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Communication Strategies to Motivate Virtual Team Members in the Banking Industry

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Kristina N. Wade

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Communication Strategies to Motivate Virtual Team Members in the Banking Industry

by

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MBA, University of Phoenix, 2008

BS, Cornerstone University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2019

Abstract

Frontline managers in the banking industry support geographically dispersed employees and face significant obstacles in communicating effectively to motivate their virtual team members. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore communication strategies frontline managers in the banking industry used to motivate virtual team members. Vroom's expectancy theory was the conceptual framework for the study. Participants consisted of 5 frontline banking managers in Michigan who had successfully implemented communication strategies to motivate virtual team members. Data were collected using face-to-face semistructured interviews, a review of company documents, and a review of company websites. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Yin's 5-step process of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding the data. The 3 emergent themes were a clarification strategy, a technology strategy, and a motivation strategy. Frontline banking managers leading virtual teams might use the findings from this study to improve the clarity of their communications with team members, make effective use of technology in their communication strategy, motivate team members through consistent messaging, and offer adequate rewards and facilitating peer competition among team members. The implications of this study for positive social change include the potential for frontline banking managers to improve job satisfaction and motivation among virtual team members, resulting in higher employment rates, improved local economic stability, and enhanced rapport and volunteerism within their local communities.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my parents, George and Judith Wade, sister and brother-in-law, Kathleen and Leander Jones, niece and nephew, Avery and Leander Jones, and my brother Roswell Wade, you may be gone from the physical state, however you will forever be in my heart. You all have my unwavering appreciation and love for all you have endured with me during this time. You have been my support system that has continued to allow me to be great. Roswell, you told me to make you proud prior to your passing and I pray I have done just that. We did it, ladies and gentlemen. We are finished, as I did not do this alone.

To my Sorors of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Lambda Lambda Sigma Alumnae Chapter of Kalamazoo, MI, I appreciate you all more than you know. Any time I have needed to vent regarding school, feeling as if I was not doing well, you were there for me and I cannot thank you all enough for that. Sisterhood! Greater Service, Greater Progress!

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First, I give honor to God who allowed me to make it through this. He who brought me to it, will help me through it. My parents who have always told us we could do anything we put our minds to. I said I would stop at a master's in business administration, however, my thirst for additional knowledge kept me going. Thank you for always encouraging me to do better, be better, again be great. My sister, what can I say, you have always been there for me and kept the encouragement coming. You encouraged me when I am not sure if you knew you were encouraging me. Thank you for being that person and ear to listen, shoulder to cry on, when needed. To my brother Roswell, I never got the chance to tell you thank for you encouragement, I studied every night with you for Undergrad and thought about you every day of Grad and Post Grad. Your words rang through every day, "Make me proud Shorts."

I offer a huge thank you to my committee members. Dr. Ronald Jones you are truly an amazing chair. You came into my life at a time in which I was ready to give up; however, you did not let that happen. I cannot thank you enough for what you have done. I will forever be grateful for you and indebted to you for everything you have done and helped me accomplish. To Dr. Diane Dusick, I appreciate you taking the time to review my work, give feedback, and continuing to push me to do well. To Dr. Judith Blando, thank you for coming on to take the late Dr. Robert Hockin's position. To the late Dr. Robert Hockin, thank you for all you did while reviewing my study. Thank you for all you did while you were on this Earth.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem Statement	2
Purpose Statement.....	2
Nature of the Study	3
Research Question	4
Interview Questions	4
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Operational Definitions.....	6
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	7
Assumptions.....	7
Limitations	7
Delimitations.....	8
Significance of the Study	8
Contribution to Business Practice.....	8
Implications for Social Change.....	9
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	9
Vroom’s Expectancy Motivation Theory	11

Complementary and Alternative Theories	14
Virtual Teams.....	19
Virtual Team Leadership and Management.....	23
Virtual Team Leader-Member Relationships	25
Virtual Team Communication	27
Improving Organizational Effectiveness Using Virtual Teams.....	30
Virtual Team Training	32
Employee Performance in Virtual Teams.....	33
Trust in Virtual Teams	35
Improving Employee Engagement in Virtual Teams	37
Improving Work-Life Balance Using Virtual Teams	38
Virtual Teams Within the Banking Industry.....	40
Transition	42
Section 2: The Project.....	44
Purpose Statement.....	44
Role of the Researcher	44
Participants.....	47
Research Method and Design	49
Research Method	49
Research Design.....	51
Data Saturation.....	52

Population and Sampling	53
Ethical Research.....	56
Data Collection Instruments	58
Data Collection Technique	60
Interview Preparation.....	60
Document Review.....	61
Member Checking.....	63
Data Organization Technique	63
Data Analysis	65
Compiling Data.....	65
Disassembling Data	66
Reassembling Data.....	66
Interpreting Data.....	67
Software Plan	67
Key Themes	68
Reliability and Validity.....	68
Dependability.....	68
Credibility	69
Confirmability.....	70
Transferability.....	70
Data Saturation.....	71

Transition and Summary.....	72
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change.....	73
Introduction.....	73
Presentation of the Findings.....	73
Emergent Theme 1: Clarification Strategy	75
Emergent Theme 2: Technology Strategy	80
Emergent Theme 3: Motivation Strategy.....	84
Applications to Professional Practice	87
Implications for Social Change.....	89
Recommendations for Action	90
Recommendations for Further Research.....	91
Reflections	93
Conclusion	93
References.....	95
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	137
Appendix B: Invitation to Participate E-mail or Telephone Script.....	140

List of Tables

Table 1. Participants' Responses for Clarification Strategy	76
Table 2. Participants' Responses for Technology Strategy	80
Table 3. Participants' Responses for Motivation Strategy.....	84

List of Figures

Figure 1. Mind map of key strategies	75
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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Virtual workers define their position as working from different geographical or organizational locations while communicating using telecommunication and information technology to complete organizational tasks (Han & Beyerlein, 2016). Virtual working has become more prevalent in frontline positions as organizations have evolved (Han & Beyerlein, 2016). Frontline managers in the banking industry continue to support the increasing number of geographically dispersed employees. Dulebohn and Hoch (2017) noted virtual teams offer improved diversity and organizational effectiveness. Business leaders use technological advancements to allow local employees work from their homes and hire globally dispersed workers (Hagel, 2015). The use of virtual teams is a means for employees to have a flexible schedule, which may lead to enhanced employee morale and an increase in productivity (Hagel, 2015).

Background of the Problem

Communications for employees who work virtually presents a challenge. This challenge involves employees' inability to hear and understand the changes that occur in the company and teams in which these individuals work (Charlier, Guay, & Zimmerman, 2016). Working from another location limits the amount of face-to-face communication between managers and employees, which has an effect on employee motivation (Hitchcock & Stavros, 2017).

Working virtually results in increased psychological and emotional distance between managers and employees, which results in challenges for effective leadership

from managers (Gilson, Maynard, Jones Young, Vartiainen, & Hakonen, 2014). Employees who work remotely must communicate through various channels. These channels include information and technology communication such as e-mail, webcam conferencing, teleconferencing, instant messaging, and phone conferences (Petković, Orelj, & Lukić, 2014), but these cannot replace the benefits that come with face-to-face communication. Face-to-face communication provides more of an intimate conversation for a person than media communication (Han & Beyerlein, 2016).

Problem Statement

Unmotivated virtual workers cause lower productivity, profitability, and apathy within the virtual team (Humala, 2017). Virtual team members are 33% less motivated to achieve team objectives goals in comparison to onsite team members because of isolation and the lack of constant communication with the team leader (Swaab, Phillips, & Schaerer, 2016). The general business problem was that frontline managers in the banking industry lack of effective communication strategies hinders virtual team productivity. The specific business problem was that some frontline managers in the banking industry lack communication strategies to motivate virtual team members.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore communication strategies some frontline managers in the banking industry use to motivate virtual team members. The targeted population was frontline managers in five banking companies in Michigan because they have successfully implemented communication strategies to

motivate virtual team members. As working virtually has become more of a global topic, the contribution to social change would potentially be improved performance and job satisfaction among virtual team members, leading to enhanced rapport and volunteerism within the local and global communities served. Motivated employees engage more in community activities, volunteer more time, and contribute more resources to their local society than do unmotivated workers (Krasnopolskaya, Roza, & Meijs, 2015).

Nature of the Study

Social science researchers use three research methods to conduct a study: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed (Yin, 2018). Marshall and Rossman (2016) noted that qualitative researchers use open-ended questions to explore a phenomenon in a natural setting. I used a qualitative method because of the need to use open-ended questions to collect primary data. Quantitative researchers collect numeric data through closed-ended questions to test hypotheses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I rejected the quantitative method because statistically analyzing numeric data would fail to answer the research question. A mixed-method researcher combines a qualitative method and a quantitative method to statistically test hypotheses (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). I did not statistically test hypotheses; therefore, a mixed-method study was not appropriate. I considered four designs: case study, phenomenology, ethnography, and narrative inquiry. Phenomenological researchers use the lived experiences of participants as data (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological design was not appropriate because I was exploring communication strategies frontline banking managers used to motivate virtual

workers, not the banking managers lived experiences regarding motivating employees. Ethnographers conduct culturally based research by immersing themselves in the culture under study (Eisenhart, 2017). An ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study because I was not exploring the culture of banking leaders or banking organizations to answer the research question. Narrative researchers identify themes from participant stories after initial analysis (Boddy, 2016). A narrative design was not appropriate for this study because I was not using participant stories as data. Case study researchers collect rich data regarding a phenomenon in a contextual setting through participant interviews (Yin, 2018). A case study researcher has little to no control over the phenomenon (Yin, 2018). A case study design was appropriate for this study because I explored a phenomenon in a contextual setting over which I had no control.

Research Question

What communication strategies do some frontline managers in the banking industry use to motivate virtual team members?

Interview Questions

1. What communication strategies did you use to motivate virtual team members in your banking company?
2. What communication strategy did you find as most effective to motivate virtual team members in your banking company?
3. How did you measure the effectiveness of your communication strategies in your banking company to motivate virtual team members?

4. What methods and technologies did you implement in your banking company for communication strategies to motivate virtual workers?
5. What barriers did you experience in implementing communication strategies in your banking company to motivate virtual team members?
6. How did you overcome the barriers you faced in implementing communication strategies in your banking company to motivate your virtual team members?
7. What additional information can you offer about the communication strategies you used to motivate virtual team members?

Conceptual Framework

I used Vroom's (1964) expectancy motivation theory as the conceptual framework for this study. According to Vroom, an employee's individual perception of their work environment, coupled with any prior actions within their environment, reflect the level of motivation. Managers put effort in to receive a certain outcome from employees (Wright, 2016). Employees then expect that same motivation in return from their frontline managers (Wright, 2016). Drawing on Vroom's theory, Bandow and Self (2016) noted that employees are motivated when they perceive that; (a) personal effort leads to performance, (b) an acceptable performance level leads to expected outcomes, and (c) those outcomes have value to the employees. These three specific conditions are relative to the three facets of Vroom's theory. Ramli and Jusoh (2015) explored these facets, noting that individuals seek a unique situation specific to themselves.

The expectancy motivation theory aligned well with the purpose of this study and research question because I studied the communication strategies leaders used to motivate virtual team members. This theory includes individual motivation, which is a facet of being a virtual team member, working individually on your own. A virtual team member must have the ability to work alone without constant supervision or additional interaction. The language that a leader uses contributes to the outcome of a subordinate, thus motivating their performance positively or negatively (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2016).

Operational Definitions

Co-located teams: A co-located team comprises individuals working from a common location towards the same goal (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017).

Dispersed teams: A dispersed team is a group of employees located in different areas from one another, working on a common goal, and communicating through different channels (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017).

Multicultural team: A multicultural team is a group of people from different nationalities and cultures who work together to accomplish a common goal (Hajro, Gibson, & Pudelko, 2017).

Team trust: Team trust is the ability for team members to have confidence in each other's ability to produce the desired outcome (Pangil & Chan, 2014).

Virtual team: A virtual team is a geographically dispersed group of employees using computer-mediated communication to interact while working independently across space, time and organizational boundaries (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are the presumptions that a researcher assumes to be true when beginning a study, although they may or may not be correct in any situation (Yin, 2018). I assumed the participants responded to all the interview questions with complete, accurate, and honest answers. An additional assumption was that the organizational documents regarding communication strategies were accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses in a research study (Yin, 2018). A limitation of this study was that the credibility and dependability of the interview data was dependent on the experience and knowledge of five frontline banking managers. Errors resulting from a lapse of the participants' memory or judgement are potential weaknesses. The responses from the five banking managers did not reflect the views of other frontline banking managers; therefore, the findings of this study are not generalizable to all banking organizations using virtual teams. Another limitation was my reliance on the honesty of participants in identifying effective communication strategies to motivate virtual team members. This was a case study of limited scope; therefore, transferability of the findings is limited to a future researcher's ability to transfer the findings to other cases or contextual settings.

Delimitations

Phillips, Gwozdek, and Shaefer (2015) defined delimitations as the scope of the study, or the boundaries that the researcher sets. A delimitation of this study was that the sample was restricted to five frontline banking managers with a minimum of 2 years of experience. Another delimitation was the geographic region of Michigan. To answer the research question, I focused on exploring the communication strategies frontline banking managers used to motivate virtual team members; therefore, I did not address other issues that might affect banking managers' abilities to motivate virtual team members.

Significance of the Study

Frontline banking managers might find value in this study's findings to improve virtual team member motivation. Increased motivation within virtual teams leads to decreased costs and improved team project outcomes (Purvanova, 2014). Society benefits by engaged, motivated, productive, and satisfied employees (Wright, 2016). This study is significant in the realm of improved business practices and positive social change.

Contribution to Business Practice

Frontline banking managers may benefit from this study's findings by gaining insight into effective communication strategies they can use to motivate virtual team members. Motivated virtual team member improve organizational effectiveness, efficiency, processes, projects, and profitability (De Jong, Dirks, & Gillespie, 2016). Leaders who create enhanced virtual working environments improve employee commitment, engagement, morale, productivity, and performance (Xiong, Lin, Li, &

Wang, 2016). Frontline leaders might use the finding of this study to improve their business practices through improved team member motivation.

Implications for Social Change

Implications for positive social change exist through banking leaders gaining a deeper understanding of communication and motivation strategies. Motivated employees engage more in community activities, volunteer more time, and contribute more resources to their local society than do unmotivated workers (Krasnopolskaya et al., 2015). Motivated employees enjoy high personal and job satisfaction, remain employed at high rates, and lead to reduced unemployment rates (Kurland, 2017). Lower local unemployment rates are a precursor to improved local economic stability and an increased standard of living for local residents.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

An exhaustive review of the relevant scholarly literature was essential for justifying and providing a foundation for this study. Managing and motivating virtual workers are significant challenges for frontline banking managers (Gilson et al., 2014). Unmotivated virtual team members cost U.S. companies approximately \$74 billion annually because of reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and worker apathy (Lally, 2014). In this multiple case study, I used Vroom's (1964) motivation expectancy theory to explore the communication strategies frontline banking managers used to motivate virtual team members. For this literature review, I reviewed scholarly, peer-

reviewed journal articles and seminal books, and compared the literature regarding motivation theories, communication and motivation strategies, and virtual teams.

