HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION

by

April Kinchen

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Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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Liberty University, School of Business

February 2022

Abstract

This study sought to obtain knowledge relating to human resources during crisis and disruption. To obtain a deeper understanding of the material, I conducted a qualitative case study using a structured interview process, an anonymous survey process for triangulation. The interview process comprised 15 interviews to achieve saturation, as well as 135 survey respondents. During the participant interview process, I obtained the data to attribute to the current body of research regarding human resources during times of crisis and disruption. Interview participants comprised of individual contributors, people leaders, and human resource professionals. Participants felt strongly that open communication, infrastructure, and training were critical during times of crisis and disruption. Participants noted that flexible work arrangements were key to business operations during crisis and disruption, particularly during the pandemic of 2020. Participants showed challenges with managing remote teams in the virtual work environment created because of the pandemic of 2020. Participants identified major challenges when faced with the immediate crisis of bolting operations from in-person business operations to remote/virtual operations. This shows the need for more information gathering on human resources during crises and disruption.

Keywords: flexible work arrangements, remote teams, infrastructure and human resources, human resources, crisis

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Edward M. Moore, Ph.D., Director of Doctoral Programs   Date

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful grandparents that lived up the street from me growing up. My grandfather died in losing his battle to cancer and my grandmother died years later in losing her battle to Alzheimer's. Both were my rocks, as I could always walk up the street and sit with them and learn so many amazing things about this WWII generation. My grandfather taught me patience as he had little education, fought for our country in WWII, which he was proud of, but somehow built a life from pumping gas at a Texaco gas station to working as an executive at Texaco when he retired. I remember listening to his story of success and thinking to myself how amazing that someone with hardly any education had street smarts and worked his way to a corporate setting. That is patience. My grandmother taught me grit as she would sew and make all of her children their clothes, made mine too, and in her marriage had to take a job as a secretary when all the women on her street were not working. This was frowned upon in the 1950s if you did not stay home as a homemaker and support the family. My grandmother was a trailblazer before the women's movement because she wanted her family to have all the things she had never had in the Great Depression. She once said, "April, God does not give you anything you can't handle." I remember my grandparents got to attend my graduation for my Bachelor's in Business Administration and they were so proud that day, crying and reveling in their influence in my life. I know they are looking at me from heaven as I embark on my next walk to my doctorate. I love you and dedicate this to you as children and young