I retrieved materials using the following databases that I accessed via the Walden University Library: Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, Emerald Management, Google Scholar, ProQuest, and SAGE Premier. Using the following keywords for research purposes to search the databases aided in retrieval of journal articles:

communication, expectancy motivation theory, leadership, team communication, team motivation, and virtual teams. The thematic topics included in this literature review are as follows: (a) Vroom's (1964) motivation expectancy theory, (b) complementary and alternative theories, (c) virtual teams, (d) virtual team leadership and management, (e) virtual team leader-member relationship, (f) virtual team communication, (g) improving organizational effectiveness using virtual teams, (h) virtual team training, (i) employee performance in virtual teams, (j) trust within virtual teams, (k) improving employee engagement using virtual teams, (l) improving work-life balance using virtual teams, and (m) virtual teams in the banking industry.

The sources I used in this study included 241 scholarly journal articles, nine dissertations, nine seminal books, and one government source. Of the 260 sources used, 92.7% are peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles and 239 have publication dates from 2014-2018, equating to 93%. Two sources were published 2019. Of all sources used, one-hundred-thirteen sources are unique to the literature review.

Vroom's Expectancy Motivation Theory

I used Vroom's (1964) expectancy motivation theory as this study's conceptual framework. Vroom posited that an employee's motivation to perform reflects the employee's perception of the work environment. Employee motivation increases when leaders recognize and meet three expectations of the employees; (a) personal effort leads to performance, (b) an acceptable performance level leads to expected outcomes, and (c) those outcomes have value to the employees (Bandow & Self, 2016). As Vroom noted, expectancy motivation is a result of employees receiving what they expect to receive, regardless of whether the impetus to earn the reward is the employee's self-interest or for the greater organizational good. Ramli and Jusoh (2015) explored employee expectations, noting that workers tend to focus far more on receipt of individual rewards for individual performance as opposed to striving to reach broad, strategic, organizational objectives. Leaders and managers must recognize that motivating employees is a function of meeting the employees' expectations; failure to meet the expectations of employees typically results in a demotivated work group (Wright, 2016). Organizational leaders yearn for motivated workers, while workers seek frontline managers who understand their wants, needs, desires, and employment expectations (Wright, 2016).

Vroom (1964), in the expectancy motivation theory, explained how employees react and expect an outcome from their actions, beyond an agreed upon paycheck. Leaders should recognize that employees seek intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Estes & Polnick, 2012). Employers should not only compensate workers as agreed, but should

strive to ensure the employees experience fulfilling, satisfying work. Kopelman, Prottas, and Falk (2012) noted that effective leaders understand employees' expectations, use motivation strategies to predict employee performance, and uphold all agreements with employees regarding pay for performance. If an employee does not perceive the value of the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards as commensurable with the level of work performed, motivation to exceed the leader's expectations decreases, as does the achievement of organizational objectives (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018).

Motivation and expected outcomes give employees the ambition to strive for the best for their employer to receive their own personal rewards. Having the knowledge of their outcome and reward creates a form of satisfaction for employees and continues to push them to improve each day. Purvis, Zagenczyk, and McCray (2015) agreed with Vroom's theory, noting that an improved feeling of accomplishment leads to improved outcomes of success with employees. Suciu, Mortan, and Lazar (2013) argued that employees change their behavior and work ethic based on their expected results as well as motivation, which effects outcomes.

Vroom (1964) asserted that the strength of force necessary for an individual to perform an act is the combined function of three major components: valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. Vroom posited that a relationship exists between effort and performance (expectancy), performance level and reward (instrumentality), and satisfaction of the reward (valence). Recognition of the factors required to motivate virtual workers is a key element of developing effective motivation strategies. Managers

who effectively use Vroom's three major components may find themselves better positioned regarding improved communication with their virtual team members (Purvis et al., 2015).

Valence. Valence refers to a person's amount of attractiveness with a foundation of value of the outcome with their position (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017). Valence is the value an employee places on the promised and expected reward for a specific job-performance outcome (Chen, Ellis, & Suresh, 2016). Individuals take on their own self-awareness and sense of accomplishment to find a path to success. Chen et al. (2016) discussed motivation and regulation relative to behavior to achieve more value within outcomes. Vroom (1964) asserted that intrinsic rewards, such as job satisfaction and fulfillment, and extrinsic rewards, such as monetary compensation, benefits, paid-time-off, professional development, and promotions, are key motivators for employees. To motivate workers, leaders and managers must recognize the key motivators for individual employees (Chen et al., 2016). Although one employee might perform at higher levels because of increased compensation, another employee might only be motivated through fulfilling work (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017).

Expectancy. Expectancy refers to a subjective evaluation of how well a person has performed and the degree or amount of the associated reward (De Simone, 2015). The type of expectation and level of confidence differs among employees (Vroom, 1964). Effective managers and leaders recognize differences in knowledge, skills, and abilities of employee, and implement the proper training and management required to address

these differences (De Simone, 2015). Employees typically believe that a strong performance will lead to a healthy reward (Kohli et al., 2018). Motivational leaders understand that expectancy for a reward based on exceptional performance is a concept to use to their advantage to motivate employees to achieve organizational objectives (Harris, Murphy, DiPietro, & Line, 2017).

Instrumentality. Vroom (1964) noted that instrumentality is the employee's perception as to truthfulness of leaders who promise rewards for performance. To ensure sustained motivation among the work group, managers must follow through on all commitments regarding performance rewards or risk demotivating the employees (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Instrumentality refers to an actual given performance by an employee as a result of a promised reward (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Baumann and Bonner (2017) discussed that leaders could promise rewards to motivate individual employees or departmental grouping of employees. Conversely, Lloyd and Mertens (2018) discussed that following through with promised rewards was an effective motivational strategy regarding only individual workers.

Complementary and Alternative Theories

Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) developed the two-factor theory of motivation, otherwise known as Herzberg's two-factor theory. Herzberg et al. theorized that leaders influence workers through motivation and hygiene factors, whereas Vroom (1964) posited that employee motivation remained contingent on employees receiving expected rewards. The primary

premise of Herzberg's two-factor theory is that leaders motivate workers through improving motivation factors or employee satisfiers, such as recognition, job fulfillment, and career advancement, while reducing employee dissatisfaction by improving hygiene factors such as working conditions, leader-employee relationships, and worker autonomy.

In assessing Herzberg's two-factor theory, Alshmemri Shahwan-Akl, and Maude (2017) noted that motivation factors resulted in employees experiencing positive outlooks regarding work, while hygiene factors typically resulted in negative employee attitudes. Herzberg et al. noted that improving hygiene factors might result in lower dissatisfaction among the employee group, yet reducing employee dissatisfaction without improving employee satisfiers would not improve employee motivation. In comparison to Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation, Herzberg et al. placed far more emphasis on the need for leaders to remove or reduce job aspects that resulted in employee dissatisfaction. Although Vroom noted that employee motivation decreases when employees experience dissatisfaction because of a leader failing to meet the employees' expectations, Vroom did not focus on reducing employee dissatisfaction to increase the motivation level of the workers.

In agreement with Vroom (1964) and Herzberg et al. (1959), Pandža, Đeri, Galamboš, and Galamboš (2015) acknowledged the need for business leaders to use a variety of strategies to motivate, satisfy, and meet the expectations of employees. Business owners and leaders face the challenge of using motivational communication strategies while directing employees to perform mundane, routine, difficult, or time-

consuming job tasks (Lăzăroiu, 2015). Pandža et al., in support of Herzberg's two-factor theory, commented that leaders improve employee motivation through regular increases in compensation, yet Vroom theorized that the degree of employee motivation remains dependent on the employee's receipt of the promised reward, not the expectation of future potential earnings. I selected Vroom's expectancy theory as the conceptual framework for this study instead of Herzberg's two-factor theory because the communication strategies banking leaders used to motivate virtual workers related more to the expectancies of the employees as opposed to bolstering hygiene factors or removing job dissatisfaction factors.

Self-determination theory of motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) developed the self-determination theory of motivation. According to this theory, improved employee motivation occurs through leaders satisfying the employees' needs for competence, independence, and affiliation with other organizational members (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In agreement with Vroom (1964), Chung-An, Don-Yun, and Chengwei (2018) commented that business leader decrease employee motivation through failing to meet workers' expectations and needs. The key tenets of the self-determination theory are (a) people act because of an intrinsic desire to accomplish a task or an objective, (b) people need external factors to experience the needed motivation to perform a significant action, and (c) people experience higher levels of motivation through self-directed or organizationally mandated professional development (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Virtual workers require high levels of self-determination to remain successful as remote, off-site

employees because of the lack of direct supervision and social interaction with other organizational members (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017).

Self-determination theorists have noted that people complete a task to experience a sense of accomplishment, which leads to higher levels of self-determined motivation (Chemolli & Gagné, 2014). In contrast to Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory of motivation, Vroom (1964) postulated that people accomplish job tasks and specified objectives to receive a promised reward. Hancox, Quedsted, Ntoumanis, and Thøgersen-Ntoumani (2018) discussed that organizational leaders improve employee motivation through recognizing and meeting the intrinsic and extrinsic needs of the employees and motivation tactics for employees. Employees might claim self-determination as their sole impetus for accomplishing an organizational objective, yet in the absence of leadership, organizational support, and sufficient reward, employee motivation to meet or exceed the specified objectives typically diminishes (Chung-An et al., 2018). Self-satisfaction is a key determinant of employee motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), yet business leaders must honor all agreements regarding performance rewards to maintain employee motivation (Vroom, 1964). Although virtual workers must use some of the aspects of the self-determination theory, Vroom's expectancy theory was in better alignment with this study because I explored the communication strategies leaders used to motivate virtual team members, not the self-determined motivation factors used by employees.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is a theory that researchers and practitioners relate to employee motivation and the drive of human behavior. Business leaders use Maslow's theory to explore how employees communicate with one another (Allen et al., 2016). The basis of the hierarchy of needs theory is five basic needs: belongingness, esteem, physiological, safety, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Maslow's theory is important to commitment to the organization as well as leadership, considering personal needs for employees as influential factors for motivation and retention is important to employees as individuals (Allen et al., 2016; Fisher & Royster, 2016). Maslow and Vroom theories contain both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators (Singh, 2016). Studies on Maslow's hierarchy of needs explored human motivation while studies on Vroom's expectancy theory explored the effect of the human motivation within the workplace (Singh, 2016). These two theories support and complement one another.

Employee motivation can affect communication within virtual teams. Team leaders decrease team member motivation by not meeting the employees' basic human needs (Chung-An et al., 2018). Najjar and Fares (2017) explored tools to motivate employees and continue satisfaction within the workplace. Chung-An et al. (2018) agreed with Najjar and Fares in that as employees continue to work on their own self-satisfaction and determination, they will work harder to perform for their organization.

Vroom (1964) posited that employees seek rewards as their ultimate outcome for a job well done. In comparison, Najjar and Fares (2017) disagreed with Vroom regarding

reward, believing that employees work for their self as well as for their organization. Rewards are not an employee's only reason for working hard. Employees look for motivation for rewards for a job well done. In agreement, De Simone (2015) agreed that individual performance is a given a reward. Vroom's expectancy theory was more appropriate as the conceptual framework for this study than Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory because I explored frontline managers' communication strategies used to motivate virtual team member, not how meeting the basic needs of employees results in improved motivation.

Virtual Teams

Some business leaders use virtual teams to allow team members to interact virtually instead of engaging in a traditional, on-site team meeting. In a 2016 survey of 1372 business leaders from 80 countries, 85% of the participants reported using virtual teams and co-located teams (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017). A virtual team is a geographically dispersed group of employees using computer-mediated communication to interact while working independently across space, time, and organizational boundaries (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017). The increased use of virtual teams is a result of significant advancements in communication technology (Chang, Hung, & Hsieh, 2014). Virtual team members work in a different method than traditional teams who work in the same location as one another (Stavrou, Parry, & Anderson, 2015). Without relocating, the team members communicate with each other using the telephone, e-mail, text, and computer programs to facilitate teamwork (Davidekova & Hvorecký, 2017). Leaders use technology to create an

effective team environment for employees collaborating on a specific project, yet working from dispersed locations (Purvanova, 2014). Organizational benefits as well as challenges exist regarding the use of virtual teams.

Organizational leaders use virtual teams to reduce cost and improve workplace flexibility. Leaders in the banking industry make extensive use of virtual teams to improve organizational efficiency, reduce meeting expenses, and increase collaboration among globally dispersed employees (Basu, 2016; Danish, Aslam, Shahid, Bashir, & Tariq, 2015; Gong & Janssen, 2015; Prabhakar & Mishra, 2016). A team member working from a remote office setting or from a home setting may provide cost savings to the employee and the organization (Yilmaz & Peña, 2015). Hoch and Kozlowski (2014) posited that leaders improve organizational efficiency using virtual teams. In agreement with Hoch and Kozlowski, Yilmaz and Peña (2015) noted that the use of virtual teams results in increased collaboration among high-caliber, geographically dispersed team members, improved project completion rates, and lower cost associated with the team project. Purvanova (2014) agreed that the use of virtual teams improved workplace flexibility and organizational effectiveness, yet noted that team members working in dispersed locations resulted in complications and challenges for employees and employers.

Leaders need to use effective communication strategies to improve team member motivation, yet the potential exists for a breakdown in virtual team communication. Virtual team members lack the consistent personal and social interaction existent within

traditional, on-site teams (Davidekova & Hvorecký, 2017). As noted by Guillen, Ferrero, and Hoffman (2015), the lack of social interaction among virtual team members potentially results in decreased communication flow. Lippert and Dulewicz (2018) discussed that misunderstandings between team members occurred more often in virtual team meetings in comparison to traditional, in-person team meetings. A virtual team member might lack the opportunity to seek a clarification from another team member or the team leader after the cessation of a virtual meeting. Dispersed team members experience the challenge of consistent and timely interactions with other team members because of the distance in time and location (Davidekova & Hvorecký, 2017). Hoch and Kozlowski (2014) agreed with Davidekova and Hvorecký (2017), commenting that team leaders must emphasize the need for team members to attend scheduled meetings, use clear communications, and follow up as needed to avoid misunderstandings among team members. Pinar, Zehir, Kitapci, and Tanriverdi (2014) noted that effective virtual team leaders stress the need for enhanced cooperation among team members to improve communication and reduce confusion. Analysis of the literature indicates that the lack of personal and social interaction among virtual team members results in decreased team effectiveness and an increased potential for misinterpretations.

Jia and Liden (2015) discussed that employees expect to receive personal and professional benefits because of engaging in virtual teamwork, such as increased job satisfaction, reduced travel, enhanced work-life balance, and increased productivity. Business leaders meeting the employees' expectations increase worker satisfaction and

motivation (Vroom, 1964). Romeike, Nienaber, and Schewe (2016) noted that the use of virtual teams is a means for business leaders to improve employee satisfaction, creativity, and performance. Webster and Wing-Fai (2017), in accord with Romeike et al., commented that employees experience job fulfillment through engaging in creative, innovative team projects.

Organizational leaders use virtual teams to gain efficiencies, provide workers with improved workplace flexibility, and broaden the scope of their access to high caliber employees, yet some virtual team members experience psychological difficulties because of working in isolation. Snyder (2015) acknowledged that some virtual team members prefer consistent, in-person interaction with superiors and contemporaries as opposed to limited interaction through computer-mediated video platforms. Mulet, Chulvi, Royo, and Galán (2016) expressed that some virtual workers become complacent, procrastinate, and experience decreased engagement because of the lack of in-person supervision from team leaders. Some team leaders provide employees more direct, forthright, and clear direction in-person in comparison to virtually communicating with team members (Mulet et al., 2016). In agreement with Mulet et al., Snyder noted that virtual team members benefit from occasional in-person meetings with superiors and other team members to mitigate the effects of working in isolation. Analysis of the literature indicates that some virtual workers desire in-person contact and interaction with other organizational members to reduce the negative effects of remote, virtual work.

Banking leaders use virtual teams to compete in global markets. Consolidation within the banking industry, the use of online banking by consumers, and globalization resulted banking leaders experiencing increased global completion (Gong & Janssen, 2015; Ramos, 2018). Effective global company leaders use virtual teams to overcome the obstacles of conducting international business, improve communication flow, and speed decision making and problem solving to remain competitive (Marlow, Lacerenza, & Salas, 2017). Curtis, Dennis, and McNamara (2017), in accord with Marlow et al. (2017), noted that leaders of companies engaging in global business benefit from assembling a virtual team because of reduced cultural barriers, increased access to employees familiar with the local competitive issues, and improved collective information sharing. Assembling a multicultural team is an effective means for global business leaders to avoid cultural mistakes and misunderstanding (Münch, 2016). The preponderance of the literature indicates that leaders use virtual teams to remain viable and promote organizational growth while engaging in competitive, global markets. As frontline managers enjoy the use of virtual teams to assist with interactions with customers, implementing effective communication strategies is an essential task for managers to motivate virtual workers.

Virtual Team Leadership and Management

Managers of virtual teams face the challenge of leading and managing from afar while striving to motivate team members. The manager of virtual workers must have the ability to lead through virtual communications to keep the team members well engaged in

all interactions (Slade, 2015). Virtual team leaders address different issues from managers who are in the same geographic location as their employees (Barnwell, Nedrick, Rudolph, Sesay, & Wellen, 2014; Saafein & Shaykhian, 2014). For instance, Whittle (2014) noted that managers of virtual teams face the challenge of lacking instant access to employees, communication effectively to avoid demotivating virtual workers because of misunderstanding caused by virtual employees misinterpreting a written message, and controlling and managing the work habits of remote employees. Sanjay and Sachin (2015), in agreement with Whittle, noted that managers of virtual teams should strive to motivate dispersed employees through clear communications, regular interaction with the team members, and sensitivity regarding the differences in time zones and cultural aspects of the team members. Purvanova (2014) noted employees within the banking industry are not fond of the reduction in human interaction when working on a virtual team, which leads to decrease in motivation and lack of communication. Virtual team leaders should empathize with their employees' perceptions of their position within the workplace and strive to meet the employees' expectations to increase motivation.

Managers must meet the employees' expectations regarding compensation, job satisfaction, and the workplace environment to improve employee motivation. Vroom (1964) noted that when organizational leaders fail to meet the expectations of the workers, employee motivation decreases. Employees seek personable and professional interactions with their managers (Slade, 2015). In agreement with Slade (2015), Hersted and Frimann (2016) acknowledged that the communication style of the leader was a key

element of the motivation level of employees. Virtual team managers should engage in effective communication strategies to develop healthy relationships with team members (Hersted & Frimann, 2016). Recognizing the employees' expectations is a continual and vital process for the virtual team manager (Liu, Jing, & Gao, 2015). The team leader must exhibit trustworthy behaviors to promote a motivational team experience (Liu et al., 2015). Evidence in the literature indicates that when virtual team members trust their leader, communication flow and team motivation improve.

Virtual Team Leader-Member Relationships

Leaders improve employee motivation through building professional, respectable relationships with team members. Relational framing theorists noted that team leader-member relationships improve through social interactions, bilateral trust and respect, and personable communication (McWorthy & Henningsen, 2014). Team members need to develop member-to-member relationships to improve team unity, yet astute team managers strive for strong leader-member relationships to reduce conflict, improve communications, and increase employee motivation (Brett, Uhl-Bien, Huang, & Carsten, 2016). Relationships between frontline managers and virtual employees build over time. The communication interactions and the motivation provided by the manager after connection with the employee create a stronger bond with the virtual team member. Virtual team managers develop relationships through exhibiting and communicating respect, trust, professionalism, and a positive attitude to the team members (Brett et al., 2016). In agreement with Brett et al. (2016), De Jong, Curşeu, and Leenders (2014) noted

that team managers should maintain a positive team environment by avoiding negative, demeaning, or harsh leadership and communication styles. A team leader damages the leader-member relationship when engaging in punitive, disparaging, and overly critical language during a team meeting or when communicating with a team member (De Jong et al., 2014).

Social interaction between the team manager and individual team members is an effective strategy to develop relationships (Liangding, Shaw, Tsui, & Tae-Youn, 2014). Mollona (2017), agreeing with Liangding et al. (2014), noted that effective team managers use socialization as a strategy to improve team cohesion, motivation, and performance. Gilstrap and Hendershot (2015) noted that team leaders should implement communication strategies to improve social relationships with virtual team members. Virtual team members need personable and socialized relationships with team managers to avoid the perception of working in isolation (Liangding et al., 2014). In contrast to Liangding et al., Yilmaz and Peña (2015) theorized that virtual team members enjoy working in a remote location because they prefer to work without distractions resulting from social relationships with other team members. Robbins and Wansink (2016) commented that leader-member relationships and employee motivation improve when the leader meets the expectations of the member regarding the rewards and benefits of employment with the company. As noted by Vroom (1964), employee motivation improves when the leader upholds all agreements with employees. The evidence drawn from the literature indicates that stronger leader-member relationships develop through

social interaction between the team manager and the individual team members. The manner in which the leader communicates with the virtual team members is a key component of developing strong team relationships and team trust. The preponderance of the reviewed literature indicated that virtual team member motivation increases when strong leader-member relationships exist.

Virtual Team Communication

Effective communication among team members is a critical element of virtual team success. Communication among organizational members is important in every organization (Baker, Mathis, Stites-Doe, & Javadian, 2016). Smalley, Retallick, Metzger, and Greiman (2016) described that effective communication is a key component of optimal organizational performance. Baker et al. (2016) noted the need for effective communication flow between leaders, team members, supply chain partners, and other internal and external stakeholders. Leaders use technology to improve communication flow between dispersed team members (Belndea, 2016). In agreement with Belndea (2016), Smalley et al. commented that communication among virtual team members continues to improve because of technological advances regarding Internet availability and speed, upgraded video-conferencing software, and improved computer hardware.

Consistency is a significant attribute of successful team communications and interactions. Team leaders should communicate with team members with a consistent communication style (Odero, 2016). Team leaders who use consistent communications with team members improve team motivation. Frontline banking managers reduce

misunderstandings and confusion through clear, coherent, and regular communication with virtual team members (Hoch & Kozlowski, 2014). Virtual workers communicate through computer-mediated platforms, e-mail, and telephone calls, which increases the potential for misinterpretations and mistakes (Lippert & Dulewicz, 2018). Charlier et al. (2016) found that consistent leader-to-member and member-to-member contact is an essential element of team success. Mastrogiacomo, Missonier, and Bonazzi, (2014) noted that leaders should use technology to avoid delays in communicating with team members. Without consistent communications among team members, team cooperation diminishes, team trust decreases, and the probability of the team failing to meet the specified objectives increases (Lippert & Dulewicz, 2018).

Virtual team communications should consist of team members operating from a holistic, team perspective. Curtis et al. (2017) noted the need for virtual team member to go beyond sharing their individual expertise to communicate a shared mindset of the team. The communication strategy implemented by the team leader is a significant factor regarding team members' ability to function as an interactive team as opposed to individual remote employees joining a meeting to discuss an issue or a project (Fan, Chen, Wang, & Chen, 2014; Jakobsen & Mortensen, 2015). In agreement with Fan et al. (2014), Yiwen, Lepine, Buckman, and Feng (2014) commented that virtual team members need guidance and direction from the team manager to function as a team. The quality of team communication improves through team members using a collective approach to team discussions, decisions, and information sharing (Curtis et al., 2017).

Team leaders need to be cognizant of how virtual team members perceive e-mail and other virtual communications to ensure the use of the proper tone and message to avoid demotivating virtual employees.

The communication mannerisms and style used by a team leader has an effect on the level of team member motivation. Inflection, tone, and language type used by a team leader can change the intended meaning of a message (Marlow et al., 2017). Leaders should use a positive, encouraging communication style to improve employee engagement (Marlow et al., 2017). In mild rebuttal to Marlow et al. (2017), Odero (2016) commented that the leader should use a consistent communication style of communication to avoid misinterpretations by the team members. A leader that sends inspirational messages one day and highly critical messages the next day demonstrates an ineffective communication strategy (Odero, 2016). Virtual team managers using an unambiguous, consistent communication style mitigate the potential for misunderstandings among team members that results in reduced team motivation. Virtual team communications exist in many forms. Adkins and Premeaux (2014) noted that technological advances regarding virtual communications extend the availability of people working remotely. Although many onsite employees use organizational Intranets to communicate with other onsite team members, remote employees communicate differently with their respective manager and peers than do in-office employees (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017). Virtual project team managers need to implement an effective communication strategy to ensure virtual team members make effective use of all

available communication resources, such as video conferencing, instant messaging, e-mail through a computer, tablet, or cellular telephone, and cloud-based file sharing (Lippert & Dulewicz, 2018). Using all available technology resources to improve communication within virtual teams is a means for business leaders to improve team as well as organizational effectiveness. Lippert and Dulewicz (2018) noted that virtual team members seek affirmation and constructive critique from their leader. Shahid (2017) conducted a qualitative case study to explore strategies leaders use to reduce employee turnover in the banking industry. Through interviews with five banking managers, Shahid found that managers reduced employee turnover by using an inspirational and motivating communication style when interacting with employees. Evidence in the reviewed literature indicates that virtual team motivation and performance improves when the team leader uses an inspirational communication style.

Improving Organizational Effectiveness Using Virtual Teams

Business leaders use virtual teams to improve organizational effectiveness. Organizational leaders can reduce cost and gain efficiencies using virtual teams (Purvanova, 2014). While Purvanova (2014) focused on cost savings through improved organizational efficiency, Lohle and Terrell (2014) discussed the advantages of using virtual teams, including increased access to global experts, increased innovation and creativity, and improved employee productivity. In agreement with Lohle and Terrell, Gilson et al. (2014) noted that leaders boost organizational diversity, effectiveness, inventiveness, and ingenuity using virtual teams. Leaders use virtual teams to gain access

to highly qualified, dispersed employees who are not willing to relocate to join a traditional, onsite team.

Some leaders changed their strategic and operational business models to improve organizational effectiveness with virtual teams. Nyström and Asproth (2013) noted that many organizational leaders shifted strategies to incorporate virtual teams for improved access to human resources and reduced team expenses. Gilson et al. (2014), in agreement with Nyström and Asproth, commented that leaders implemented strategic changes to improve the quality of organizational cooperation, collaboration, and innovation through using virtual teams. Pinar et al. (2014), in rebuttal to Gilson et al., noted that dispersed team employees resulted in a managerial loss of control as well as decreased cooperation among employees. Contrary to Pinar et al., Hoch, and Kozlowski (2014) strongly recommended the use of virtual teams to increase the quality of collaboration among team members in pursuit of a unified project objective. Nyström and Asproth concluded that leaders allowing employees to work from a remote location improved organizational effectiveness through increased employee morale, motivation, and performance. The effectiveness of a virtual team and ultimately, the effectiveness of the organization, remains dependent on the communication strategies leaders use to interact with team members, build relationships, and ensure cohesive team performance (Hoch & Kozlowski, 2014).

Virtual Team Training

The need for virtual team training exists for leaders, managers, and team members. Lockwood (2015) discussed that adequate training of virtual team members was a requirement regarding team effectiveness, motivation, and performance. While Lockwood discussed the sufficiency of virtual employee training, Latham (2014) noted that exceptional team motivation and performance is a result of excellent leadership. Well-trained leaders and managers enjoy more success regarding team effectiveness, motivation, and productivity (Latham, 2014). Leadership development is an essential element of improved team motivation. Team leaders and managers must engage in professional development and training to lead a virtual team (Lockwood, 2015). An expectation of a team member is the team leader possessing the knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead the team to a successful conclusion of the team project (Khan & Baloch, 2017). Untrained team managers will remain ineffective regarding motivating virtual team members to excel in their remote positions; therefore, the need exists for team members to receive adequate guidance from trained managers. With the advancements in technology, virtual training has become commonplace among dispersed teams.

Interactive, virtual learning is a means for leaders to train virtual team members without the need for expensive travel, accommodations, and on-site facilitators. Khan and Baloch (2017) discussed the organizational as well as employee benefits of virtual training. Keshvari, Faraz, Safaie, and Nedjad (2018), in agreement with Khan and Baloch, noted that employee satisfaction, motivation, and performance increased through

effective and consistent virtual training. Astute team leaders improve virtual team performance by inspiring the dispersed team members to engage in professional development training regarding the advancements in technology (Betta, 2016; Buchelt, 2015; Paul, Drake, & Liang, 2016). Conversely, Havera, Nawawi, and Solimun (2018) commented that many employees hold a disdain for regular training, perceive virtual training as impersonal and ineffective, and prefer to work within the boundaries of their current knowledge and skills. The preponderance of the literature reviewed indicated that to motivate virtual team members, managers must receive ample training. Managers should ensure that virtual team members receive consistent and relevant training to improve team performance.

Employee Performance in Virtual Teams

Leadership is a fundamental part of how an employee performs and interacts with other team members. Leaders possess the ability to influence employee performance through inspiration and motivation (Ford, Piccolo, & Ford, 2017). Gilstrap and Hendershot (2015) argued that although leaders influence their employees, they also develop their own strategies and technological savviness to meet their virtual team members' expectations and needs to increase employee motivation and performance. Leaders motivate employees to exceed performance expectations through inspiration, encouragement, and surpassing employees' expectations of the leader (Hui-Ling, 2017; Vroom, 1964). Employee performance and engagement increases when the team manager uses effective communication strategies to motivate the team members (Anitha, 2014).

Conversely, Chaudhary (2014) commented that employee performance and motivation increases only when the leader links promised rewards to specific levels of performance.

An employee's performance is often the sole determinant of the level of compensation paid to the worker. Effective team leaders strive to align team member performance with a specified compensation level (Carton, Murphy, & Clark, 2014). Anitha (2014) noted that team members' ability and willingness to perform remains contingent on their comfortability with the job, perception of their surroundings, and the level of trust placed in the leader's willingness to provide the agreed rewards for increased performance. Carton et al. (2014), in agreement with Anitha, commented that employees commit themselves to their position based on the monetary commitment from their organizational leader or manager. Other known factors exist that increase an employee's performance, such as organizational trust, cultural consideration, accountability, effective communication, and interpersonal relationships (El-Sofany, Alwadani, & Alwadani, 2014). Employee performance in virtual teams improves when the leader uses clear and thoughtful communications, yet decreases when the employee perceives the team manager as untrustworthy (De Jong et al., 2016). To perform at optimum levels and remain motivated, team members need consistent interaction with other team members as well as the team leader (Dissanayake, Zhang, & Gu, 2015). Without effective communication flow among all team member, team camaraderie may become nonexistent and trust within the dispersed team and trust of the manager might diminish.

Researchers indicated that business leaders use virtual teams to increase employee productivity. Goodman (2013) explored the productivity of employees who worked from home or from a remote off-site location, finding a 13% increase in worker productivity in comparison to onsite employees. Snyder (2015) agreed with Goodman in the existence of an increase in productivity regarding virtual employees, yet noted some workers prefer the daily human interaction of working in an organizational office setting. Romeike et al. (2016) explained that virtual team members experience increased worker satisfaction and work-life balance, resulting in a rise in employee performance and productivity. Using a qualitative case study, Guerra-Brown (2017) explored the strategies team leaders use to increase productivity in virtual teams, using a sample size of five participants. Productivity in virtual teams improves when the leader maintains consistent and frequent communications with virtual team members to ensure the team works as a cohesive unit instead of individuals working in isolation (Guerra-Brown, 2017). Evidence exists in the literature that the use of virtual teams results in higher employee performance, satisfaction, and productivity.

Trust in Virtual Teams

Trust among virtual team members, including the team manager, is an essential element for team motivation and performance. Dulebohn and Hoch (2017) postulated that teams function at optimum levels only when trust-based relationships exist among the team members. Team commitment, productivity, and motivation are a function of the level of trust between team members (Lippert & Dulewicz, 2018). Baker et al. (2016)

noted the need to elevated levels of trust between virtual team members and the team leader because of the distance in time and location. Maley and Moeller (2014) indicated that trust between all parties is a vital aspect for effective team performance. Leaders of virtual teams lack the ability to obtain instant validation of the level of work performed by virtual team members; therefore, astute team leaders strive to place only trustworthy employees on a virtual team (Baker et al., 2016). Charlier et al. (2016) explored the effect of a leader's level of trust of team members, finding that employee motivation improved when the team members perceived that the leader trusted the members to perform in their team role. In agreement with Charlier et al., O'Neill, Hodgson, and Mazrouei (2015) noted that team members' motivation, performance, and engagement remained contingent on the level of trust of the leader in the team. Dispersed team members experience improved motivation when they perceive that the team manager trust them to perform their job.

Trust is a function of perception, acceptance, social interaction, and interpersonal relationships. Virtual team members engage with their direct manager in a different manner than employees working with their manager in the same office location (Cordes, 2017). When employees perceive acceptance within the team by fellow team members and the team leader, their motivation to perform at optimum levels improves (Marlow et al., 2017). The trust and reception that employees perceive between themselves and their dispersed team is a means of support for positive team outcomes (Breuer, Hüffmeier, & Hertel, 2016). A trust-based relationship between team members is an essential

component for team success (Breuer et al., 2016). Trust among team members improves through the development of social relationships among team members (Leiter, Day, & Price, 2015). Peñarroja, Orengo, Zornoza, Sanchez, and Ripoll (2015) discussed the need for the development of interpersonal relationships among team members to ensure a cohesive team, elevated trust, and enhanced motivation to succeed regarding completion of a team project. The preponderance of the literature reviewed indicated that trust among virtual teams members and a team leader's level of trust of the team to perform are vital aspects of team motivation.

Improving Employee Engagement in Virtual Teams

Some business leaders use virtual teams to increase employee engagement (Zanozovska, 2017). Employee engagement is an action, behavior, or mindset exhibited by an employee through elevated levels of attentiveness to job duties, performance, and commitment to the organization (Mäkikangas, Aunola, Seppälä, & Hakanen, 2016). Effective virtual team managers recognize the need to motivate team members to remain engaged in the team project (Zanozovska, 2017). Handa and Gulati (2014) found through research that the leader's personality traits and communication style correlated with levels of employee engagement. Zanozovska (2017) noted team member engagement correlates with team leader engagement; therefore, engaged team managers tend to improve the engagement and effectiveness of the team members.

Employee engagement is a function of team leader-to-member and member-to-member interaction (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). Team leaders should consistently

communicate with team members and implement a team strategy to ensure robust and regular team interaction (Mäkikangas et al., 2016). Virtual team members work in autonomous environments, which oftentimes results in decreased engagement (Yalabik, van Rosenberg, Kinnie, & Swart, 2015). Conversely, leaders use virtual working as a means to improve engagement and organizational commitment of employees in dispersed locations (Kakkar & Bhandari, 2016). Freeman (2017) conducted a qualitative case study using seven participants to explore the strategies leaders use in virtual teams, noting that effective communication between the team leader and team members is an essential component of team success.

Employees experiencing work-life conflict often mentally and emotionally disengage from work activities (Demsky, Ellis, & Fritz, 2014; Mulvaney, 2014). Business leaders improve the propensity for employee engagement by allowing workers in need of flexible schedules to work from home or off-site locations (Yalabik et al., 2015). In agreement with Yalabik et al. (2015), Gyanchandani (2017) noted that many virtual employees exhibit improved organizational engagement because of reduced work-life-family conflict. Business leaders need engaged, committed employees. The use of virtual teams is a means for leaders to afford some workers the opportunity to remain engaged productive employees.

Improving Work-Life Balance Using Virtual Teams

Some business leaders use virtual teams to allow employees to enjoy improved work-life balance. Salem (2015) noted that employee stress and burnout increases when

the workers fail to achieve work-life balance. Employees are more productive, motivated to perform job tasks, and satisfied in their job roles when work-life balance exist (Gyanchandani, 2017). The use of virtual working is a means for leaders to create employment opportunities for people that would otherwise not be possible (Kakkar & Bhandari, 2016). For example, people tasked with daily activities, such as childcare, elder care, home and family responsibilities, community volunteering, or attending college face challenges regarding accepting a traditional, onsite job that involves defined, daily participation and work engagement. Leader increase their access to qualified employees while allowing for the maintenance of work-life balance through use of virtual teams (Kakkar & Bhandari, 2016).

Chan et al. (2016) acknowledged that work-life balance directly correlates with job satisfaction and employee performance. Work-family conflict results in decreased employee achievement, attentiveness, motivation, and satisfaction (Salem, 2015). In the absence of work-life balance, many employees experience mental and physical exhaustion, poor concentration, and reduce effectiveness (Kakkar & Bhandari, 2016; Windeler, Chudoba, & Sundrup, 2017). Crain et al. (2014) revealed a relationship between work-family conflict and employee fatigue. In accord with Salem (2015), Demsky et al. (2014) posited that some employees lacking work-life balance experience psychological detachment from their job duties. Employees need the ability to satisfy home and family commitments while fulfilling work commitments. Working virtually is a means for employees to uphold their family responsibilities, yet remain a valued

employee (Chan et al., 2016). Evidence from the literature indicates that the business leaders improve employee work-life balance, job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity using virtual teams.

Virtual Teams Within the Banking Industry

Teams are an integral part of the banking industry. Banking leaders make extensive use of virtual teams because of global trade, globally dispersed employees, and the availability of high-quality virtual communication channels (Gong & Janssen, 2015). Danish et al. (2015) noted that the quality and the speed of communications among virtual team members is an essential element of success in the banking industry. Effective banking team leaders recognize the need for accuracy, speed, and clarity regarding the means for virtual team members to communicate with each other, make decisions, and operate at optimum performance levels (Basu, 2016). Banking managers leading virtual teams improve team motivation through assuring all team members have virtually instant access to real-time information and other team members (Basu, 2016).

Effective frontline banking managers set defined roles for each team member, grouping individuals into teams based on specific levels of expertise and experience to develop a team of people with a diversity of knowledge (Prabhakar & Mishra, 2016). In agreement with Prabhakar and Mishra (2016), Lippert and Dulewicz (2018) noted that a team functions as a unified group through the leader assembling the team with people possessing the needed expertise to produce the optimal outcome. Banking leaders should strive to form a cohesive team to reduce conflict, argument, and dissension, yet ensure

robust debate occurs to expose a diversity of expert opinions (Danish et al., 2015). The literature indicates that virtual team members experience improved motivation when the leader assembles a group of collegial people with diverse knowledge of the team project.

Frontline banking managers who effectively lead teams create a cohesive environment for their teams to learn and progress in their performance (Danish et al., 2015). Improved team performance translates into improved organizational performance (Basu, 2016). A significant relationship exists between team performance, team commitment, and team motivation levels (Basu, 2016). Gong and Janssen (2015), in mild rebuttal to Danish et al. (2015) and Basu (2016), noted the primary reason for an improvement in team members' motivation is the leader exceeding the members' expectations regarding performance-based rewards.

Effective frontline banking managers use a selection strategy to assemble virtual teams. Lippert and Dulewicz (2018) discussed that managers should pay close attention to the prospective team member's level of performance, knowledge, communication style, and ability to cope the challenges of working on a project with other people. The team leader should relay to the team the importance of trust, professionalism, and collaborative behaviors (Aritz, Walker, & Cardon, 2017). Team leaders should avoid appointing people who exhibit an unwillingness to cooperative, compromise, or act in professional, collegial manner (Gupta & Pathak, 2018). Conversely, leaders should seek out team members who offer a diversity of opinions, refusing to compromise their decisions for the sake of team unity (Aritz et al., 2017). In agreement with Aritz et al.

(2017), Lippert and Dulewicz acknowledged the value of selecting team members who offer new points-of-view regarding solutions to problems. Selecting the right people to serve on the team is an essential responsibility of a frontline banking manager.

Banking leaders who make effective use of virtual teams improve their organizational performance, extend their global reach regarding employing high-caliber people, and increase the potential to speed the completion of banking projects (Gong & Janssen, 2015). The use of virtual teams removes the barriers of time and geographic difference, resulting in improved employee and organizational flexibility, increased employee satisfaction, and improved employee work-life balance (Gupta & Pathak, 2018). By meeting or exceeding the expectations of team members, frontline banking managers could improve the motivation level of virtual team members and create a cohesive group of high-performing employees.

Transition

In Section 1, I presented the background of communication strategies and motivation strategies for virtual working employees from frontline banking managers, the problem and purpose statements, and the chosen method and design of a qualitative case study. I explained the significance of the study, the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. I included an exhaustive review of the literature regarding virtual teams and communication methods with frontline banking managers, including communication strategies and virtual teams.

In Section 2, I will explain my role in the research, the eligibility criteria, and sampling methods for the participants. Within this section, I will explain how to reduce bias within the study. I will also use the Belmont report to address ethical and participant relationships to the study. I will justify the use of the qualitative method and case study design, explain sampling procedures, describe the data collection instruments and techniques, and explain the proposed data analysis steps. I will discuss the proposed procedures to ensure dependability, credibility, and confirmability.

In Section 3, I will present the findings of the study, link the findings to the conceptual framework, and expose how the findings confirm or refute published studies. I will offer recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and discuss the implications for positive social change. I will end the study with a concluding statement.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I discuss my role as the researcher, the eligibility criteria for participants, and the sampling method. I justify the use of the qualitative, case study design, and explain the plan to reach data saturation. Section 2 contains a detailed description of the data collection instruments and methods, data collection techniques, and the means I used to organize the data. I explain the logical sequence for data analysis and the use of methodological triangulation. Section 2 concludes with my actions to ensure dependability, credibility, and confirmability.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore communication strategies some frontline managers in the banking industry use to motivate virtual team members. The targeted population was frontline managers in five banking companies in Michigan because they have successfully implemented communication strategies to motivate virtual team members. As working virtual has become more of a global topic, the contribution to social change would potentially be improved performance and job satisfaction among virtual team members, leading to enhanced rapport and volunteerism within the local and global communities served.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in qualitative studies (Yin, 2018). The researcher's role is to describe the purpose of the research, its methodology and design, and the population under study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

As the researcher, I was the primary data collection tool. I interviewed the participants, collected and analyzed the data, and presented the findings.

Researchers mitigate bias by not using their employer's company for participant recruitment purposes (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015). I did not recruit participants from my place of employment or any company in which I held a professional or personal affiliation. McDermid, Peters, Jackson, and Daly (2014) discussed that a personal relationship with participants potentially reduces the validity of the results. Researchers should avoid selecting participants with whom they hold a professional or personal relationship (Gajewski, 2013). I did not select any participants with whom I held a personal or professional relationship. Researchers should possess familiarity with the research topic as well as the geographic region (Teusner, 2016). As a manager of both in-office and virtual team members from 2002-2017, I was familiar with communication strategies of virtual employees, yet was not affiliated with any of the organizations selected for this case study. I reside in Michigan and am familiar with the geographic region.

Researchers rely on the Belmont Report to better understand and apply the principles of ethical action of respecting participants, generalizing beneficence, and negotiating justice (Artal & Rubenfeld, 2017; Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015). I followed the guidelines set forth in the Belmont Report regarding ethical behavior, respect for participants, beneficence, and justice. Researchers protect participants from harm, while maintaining confidentiality (Belmont Report, 1979).

Maintaining proper ethics requires researchers to minimize any potential harm to participants (Adams & Miles, 2013). I strived to minimize any discomfort experienced by the participants during the interviews. The informed consent process facilitates participants' understanding of the purpose of the study, the possible risks, and any related benefits (Wang, 2015). Participants read and signed the informed consent form prior to the beginning of the interviews.

Mitigating bias and avoiding influence regarding participants is an essential role of the researcher (Madill & Sullivan, 2017). Researchers mitigate personal biases by remaining objective in the interview and in the data analysis process (Moustakas, 1994). As the researcher, I mitigated personal biases by avoiding intervening within the interview and data analysis with my personal worldview or perspective. McDermid et al. (2014) noted the need for researchers to remain neutral, avoiding interjecting personal feelings, emotions, or perspectives in the research process. I asked probing questions without interjecting my personal feelings, emotions, or perspectives into the interview process. I avoided steering the participants in an attempt to persuade or influence a response.

Researchers use an interview protocol to guide the steps before, during, and after an interview, in order to maintain the integrity of the interview process and to ensure consistency among all the interviews (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). I used an interview protocol to keep the interviews as succinct as possible, guide the interview process, and

maintain consistency throughout all the interviews (see Appendix A). An interview protocol is a way to ensure consistency in the interview process (Yin, 2018).

Participants

The eligibility criteria for participants must be in perfect alignment with the purpose of the study as well as the research question (Lewis, 2015; Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2018). The overarching research question for this study was: What communication strategies do some frontline managers in the banking industry use to motivate virtual team members? The eligibility criteria for participants were that they must have (a) been a frontline manager in the banking industry with a minimum of 2 years of experience, (b) been a leader of a virtual team, and (c) previously implemented communication strategies to motivate virtual team members. Jha, Balaji, Yavas, and Babakus (2017) noted that a frontline banking manager coaches, trains, and leads an employee group. A virtual team leader manages a group of employees who work remotely (Hoegl & Muethel, 2016; Iorio & Taylor, 2015; Morgan, Paucar-Caceres, & Wright, 2014). Motivation from frontline managers significantly impacts the communication level with virtual team members (Killingsworth, Xue, & Liu, 2016). When leading a virtual team, it is important to understand how both the frontline manager feels and how the virtual employee receives the communication (Chang et al., 2014).

Using publicly available Auriemma Consultant Group data is an excellent strategy to identify potential companies to recruit participants and obtain contact information of company leaders (Moher & Joo-Hyun, 2014). Auriemma Consultant Group is a

consortium of major financial institutions (Gordon et al., 2016; Moher & Joo-Hyun, 2014). I identified five companies in the banking industry in Michigan that employ virtual workers using the Auriemma Consulting Group data. Contacting a company representative in person is an excellent means to gain a rapport with the company officials who hold the authority to permit employees to participate in a study (Gandy, 2015; Russell et al., 2016).

Case study researchers increase the probability of locating willing participants by meeting potential participants or employers of members of the target population in person (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015; Schulz & Newig, 2015). Burns and Ulrich (2016) discussed meeting the supervisory management staff of potential participants to gain initial permission. I personally met the department leaders in the five banking companies who supervise frontline managers to obtain permission to meet with frontline managers.

Company leaders possess unique insight as decision makers and strategy implementers in their companies (Burns & Ulrich, 2016; Hatton, Kolk, Eikelenboom, & Beaumont, 2017). I sought the recommendations from the department managers regarding which frontline banking managers met the eligibility requirements for this study. Building a working relationship occurs through personal contact and interaction with the participants (Delello & McWhorter, 2015; Du, Jordan, & Funk, 2015; Gentles et al., 2015). I personally met with the referred frontline managers to assess each manager regarding meeting the eligibility requirements to participate in this study. I established a

working relationship with the participants through a personal meeting accompanied by follow-up phone calls and e-mails to discuss and clarify the purpose and value of the study.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

There are three major research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Cohanier, 2014; Kruth, 2015). Marshall and Rossman (2016) noted that qualitative researchers use open-ended questions to explore a phenomenon in a natural setting. Qualitative researchers seek to gain insight into a phenomenon through open discourse, in-depth investigation, and exploratory discovery (Kruth, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The qualitative method was most suitable for this research study because exploring communication strategies implemented by frontline banking managers requires open discourse using open-ended interview questions, in-depth inquiry, and exploratory discovery. Exploring the experiences and reflections of participants requires open dialogue (Bristowe, Selman, & Murtagh, 2015; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015). Gathering rich data, information, and facts from participants occurs through semistructured interviews (Kadowaki, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015; Šulentić, Žnidar, & Pavičić, 2017). To answer the research question, I conducted semistructured interviews using open dialogue to gather rich data from participants. Because fulfilling the purpose of this study required exploring strategies used by participants, the qualitative method was the optimal choice.

Quantitative researchers use statistical analysis of numeric data to test hypotheses regarding relationships among and between variables (Trafimow, 2014). A researcher using the quantitative approach focuses on questions regarding how often or how many occurrences exist within a phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015; Trafimow, 2014). Rejection of or failing to reject a null hypothesis remains the primary focus of the quantitative researcher (Barczak, 2015). I rejected the quantitative method because statistically analyzing numeric data would fail to answer the research question. The quantitative method was not appropriate because I was not testing relationships among variables, seeking information on how often or how many occurrences exist within a phenomenon, or collecting data for testing null hypotheses regarding rejection or failure to reject.

Mixed-method researchers combine the qualitative approach with the quantitative method to examine and explore a phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Ramnarine-Singh, 2014; Stockman, 2015). Researchers using the mixed-method approach couple open dialogue with participants with mathematical data collection and analysis (Stockman, 2015; Yin, 2018). Combining a qualitative method with a quantitative research approach and collecting numeric data for statistical analysis would not result in additional data relevant to the communication strategies frontline banking managers use to motivate virtual team members; therefore, the mixed-method approach was not suitable for this research study.

Research Design

I considered four designs: case study, phenomenology, ethnography, and narrative inquiry. Phenomenological researchers use the lived experiences of participants as data (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological researchers conduct extensive and lengthy interviews to understand the real life meaning of a phenomenon (Sohn, Greenberg, Thomas, & Pollio, 2017). The participants provide vivid details in a phenomenological study that are actual accounts and cannot be mimicked data; these accounts are distinct and credible to the participant (Sohn et al., 2017). A phenomenological design was not appropriate because I explored communication strategies that frontline banking managers used to motivate virtual workers, not the banking managers' lived experiences regarding motivating employees.

Ethnographers conduct culturally based research through immersing themselves in the culture under study (Lindsay & Schwind, 2016). A business researcher who uses an ethnographic design seeks to understand how organizational culture affects a phenomenon or problem (Lester & Gabriel, 2015). Ethnographers study the cultural aspects of specific communities or people groups (Boddy, 2016). An ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study because I explored communication strategies banking managers used to motivate virtual workers, not the cultural aspects of banking leaders or banking organizations.

Narrative inquirers research through themes from participant stories after initial analysis (Boddy, 2016). Researchers conducting a narrative inquiry rely on the life stories

of participants for data, regardless of the variance between participant perception and verifiable fact (Lindsay & Schwind, 2016). Researchers using life stories as data gain insight through the personal knowledge and perceptions of participants (Wang & Geale, 2015). A narrative design was not appropriate for this study because using the life stories of participants would result in a failure to answer the research question.

Case study researchers collect rich data regarding a phenomenon in a contextual setting through participant interviews (Yin, 2018). Lewis (2015) noted that researchers using a case study design seek the deeper meaning of a phenomenon through multiple sources of evidence and avoid manipulation of data. Researchers conducting a case study have little to no control over the phenomenon (Yin, 2018). A case study design was appropriate for this study because I explored a phenomenon in a contextual setting of which I have no control over. I collected rich data through semistructured interviews and a review of relevant company documents. I used a case study design to explore a phenomenon within a specified setting and to analyze and interpret the data without manipulation.

Data Saturation

Qualitative case study researchers must attain data saturation (Boddy, 2016; Elo et al., 2014). Data saturation occurs when the researcher finds no new data, information, patterns, or themes resulting from additional data collection efforts (Ando, Cousins, & Young, 2014). Upon obtaining data saturation, additional interpretation and coding of data is no longer possible (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). Researchers failing to obtain data

saturation cause a negative effect on the credibility, dependability, and quality of the research findings (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013).

I collected data until no new information, themes, patterns, or data emerged and until additional coding was no longer feasible. To attain data saturation, I conducted face-to-face interviews with participants, asked in-depth and probing questions, engaged the participants in follow up questions, and used member checking to verify a summary of the interview transcript and collected additional information. Qualitative researchers use member checking to attain data saturation through allowing participants the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the summary of the interview responses and to glean additional insight into the research phenomena from participants (Bodaghi, Cheong, & Zainab, 2016). I continued to seek out new information, themes, and patterns until exhausting all means to collect additional data and further efforts resulted in redundant data. I extensively reviewed company documents regarding communication strategies used to motivate virtual team members to verify the interview data and enhance data saturation.

Population and Sampling

Researchers use purposeful sampling to provide rich data for exploration (Palinkas et al., 2015). I used purposeful sampling in this qualitative case study. Researchers use purposeful sampling to narrow the targeted population to a manageable sample population (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). Robinson (2014) noted that researchers engage in purposeful sampling when the participants must meet specific eligibility criteria. The participants must meet specific eligibility criteria to participate in

this study; therefore, purposeful sampling was appropriate. The researcher must align eligibility criteria for participants with the study's overarching research question (Lewis, 2015; Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2018). In alignment with the overarching research question for this study, the eligibility criteria for participants are (a) must be a frontline manager in the banking industry with a minimum of 2 years of experience, (b) be a leader of a virtual team, and (c) previously implemented communication strategies to motivate virtual team members. I interviewed frontline banking managers in Michigan who have direct report employees who work remotely.

The sample size consisted of five frontline banking managers who successfully met the eligibility criteria. Referring to the participants who provide the data for collection is called the sample size (Fugard & Potts, 2015). The number of participants within the qualitative case study is not as important as the integrity of the data (Colombo, Froning, Garcia, & Vandelli, 2016). Using a qualitative case study, Shahid (2017) explored strategies to reduce employee turnover using a sample size of five banking managers from three financial institutions. Guerra-Brown (2017) conducted a qualitative case study to explore strategies to increase productivity in virtual teams, using a sample size of five participants. Freeman (2017) explored the strategies leaders use to create success in virtual teams, using a sample size of seven participants. Because my research was similar in topic, method, and design to Shadid, Guerra-Brown, and Freeman, five participants was an appropriate sample size.

A neutral interview setting is an important aspect of conducting qualitative research (Robinson, 2014). Prior to the interview, the researcher and participant should establish communications and discuss a setting for the interview (Miller, 2017). The researcher and the participants should mutually agree to meet at a location that is conducive for a private interview to occur without bias, distractions, or interruptions (Blackwell et al., 2016). The interviews took place in the private meeting room of a local public library to provide a location that was neutral to both parties, remove the distractions of in-office interviews, and reduce the chances of disruptions.

Within a qualitative case study, data saturation is a must (Yin, 2018). Data saturation occurs when acquiring additional information produces no new information, themes, or patterns (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Once the researcher attained data saturation, additional data coding and interpretation was no longer possible or needed. A qualitative case study researcher must attain data saturation within their study (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Gibbins, Bhatia, Forbes, & Reid, 2014; Morse, 2015). Attaining data saturation occurs when no new data is available and current outcome becomes repetitive (Colombo et al., 2016). Not achieving data saturation may have a negative effect on credibility, reliability and quality of the research (Colombo et al., 2016).

I collected data until no new themes, patterns, or data emerged to attain data saturation. Engaging in face-to-face interviews with participants, asking probing and in-depth questions, and engaging participants in member checking helped in attaining data saturation. During the interviews, I engaged participants with follow up questions. I

engaged the participants in member checking sessions to validate information from the interviews. I transcribed the audio recording of the interviews, created a 1-2 page summary of each of the transcripts, and met with the participants in a 30-minute member-checking session for them to validate my interpretation of their interview responses. I revised the summary as needed, and asked the participants if they had more information to offer. Harvey (2015) mentioned that member checking is a quality control process that researchers use to improve the dependability, credibility, and confirmability of the data and the findings of the study.

Ethical Research

Ethical researchers obtain informed consent from the participants prior to any data collection procedure involving human subjects (Artal & Rubenfeld, 2017; Oliver & Barr, 2014). An informed consent form should include the purpose of the research, the potential benefits, as well as any risks, and the means by which a participant can withdraw from the research study (Lika, Brenda, Karla, Michael, & Neenah, 2017). After obtaining Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to collect data, I began the data collection process. I met in-person with the participants, explained the potential benefits and the risks of participating in the study, presented the informed consent form to each participant, and obtained a signed informed consent form from each participant prior to starting the interview. The Walden University IRB approval number for this research study was 02-20-19-0449738.

An essential element of maintaining ethical research is for the researcher to convey to the participants their right to withdraw from the research at any time (Gupta, 2013). The informed consent form should denote that participation in the study is voluntary (Mouton, Malan, Kimppa, & Venter, 2015). I included within the informed consent that participation is voluntary, that participants may withdraw from the study at any time, before, during, or after the interviews. Fiske and Hauser (2014) found that voluntary participants provide more value, insight, and in-depth knowledge to the researcher than paid participants. I engaged voluntary participants who met the eligibility criteria. I provided participants with a copy of the published study, but no other compensation or incentives apply.

Stanley, Ellis, and Mann (2014) described the Belmont Report as the *moral principles* of research. As a researcher, I abided by these principles to ensure ethical research. Confidentiality is important to participants who participate in the study (Artal & Rubenfeld, 2017; Lancaster, 2017). Coding of participants' names as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 occurred to remove personal identifiers from the study. I coded the employing companies of the participants as B1, B2, B3, B4, and B5 to avoid publishing any organizational names within the study.

Maintaining proper restricted access to data is important to maintain confidentiality of participants as well as the collected data (Mouton et al., 2015). I secured the paper notes and written documents resulting from the study in a locked file in my home office to which I am the only one who has access. Digital files and recordings

remain secure on a password protected flash drive. I have securely stored all data, notes, files, transcriptions, and records for 5 years. After 5 years, I will shred all paper records and delete all digital records.

Data Collection Instruments

Researchers conducting a qualitative study are the primary data collection instruments (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Yin, 2018). For this qualitative case study research, I was the primary data collection instrument. Using face-to-face, semistructured interviews is a primary data collection instrument used by researchers conducting a qualitative method study (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013). Researchers use face-to-face, semistructured interviews to engage the participants in open dialogue to gain rich insight into the phenomenon under study (Dong et al., 2016). I used face-to-face, semistructured interviews as a primary data collection instrument.

Researchers conducting a case study gather data using multiple data collection instruments (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Yin, 2018). Reviewing relevant company documents is a means for researchers to collect supporting data to engage in methodological triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014). I collected data through reviewing relevant company documents such as vision and mission statements to understand what foundation frontline managers used to base their communication strategies. Yin (2018) mentioned the importance of using additional sources, including company documents to avoid bias. Laursen (2013) mentioned that

qualitative case study data is strengthened with support from additional company documents.

Researchers engaging participants in semistructured interviews use an interview protocol to guide the interview process, to maintain consistency, and ensure equal treatment of all participants (Dong et al., 2016; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). An interview protocol is a way to ensure consistency within the interview process (Yin, 2018). I used an interview protocol to guide the interview process and maintain consistency before, during, and after the interview (see Appendix B).

Reviewing company documents is essential to my understanding of communication and motivation strategies of virtual workers. I obtained permission from the leaders of the five banking organizations to review and collect data from their employees as well as the companies' data. I reviewed the documents to engage in methodological triangulation and crosscheck the interview data.

Researchers strive for dependability, credibility, and confirmability of the data and the findings using effective and accurate data collection instruments (Yin, 2018). Member checking is a technique used by researchers to enhance the dependability, credibility, and confirmability of the data and the findings (Anney, 2014; Chamberlin, 2015; Nwankwo, 2015). I engaged the participants in member checking to verify the accuracy of the interpreted summary of their interview responses. During member checking sessions, participants verified, confirmed, edited, and added to the interpreted summary to improve the dependability and credibility of the interview data.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers use face-to-face, semistructured interviews as a primary data collection technique (Cridland, Jones, Caputi, & Magee, 2015; Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013; Marshall et al., 2013). Gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon is the goal of the researcher using semistructured interviews as a data collection technique (Cridland et al., 2015; Marshall et al., 2013). Researchers often conduct a pilot study when the need exist to conduct a preliminary study for a larger study to follow (Ingham-Broomfield, 2015). Because of the limited scope of this case study, no need existed to conduct a preliminary pilot study. I used face-to-face, semistructured interviews as the primary data collection technique. I reviewed organizational documents to crosscheck the credibility of the interview data. I followed the interview protocol as shown in Appendix A.

Interview Preparation

Prior to the interview, I reached out to the supervisors of the frontline managers and gained their approval to contact the frontline managers. During this time, I ensured that each potential participant met the eligibility criteria for the study. After gaining approval from the companies and informed consent from the participants, I suggested that the interviews take place in the private meeting room of a local public library to provide a location that is neutral to both parties, remove the distractions of in-office interviews, and reduce the chances of disruptions.

The Interview

At the beginning of the interview, I greeted the participant and thanked them for taking the time to meet with me. I explained to them my role as the researcher and explained the purpose of the study and any additional benefits from the study. Researcher should ensure the participants are fully aware of the implications of participation and their rights (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). The participant signed an informed consent form after I explained the form and provided advice regarding the full interview process and their right to withdraw at any time. Researchers should clearly state in the informed consent form that the participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without obligation (Blackwood et al., 2015). I advised the participants of the need to record the interview for transcription purposes. I used my interpreted summary of the transcript during member checking to ensure accuracy in the data. I informed the participants of the use of code names to protect their confidentiality.

After the interview, I thanked the participant for their time. I advised that I will reach out to them again for a 30-45-minute member checking session. This session allowed the participants to review my interpretation of their interview responses to ensure accuracy of the data recorded.

Document Review

For document review, I used document browsing of company procedure manuals and current processes as a technique using document clustering. I reviewed organizational documents relevant to the communication strategies the frontline banking

leaders use to motivate virtual teams members. Researchers use document browsing to narrow down the information to preselected documents (Cutting, Karger, Pedersen, & Tukey, 2017). Document clustering involves clustering information together with other like documents to understand the amount of data that is available (Hu, Milios, & Blustein, 2016). I used this document data to crosscheck the credibility and dependability of the interview data.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Data Collection Techniques

Researchers conduct semistructured interviews to gather data through an open dialogue and in-depth conversation with the participant (Geurin, 2017). Uncovering of additional information could occur using semistructured interviews (Geurin, 2017). Semistructured interviewing is an excellent means for researchers to collect rich data from participants (Dong et al., 2016). Communication strategy implementation including e-mail, Internet, and other sources is what helps to engage remote workers (Holtzhausen, 2016).

Disadvantages exist regarding conducting semistructured interviews. Participants may show some bias when responding to questions, unknown biases (Adams, 2015). Yin (2018) noted that personal biases of the participants might reduce the credibility of the data. The same participants may feel as if their answers are not important and may not put forth a real effort because they are not receiving compensation (Adams, 2015). Participants may have preexisting knowledge of topics relative to the study that may influence their answers (Yin, 2018).

Document reviews have advantages and disadvantages (Yin, 2016). An advantage to a document review may provide additional insight into a company and its inner workings (Krall, Wamboldt, & Lohse, 2014). A disadvantage of a document review is that the researcher may find some information is inaccessible, out-of-date, or incomplete (Krall et al., 2014). An additional disadvantage is the amount of time needed to conduct a thorough review of the documents (Zhang, Ni, & Xu, 2014). During a document review, the researcher can triangulate and substantiate interview data (Krall et al., 2014).

Member Checking

Member checking is a process researchers use to engage participants in a follow-up meeting to validate their interview responses (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I engaged participants in 30-45 minute member checking sessions after compiling all information from the semistructured interviews. I transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews, developed a 1-2 page summary of the interview transcripts, met once again with the participants, and asked them to verify that I accurately interpreted their interview responses. Researchers use member checking to enhance the dependability of the information (Hazavehei, Moonaghi, Moeini, Moghimbeigi, & Emadzadeh, 2015). At this additional meeting, participants reviewed the summary and added additional information.

Data Organization Technique

Data organization is crucial to the success of this study. Organizing the information and safekeeping the information is as important as collecting the data itself. Yin (2018) explored different research methods and found that research from a case study

must be well organized, examined, and interpreted based on the actual answers given. For ease of use and retrieval, data and supporting documents will be stored on a USB drive and uploaded to a password-protected personal cloud with individual access. The documents to be stored include (a) company permission letter, (b) informed consent letter, (c) interview transcripts, (d) handwritten transcription of the interviews, (e) recordings of interviews and (f) company documentation.

Organization of files occurs within password-protected Microsoft Word and Excel and in NVivo 12. Each participant will have his or her own spreadsheet for easy sorting and retrieval of information. Researchers should use code names for participant to avoid a breach of confidentiality (Morse & Coulehan, 2015). I used code names to protect the confidentiality of the participants. In each file, I had notes from the interview, additional information about the participant, and an arrangement of their responses by themes. Cope (2014) noted the importance of researchers maintain a reflective journal to record notes during and after the interviews. I maintained a reflective journal to record notes during and after the interviews. I used Microsoft Word and Excel to store data, in the same password protected document.

Researchers should use well-organized material to improve their ability to retrieve and analyze data in a timely fashion (Basurto & Speer, 2012). I have securely stored the data and will do so for 5 years in a fireproof safe in my home office, to which I am the only person with access to the research records. At the end of the 5 years, I will shred the physical data and destroy the USB drive.

Data Analysis

I described the data and outcomes using Yin's (2018) five-step data analysis. I compiled, disassembled, reassembled, interpreted, and then concluded the data. Yin described this method as cohesive in gaining data from a study for outcomes. As managers interact with employees, attitudes and satisfaction from virtual workers by the frontline staff explain outcomes of interactions. The researcher should analyze the data properly to ensure the answers to the research questions are correct (Sibbald, MacGregor, Surmacz, & Wathen, 2015). Researchers should strive for a well-organized, data analysis process to ensure accuracy of their data interpretations (Basurto & Speer, 2012).

Case study researchers must collect data from multiple sources to engage in methodological triangulation (Yin, 2018). Methodological triangulation is a process researchers use to crosscheck the validity and trustworthiness of one set of data with a second set of data (Awad, 2014; Hazavehei et al., 2015). I used methodological triangulation during the data analysis process to crosscheck the credibility and dependability of the interview data with organizational document data.

Compiling Data

Researchers compile all collected data in an organized manner to begin data analysis (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenson, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Cope, 2014; Yin, 2018). Data compilation will consist of organizing and categorizing the interview data and the documentation data. I reviewed the company's data that they have on file referencing communication strategies from previous implementations by their frontline

management staff. I compiled the data in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and in NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software. After data compilation, I began to disassemble the data.

Disassembling Data

To disassemble data, researchers use a coding process (Flick, 2014). During qualitative research, themes emerge during the interview data analysis process (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). I disassembled the data using NVivo 12 software to break the data into fragments to begin inserting codes and labels. Oliveira, Bitencourt, dos Santos, and Teixeira (2016) noted that coding and labeling of data fragments is a vital step in qualitative data analysis. Once coding of the fragmented, disassembled data occurs, I began to reassemble the data.

Reassembling Data

To reassemble data, I used data clustering. Data clustering occurs when the researcher groups themes and patterns (Yin, 2018). I used these groupings to understand how participants responded to each interview question. As I reassemble data, I categorized data to find additional themes that may need clarity. Researchers should organize and categorize data to ensure the emergence of all relevant themes (Houghton, Murphy, Shaw, & Casey, 2015). I used the same categories to compare to the company documents to the interview data using methodological triangulation.

Interpreting Data

To interpret data, I used prior literature to reassess common themes and strengthen the results. The amount of data for analysis may be large and full of wording in this qualitative study; however, interpretation of data will be the researcher's responsibility (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2016). I interpreted my study's data using NVivo11 to deduct reasoning to the common themes from the participants' responses. I used scholarly studies to enhance my results. During data interpretation, I remained neutral and objective, allowing the key themes to emerge from the participants' responses and the organizational documents.

Software Plan

Researchers use NVivo 12 software to organize the data into different themes called nodes (Atkins, Woods, Macklin, Paulus, & Atkins, 2016). I used NVivo 12 software to parse out themes and patterns from the interview transcripts. From these themes, I had the ability to recognize if the similarities and differences in the participant's responses and ascertain when I reach data saturation. I used Microsoft Word and Excel to organize the interpreted data. Oliveira et al. (2016) noted that researchers minimize bias and subjectivity by using qualitative data analysis software. I used NVivo 12 to remain neutral and objective during the data analysis phase, and improve the credibility, confirmability, and dependability of the findings.

Key Themes

Researchers should use their findings to confirm or refute the finding of previous researchers (Anney, 2014). I used key themes that emerge from the analyzed data to confirm or refute the findings of previously published studies regarding communication and motivation strategies leaders used to motivate virtual team members. The key themes emerged from the participants' responses and confirmatory organizational documents. I exposed the alignment of the key themes with Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory.

Reliability and Validity

Qualitative researchers strive to ensure credibility, confirmability, and transferability of the findings instead of seeking validity (Rodham, Fox, & Doran, 2015). Qualitative researchers refer to reliability as dependability, seeking consistency and stability in the data collection process (Sheikhi, Fallahi-Khoshnab, Mohammadi, & Oskouie, 2016). The goal of a qualitative researcher is to produce a study with dependability and trustworthiness (Rushing & Powell, 2014).

Dependability

Qualitative researchers ensure dependability through maintaining consistency throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes (Harvey, 2015). I used strategy to reference and ensure dependability within my study. Researchers use methodological triangulation and member checking to enhance dependability (Hazavehei et al., 2015; Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014; Yin, 2018).

Dependability in a qualitative study includes the participants' awareness of any changes

with the research or within the process that many occur creating updates for the participant (Hills, 2015).

Evaluation of the information presented in the qualitative study, enables the researcher to ensure dependability and relevance of the data (Watson, 2014). I used methodological triangulation and member checking to ensure dependability. Member checking occurs by providing participants an interpreted summary of the interview transcript in a follow-up meeting for verification of the interview data (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Morse, 2015). During the member checking sessions, I sought additional information from the participants. I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to ensure consistency throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process.

Credibility

Researchers ensure credibility by objective and accurate interpretation of the participants' responses to the interview questions (Yin, 2018). Additionally, credibility refers to trust between the researcher and the participant (Cope, 2014). Fujiura (2015) discussed that communication effectiveness between the researcher and the participants is an essential element of credibility. To ensure credibility, and maintain accuracy and trustworthiness in the findings, researchers use methodological triangulation and member checking (Awad, 2014; Debono et al., 2017). I used methodological data triangulation, collecting company records data to corroborate the truthfulness of the participants' responses. I engaged in member checking to ensure the quality of the data collected, gained additional insight, and allowed the participants to confirm the accuracy of my

interpretation of their responses. Researchers establish credibility of the results through the collection of rich data and accurate interpretation of the data (Aldrich, Dietz, Clark, & Hamilton, 2015).

Confirmability

Researchers establish trust with participants by increasing confidence (Civera, Casalegno, Mosca, & Maple, 2018). Connelly (2016) noted that researcher attain confirmability when the outcomes become consistent. I ensured confirmability within the study by comparing participants' responses and dissecting for consistency. Consistent responses lead to other researchers being in agreement with the current findings (Childers, 2014). Fusch and Ness (2015) discussed using member checking to ensure confirmability. I ensured confirmability by using member checking after completing all interviews.

Transferability

Transferability of the findings occurs when a future researcher replicates the study in another setting and arrives at the same findings (Patton, 2016; Yin, 2018). Researchers can improve the opportunity for future researchers to transfer the findings through meticulously documenting each step of the study, adhering to strict research protocols, and reaching data saturation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Yin, 2018). Yilmaz (2013) discussed that a researcher conducting a qualitative case study improves the opportunity for transferring the finding through exhaustive and complete data collection. Transferability is a characteristic that defines a trustworthy study (Patton, 2016; Ravitch

& Carl, 2016). I meticulously documented the research procedures, adhered to an interview protocol, maintained ethical standards, engaged in methodological triangulation, and reached data saturation to provide future researchers the opportunity to transfer credible, dependable findings.

Data Saturation

A researcher conducting a qualitative case study must collect all the data relevant to the case to attain data saturation (Marshall et al., 2013; Nelson, 2016). Once no new information is available and no new patterns or themes emerge from further analysis, data saturation occurs (Marshall et al., 2013). Data saturation occurs when additional interpretation and coding of data is no longer possible (Fusch & Ness, 2015). A study whose researcher fails to obtain data saturation negatively effects other areas of their study including credibility, dependability, and quality of the findings (Cope, 2014; Tran, Porcher, Ravaud, & Falissard, 2016).

I collected data until no new information, themes, patterns, or data emerged and until additional coding was no longer feasible. To attain data saturation, I conducted face-to-face interviews with participants, ask in-depth and probing questions, engaged the participants in follow up questions, and used member checking to verify a summary of the interview transcript and collect additional information. Qualitative researchers use member checking to attain data saturation through allowing participants the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the summary of the interview responses and to glean additional insight into the research phenomena from participants (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, &

Walter, 2016; Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'Brien, & Rees, 2016). I continued to seek out new information, themes, and patterns until exhausting all means to collect additional data and further efforts result in redundant data. I extensively reviewed company documents regarding communication strategies used to motivate virtual team members to verify the interview data and enhance data saturation.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I explained my role as the researcher, the process of recruiting eligible frontline banking managers as participants within this study, and the justification for using a qualitative method with a case study design. I explained the process that participants went through as well as the interview technique that ensued for participants. I also explained the member checking process that took place after the interviews were complete. In Section 3, I presented the findings of the research, discussed the applications for the business improvement, and the implications for social change. I included reflections from my research and provided a concluding statement to finalize Section 3.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore communication strategies some frontline managers in the banking industry use to motivate virtual team members. I used Vroom's (1964) motivation expectancy theory as the conceptual framework for this study. I collected data from face-to-face interviews with frontline banking managers and company documentation from banking institutions in Michigan. I engaged the participants in member checking to improve the dependability of the data and the trustworthiness of the findings. The findings indicated that frontline managers implemented successful communication and motivation strategies for their virtual employees. Frontline banking managers serving as participants in the study implemented a clarification strategy, a technology strategy, and a motivation strategy to motivate virtual team members. Banking managers leading virtual teams might use the findings to this study to improve the clarity of their communications with team members, make effective use of technology in their communication strategy, and motivate team members through consistent messaging, offering adequate rewards, and facilitating peer competition among team members.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was: What communication strategies do some frontline managers in the banking industry use to motivate virtual team members? Virtual employees and their managers must have effective communication strategies to keep their

lines of communication open and fluid. Virtual employees work from another location without their teammates around, which may lead to a feeling of isolation. Effective motivation strategies are important for continual reassurance to the employees that they are an important asset to the team and organization.

I developed seven interview questions to use during five face-to-face, semistructured interviews to gain a more in-depth understanding of the actual strategies frontline banking managers have implemented with their virtual workers. I collected data from company documentation and face-to-face interviews with five participants from five banking institutions located in Michigan. I created summary of the interview transcripts, met once again with the participants for member checking, and obtained their validation of my interpretation of their interview responses. I collected data until no new themes or patterns emerged to ensure data saturation.

For purposes of confidentiality, I used P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 to identify participants and used B1, B2, B3, B4, and B5 to identify the participants' respective businesses. I reviewed information and collected documents from company websites. To sort, code, and analyze the data, I used NVivo 12 software. During the process, three themes emerged from the research: (a) clarification strategy, (b) technology strategy, and (c) motivation strategy. Figure 1 is a mind map of the key strategies frontline managers in the banking industry use to motivate virtual workers.

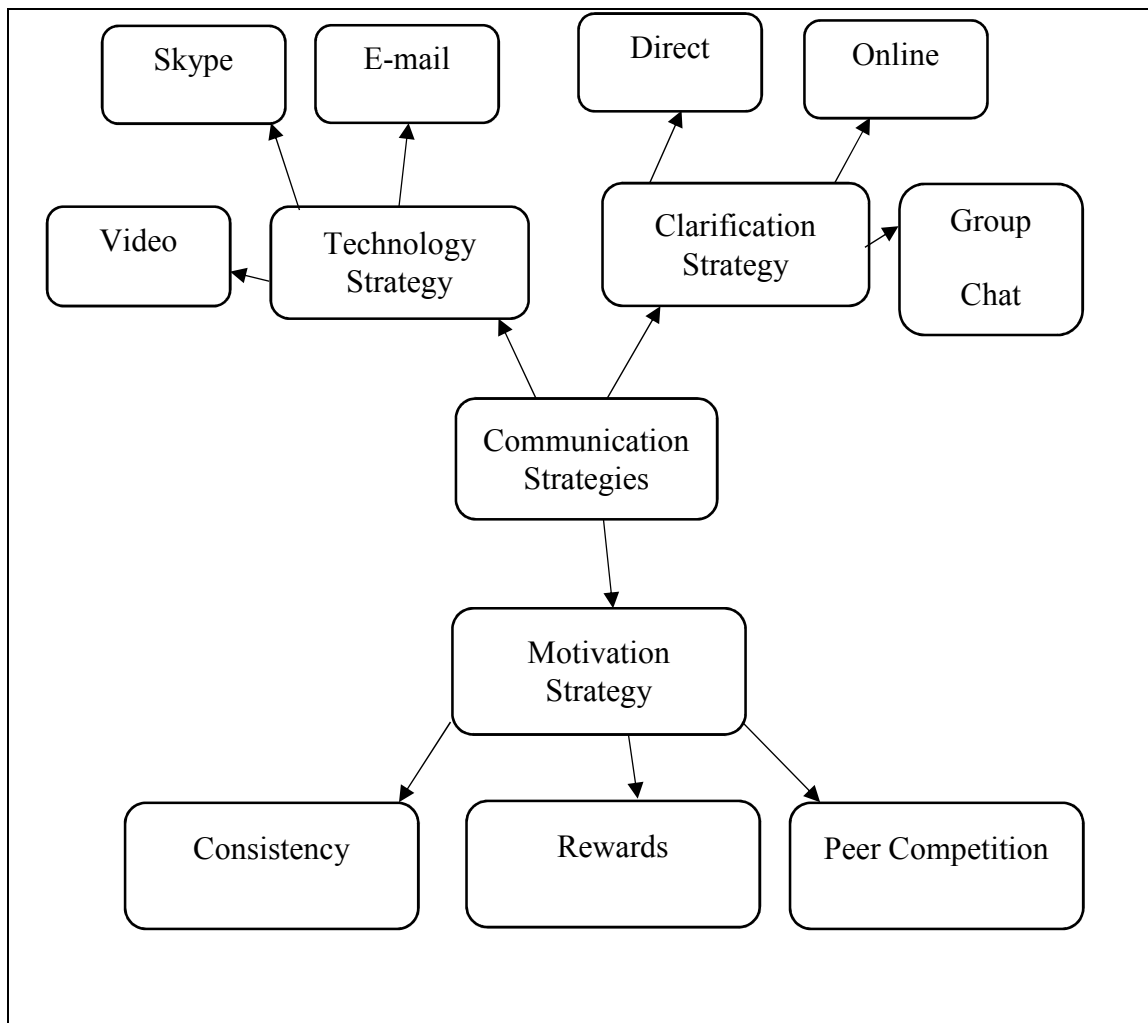


Figure 1. Mind map of key strategies.

Emergent Theme 1: Clarification Strategy

All participants conveyed that the use of a clarification strategy was essential to motivate virtual team members. This finding confirms the research of Jalaludin and Siti-Nabiha (2018) who noted that managers improve employee motivation and satisfaction by using clear communications when interacting with workers. Table 1 displays the key

responses from the interview participants and the associated occurrence of each response regarding the clarification strategy.

Table 1

Participants' Responses for Clarification Strategy

Key responses	Participants	Frequency of occurrence
Direct message	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	33
Online meeting	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	28
Group chat	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	22

For successful clarity among team members, P1, P3, and P4 felt as if visual stimulation is important for meetings with their remote employees to communicate in an effective manner. P3 stated, "Bringing them in with video is a good way for me to see their facial expressions and body language, which improves my ability to communicate with them." P2 and P5 remarked that verbal expression was satisfactory, and did not tout the value of using video within the team meetings. All participants expressed the importance of documenting telephone and Skype (with and without video) calls to ensure a paper trail existed in the event of a misunderstanding.

All participants felt that the meetings must be setup during times conducive to most of the staff's availability, paying close attention to the schedules of remote employees. With the team members working remotely, there is a need to keep the employees engaged in activities occurring within the office environment. All participants noted that the meetings were useful for team building and as a time for the team members to express their concerns or obtain clarity regarding their work assignments. P1 stated,

Not having remote workers involved in meetings leads to additional rework for frontline managers for any information shared during the meeting. The information is crucial to all involved, and does not disseminate as well if everyone is not involved. Remote workers feel disconnected if unable to participate in team meetings, having to have a one-on-one with their manager to catch up on given information.

I used information from B1's website to verify P1's statements regarding the use of clear communication. B1's company website contained the following statements:

We as a company understand the importance of communicating both at work and home, when away from either location. We have launched a series of articles to address these issues and address communicating with the most recent technologies we have available to us. As a company, we moved forward with implementing various options for our employees.

P2 stated, "Communication continues to be important to not have disengaged employees." All participants reported that remote workers needed easy access to their managers. The participants used a variety of communication modes to interact with their virtual teams members such as e-mail, telephone, instant messaging, video conferencing, and voice-over-Internet protocol. A key element of the participants' clarification strategy was to ensure team members could gain access to other team members as well as the manager. The participants understood that virtual team members needed a means to communicate with the home office regardless of their location or time of day. P5 stated,

Communication channels in today's environment are versatile and allow employees to work from various locations, allowing them to be mobile and work from virtually anywhere. They may have a home office they typically work at on a regular basis; however, if something comes up and it is necessary for them to work from another location, our ability to stay in contact assists us.

All the participants preferred to direct message virtual team members through e-mail. P1 and P2 preferred to use e-mail as a summation tool for communication from Skype conversations to document the key points addressed in meetings. P3, P4, and P5 preferred e-mail as opposed to using Skype and group chats as their primary methods for communicating with virtual team members. P1 and P5 expressed that group chats were useful and necessary, yet noted the challenge of scheduling full team meetings.

All participants noted that e-mail was the communication mode used to notify virtual team members of the daily issues that needed addressing. As frontline managers, all participants felt they had the due diligence to inform their employees immediately of an impending change in policy or procedure. P3 and P4 commented that they make extensive use of follow-up e-mails to ensure the remote workers understood their message. P5 stated, "E-mail is a form of communication in which we are guaranteed to retain a copy. This ensures that we, both manager and employee, do not miss any information, even after we have discussed the matter in a group setting or meeting."

According to all participants, communicating important information remained the responsibility of the frontline manager. B3's procedure included content regarding

releasing information to employees both by verbal and written documentation. I used information from B3's procedure manual to verify P3's statement regarding the use of clear communication. B3's manual contained the following statements:

Managers will ensure compliance with all rules and regulations set forth. It is the responsibility of the employee's direct manager to relay all information in both verbal and written format, when necessary. Information deemed confidential in nature, must be followed by a direct e-mail to all remote working employees with a read receipt attached for confirmation. This confirmation will be held electronically in the employee's file and may be requested, if needed.

Clarification among frontline banking managers and virtual employees is important to the success and engagement of these employees. Wright (2016) posited that the manager's ability to communicate clearly with employees is an essential element of employee motivation. The findings from this study indicated that the more interaction the frontline banking manager has with the remote employees, the higher the level of motivation among virtual team members. This finding confirms Muszyńska's (2018) research in that the manager's use of a clear communication strategy is an effective means to improve the motivation level of project team members.

This finding aligns with Vroom's (1964) expectancy motivation theory because employee motivation increases when managers engage employees in strong relationships and use clear communications to convey the expectations regarding employee performance. Managers motivate employees with positive interactions, including the

fulfillment of promised intrinsic rewards (Vroom, 1964). All participants in this study noted that when employees feel valued, they perform at higher levels and possess more trust for their manager. Clarifying information and engaging employees is a means for frontline banking managers to allow the employee-manager relationship to flourish based on expectancy of outcomes from rewards from managers and expected performance from employees.

Emergent Theme 2: Technology Strategy

The second theme that emerged from the analyzed interview and document data was having an effective technology strategy. All participants felt technology played an important role in their communication with virtual employees as well as a means to improve team member motivation. The participants used a technology strategy to engage in interactions, regardless of employees' or manager's locations. This finding confirms Collins's (2019) research in that technology is a foundational element of communication among virtual team leaders and members. Table 2 displays the key responses from the interview participants and the associated occurrence of each response regarding the technology strategy.

Table 2

Participants' Responses for Technology Strategy.

Key responses	Participants	Frequency of occurrence
E-mail	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	50
Skype	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	27
Video	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	17

Virtual employees engaged in communication in different methods with their managers and peers. P1 and P5 felt that e-mail and Skype messaging without video were sufficient for employees and managers to effectively communicate. P1 stated, “Skype communications in my office are used to effectively communicate with employees in a manner conducive to everyone’s work situation.” I used information from B1’s company website to verify P1’s statement. B1’s company website contained the following statements:

We are proud to announce as technology advances, so will our company. We plan to continue to be an industry leader with our technology. It is important that we keep up with our industry partners and lead in technological advances. Your leaders will continue to communicate and introduce new technology to you. You will receive various employee surveys surrounding technology. Please respond accordingly. We value your feedback!

P2, P3, and P4 acknowledged that using Skype was a means to engage in immediate interaction with virtual workers, yet the use of e-mail typically resulted in a delayed response from virtual team members. This finding confirms the research of Deniers (2019) who noted that the use of Skype was an effective means for managers to contact, coach, interact with, and train virtual employees. All participants agreed that e-mail and Skype were efficient means of communicating with their remote workers. A key noted element of both technologies is the retention of information in contrast to an unrecorded telephone call. P5 stated,

The easiest way to connect with employees is to reach out with a quick message to let them know you are thinking about them and aware of their value as an employee. The employees know their worth, so I try to definitely acknowledge their worth at various times.

I used information from B5's procedure manual to verify P5's statement regarding the use of technology. B5's manual contained the following statements:

Management reserves the right to review and discuss your performance with you anytime in your career with us. As we review your performance, we will do so with respect and dignity, including you, the employee, in all decisions. We commit to inclusiveness and communicating timely decisions.

Noting the advancements in technology, P4 and P5 conveyed the preference of using Skype instead of using telephone calls to contact virtual team members. P4 stated, As a manager, we spend most of our days in meetings; picking up the phone to answer a question, or respond to an inquiry from a virtual employee has not always been the best answer to technology. A quick Skype message is more sufficient for communication and a better use of technology.

I used B4's procedure manual to verify the P4' statement regarding the use of technology. B4's employee department manual contained the following statements:

Managers are expected to be attentive to their employees as well as continue to run their business, as needed. There may be times in which a manager may be out of touch for employees; however, all employees will always be available by

Skype. If an employee needs assistance, reach out to your direct manager first, and if no response, please reach out to another manager who looks to be available for an answer to your question or concern.

All participants use video conferencing to communicate with their virtual team members, yet P2 and P5 preferred using Skype without video. Managers use video conferencing through instant messaging services, telephones, or computers to connect with their virtual employee located anywhere in the world (Deniers, 2019). Video conferencing was a means for the virtual employees and frontline managers to communicate, solve problems, and work on any questions that needed resolving. Aritz et al. (2017) discussed trust, professionalism, and collaboration behaviors are all important to the team. All participants used technology to allow virtual team members to be included in dialogue formerly reserved for in-office workers.

Keshvari et al. (2018) posited that managers motivate employees using technology to engage them in virtual learnings and trainings sessions. The use of enhanced technology was a means for the frontline managers to train remote workers in the same manner as they would in-office employees. Vroom (1964) noted in the motivation expectancy theory that employee motivation remains dependent on the leader's ability to meet the expectations of the employee. All participants in this study acknowledged the value of using a technology strategy to communicate with virtual team members, motivate them to perform, and meet their expectations. Vroom noted a key relationship between employee performance and their ability to understand the

expectations of their manager. Kiatkawsin and Han (2017) commented that employees performed at high levels when the leader meets their expectations and delivers the promised rewards. Vroom noted that intrinsic values are important to employees. All participants in this study conveyed that the use of technology was a vital component of their organizational strategy of building trust among virtual teams, improving team member motivation, and increasing team performance.

Emergent Theme 3: Motivation Strategy

The third theme that emerged from the interview data and my review of company documents was a motivation strategy. To implement and maintain their motivation strategy, all participants noted the importance of using consistent messaging, including frequency, tone, and style. P1, P4, and P5 placed significant value on their ability to offer rewards to their virtual team members. P2 and P3 used peer-to-peer competition to increase team motivation. Table 3 displays the key responses from the interview participants and the associated occurrence of each response regarding the motivation strategy.

Table 3

Participants' Responses for Motivation Strategy.

Key responses	Participants	Frequency of occurrence
Consistency	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	32
Rewards	P1, P4, P5	30
Competition	P2, P3	28

Consistency within the teams regarding communication and interaction was a frequent response from the participants. All participants recognized the value of using clear, consistent communications to ensure their virtual team members remained motivated. Consistent communication was a means for the participants to improve the level of trust among team members as well as the team members' trust for their managers. This finding confirms the research of Liu et al. (2015) who noted that employee motivation remains contingent on the level of trust the employee has for the manager.

All participants conveyed that consistency was important, yet used differing methods and tactics to implement this element of their motivation strategy. P1 and P4 noted that consistent coaching during scheduled weekly meetings as an essential part of their motivation strategy. P2 applied consistency to ensure that all employees received the same message each day. P3 and P5 participants felt consistency improved by pairing up virtual workers with in-office employees to ensure everyone, regardless of location received the same message, and understood the message. P3 and P5 also used the pairing-up tactics as a means of employee accountability.

P1, P4, and P5 felt that motivating employees through rewards was a means to increase employee engagement, satisfaction, and performance. P1 commented that offering rewards for exceptional performance was to maintaining high virtual team motivation. P5 placed emphasis on the need to keep virtual team members engaged in the team processes as well as in the entire organization. P5 stated,

As the leaders in this organization, we want to ensure our virtual employees feel the same level of engagement as those who are in the office. We want a flawless experience in the office or at home, the same attention must be placed on all employees as to not have any employee get lost because of to being disengaged.

I used B5's company website to verify the participant's statement regarding engagement.

B5's company website included the following statements:

As a growing, healthy, and thriving bank, we offer employees everything they need to flourish and grow in the world of banking. Employees are our strongest assets so we continue to invest in our people to be the best they can be. Our employees are empowered to make decisions and take charge as necessary.

P2 and P3 conveyed that the use of peer-to-peer competition was an effective way to improve virtual team member motivation. P2 and P3 acknowledged the value of setting team goals, attaching specific reward levels for reaching desired objectives, and delivering the rewards as promised. This finding is consistent with the research of Kohli et al. (2018) in that frontline managers use rewards and competitions to motivate employees. P3 noted that checking the progress of the virtual employees on a daily basis was essential to the team's success. P3 stated,

I reach out to each of my virtual employees in support of their performance each day to show them I am paying attention to what they do each day. I send them a quick message through Skype or e-mail to acknowledge what they have done the prior day.

I used B3's department manual to verify their statements regarding motivation. B3's department manual included the following statements:

Each team shall have at least 25% of their employees working from home on a consistent basis. These employees will participate in competitions hosted by their managers or team leads to assisted with employee engagement. We will take time to review how well each team is performing and adjust a needed.

Bandow and Self (2016) expressed employees value the rewards that meet their expectations. Competition and consistency lead to increased levels of employee motivation, resulting in more rewards for employees (Bandow & Self, 2016). Employees possess expectations of their manager (Vroom, 1964). All participants in this study recognized the need to respect the team members, build a high level of trust, and remain consistent in their messaging. This finding regarding the use of a motivation strategy aligns with Vroom's (1964) motivation expectancy theory in that managers increase employee motivation by recognizing the need to develop a reward structure and then follow through on the distribution of the rewards to employees.

Applications to Professional Practice

Frontline managers of virtual employees within the banking industry use effective communication strategies to motivate their virtual employees (Killingsworth et al., 2016). The findings of this study indicated that frontline banking managers used a variety of communication strategies and tactics to motivate their virtual team members. Frontline banking managers could apply the recommendations from this study to implement

various communication strategies to motivate their virtual employees and improve employee performance. Continued engagement from employees leads to employees' satisfaction of their intrinsic rewards; therefore, exemplifying an increase in their performance as an outcome (Anitha, 2014).

Frontline managers are intentional in their communications with their virtual employees (Adkins & Premeaux, 2014). Frontline banking could apply the findings of this study to implement a clarification strategy to improve the motivation level of virtual workers. Frontline managers should recognize the preferred communication mode of virtual workers to enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance (Basu, 2016). The results of this study indicated effective, clear communication from the managers was important to the success of virtual employees.

Frontline managers participating in this study communicated through Skype, e-mail, and video conferencing with their employees to ensure full engagement and continued motivation. Banking managers leading virtual teams could apply the findings of this study to use a technology strategy for improved team motivation, enhanced team training, and increased socialization among team members. Evidence from the analyzed data of this study and the literature reviewed indicated technology is an essential component of successful virtual team interaction.

Frontline banking managers might apply the findings from this study to increase motivation of their virtual employees through consistent and effective motivation strategies. The findings of this study indicated frontline managers improved virtual team

motivation by using consistent messaging, appropriate rewards, and peer-to-peer competition. Virtual team members typically work in isolation and are in need of frequent interaction with the team leader and other team members to stay motivated and remain productive. Vroom (1964) noted that employee motivation improves when leaders deliver the promised and expected rewards to their subordinates. Banking managers could apply Vroom's expectancy motivation theory to recognize the need to follow through regarding the distribution of all promised and expected rewards to their virtual team members.

Implications for Social Change

Frontline managers using effective communication and motivation strategies to interact with their virtual employees have the potential to affect positive social change. Implications for positive social change exist through banking leaders gaining a deeper understanding of communication strategies, resulting in motivated, engaged virtual team members. The findings of this study indicated that frontline banking managers use effective communication strategies to motivate their remote employees. Motivated employees engage more in community activities, volunteer more time, and contribute more resources to their local society than do unmotivated workers (Krasnopolskaya et al., 2015). Motivated employees experience personal and job satisfaction, remain employed at high rates, and contribute to a reduction in local unemployment rates (Kurland, 2017). Lower local unemployment rates are a predecessor of improved local economic stability and an increased standard of living of local residents. The implications for positive social change include the potential for frontline banking managers to improve job satisfaction

and motivation among virtual team members, resulting in higher employment rates, improved local economic stability, and enhanced rapport and volunteerism within their local communities.

Recommendations for Action

Virtual team members face different challenges than in-office team members. The specific business problem addressed in this study was that some frontline managers in the banking industry lacked communication strategies to motivate virtual team members. The findings of this study indicated that frontline managers used clarification, updated technology resources, and motivation strategies to interact with their virtual team members.

I recommend that frontline banking managers use clarification strategies best suited to each employee or virtual team to improve motivation, which could result in higher employee performance and improved project success rates. The findings of this study indicated that virtual team member motivation increased because of the frontline banking manager using clear communications when engaged with their virtual teams. The frontline manager has the responsibility to understand each employee's preference for interactions (Jalaludin & Siti-Nabiha, 2018). I recommend managers and team members collaborate so that each party recognizes the preferred means of communication.

I recommend frontline banking managers implement the use of a technology strategy to motivate virtual team members. The findings of this study indicated that frontline managers improve virtual team member motivation by using effective

technologies. Technology is a foundational element of effective communication modes between managers and remote workers (Collins, 2019). Technology continues to evolve, resulting in the need for business leaders investing the newest technology to communicate effectively with virtual workers.

Virtual employees have an appreciation for motivation in different manners. I recommend frontline banking managers implement use of a motivation strategy to motivate virtual team members based on what each individual employee needs. Employees may look for rewards to solidify their value to the company while others may simply look for a consistent approach from their manager. As frontline managers learn what each employee requires, the responsibility lies with the manager to implement the correct motivation strategy to keep the employee engaged.

The findings and recommendations of this study are relevant to frontline banking managers, their virtual team members, and the use of effective communication strategies for motivation. I will provide participants with an executive summary of this study. I will seek opportunities to share the findings with frontline banking managers at a seminar or conference hosted by the Michigan Bankers Association. I intend to submit articles for *Journal of Education for Business* and *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* to disseminate the findings in scholarly peer-reviewed publications.

Recommendations for Further Research

I made several recommendations for further research to overcome the limitations of this study. A limitation of this study was the credibility and dependability of the

interview data remained dependent on the knowledge and experience of five frontline banking managers and data collected from five banking companies in Michigan. I recommend future researchers use a larger sample size of banking managers. Future researchers might consider using a written, validated questionnaire instead of semistructured interviews to collect primary data from participants. I recommend future researchers consider using a comparison of fully virtual teams versus a mixture of virtual and in-house banking teams. A limitation of this study was the eligibility criteria of a frontline banking manager who had successfully implemented a communication strategy to motivate virtual team members. Future researchers could explore other strategies and tactics that banking managers used to motivate remote workers.

A limitation of this study was the case study design, which resulted in limited, if any, transferability of the findings. A future researcher might consider conducting a qualitative case study in a different region of the United States to explore the communication strategies frontline banking managers use to motivate virtual team members to test the transferability of the findings of this study. I recommend that a future researcher conduct a quantitative correlational study, resulting in findings that are generalizable to a larger population. A future researcher could test the significance of variables, such the communication style of the managers, the level of virtual team member motivation and satisfaction, and the success rate of virtual team projects.

Reflections

As I completed this study, I realized how much I truly had in common with the frontline managers I interviewed. From the time I was younger, I have always strived for the best in everything I do. With that in mind, as a younger child, I told my father, I would become an MBA and stop my education there. As I completed my MBA, I longed for much more and my passion for assisting and leading others has grown. My passion grew to continue my education, learn more, and work on a way to open a business that could support others as well.

From the beginning of this process to completion, I have seen a lot of what I am looking to do in the future through these interviews. As I have engaged with others, I have seen that I would like to see many changes made in society and businesses that to others to learn additional strategies of managing as well as leadership styles appropriate for their setting. Throughout this doctoral process, I grew as a scholarly writer, researcher, and business practitioner. I know the knowledge and experience gained from conducting this research study will be of significance value to me as I continue in my professional career. An entirely new world opened for me because of completing this study; a world that I like and will remain vested in.

Conclusion

Frontline managers in the banking industry support geographically dispersed employees, yet face significant obstacles in communicating effectively to motivate their virtual team members. Unmotivated virtual workers cause lower productivity,

profitability, and apathy to spread within the virtual team. Through the lens of Vroom's (1964) expectancy motivation theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore communication strategies frontline managers in the banking industry used to motivate virtual team members. I collected data, using semistructured, face-to-face interview, from five frontline banking managers in Michigan who had successfully implemented communication strategies to motivate virtual team members and a review of relevant company documents. I analyzed data using Yin's (2018) five-step process of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding the data. The three emergent themes were a clarification strategy, a technology strategy, and a motivation strategy. Frontline banking managers leading virtual teams might use the findings to this study to improve the clarity of their communications with team members, make effective use of technology within their communication strategy, and motivate team members through consistent messaging, offering adequate rewards, and facilitating peer competition among team members. The implications for positive social change include the potential for frontline banking managers to improve job satisfaction and motivation among virtual team members, resulting in higher employment rates, improved local economic stability, and enhanced rapport and volunteerism within their local communities.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Preparation

- Contact supervisors of frontline banking managers to obtain participant referrals and obtain permission to contact frontline managers.
- Contact frontline banking managers, assess each for meeting eligibility criteria, and purposefully select five participants.
- Determine the interview setting for each interview.

Opening the Interview

- Greet the participant
- Restate my role as the researcher, the purpose of the study, and explain the possible benefits of the study

Informed Consent

- Explain the process of obtaining informed consent prior to beginning the interview
- Obtain a signed informed consent form
- Notify the participant that recording the interview is for transcription purposes

Conducting the Interview using Primary Interview Questions

1. What communication strategies did you use to motivate virtual team members in your banking company?

2. What communication strategy did you find as most effective to motivate virtual team members in your banking company?
3. How did you measure the effectiveness of your communication strategies in your banking company to motivate virtual team members?
4. What methods and technologies did you implement in your banking company for communication strategies to motivate virtual workers?
5. What barriers did you experience in implementing communication strategies in your banking company to motivate virtual team members?
6. How did you overcome the barriers you faced in implementing communication strategies in your banking company to motivate your virtual team members?
7. What additional information can you offer about the communication strategies you used to motivate virtual team members?

Follow up with Probing Questions

- Once participant answers an interview question, follow up with probing questions

- Ask clarification questions if needed

Theme Verification

- Ask participant about major themes that emerged during the interview
- Ensure full understanding of the participant's perceptions of the emergent themes

Coding

- Explain the coding procedure to protect the participant's confidentiality
- Reassure the participant that no names appear in the published study
- Remind the participant that all raw data, transcripts, and recordings remain

secured in a locked file

- Code each participant's name
- Secure all notes, raw data, transcripts, and recordings

Recording Reflexive Notes

- Record reflexive notes during the interview
- Observe and note participant's actions or reactions

Ending the Interview

- Thank the participant for their time and information
- Explain the member checking process
- Set up a follow-up meeting for member checking

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate E-mail or Telephone Script

Hello, my name is Kristina Wade and I am a doctoral student at Walden University conducting a study on communication and motivation strategies of frontline banking managers with virtual team members. I identified you as a potential participant in my study through publicly available resources. I would like you to consider being a participant in my study, agree to participate in a 45-60 minute face-to-face interview, and agree to a 30-minute follow-up meeting so that you could review my interpretation of your interview responses. This study could potentially benefit the banking industry by providing effective strategies to communicate and motivate virtual team members. The eligibility criteria for participation are a frontline banking manager, located in Michigan, and have virtual team members. If you meet the eligibility criteria, would you be willing to participate? Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If you are willing to participate, please reply to this e-mail, or you can call me. If you would like additional information or have questions before agreeing to participate, please contact me using the information below. If you agree to participate, I will forward you an informed consent form that will formally convey your rights as a participant. You can provide informed consent by replying *I consent* to the e-mail.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Kristina Wade

E-mail address: _____

Telephone: _____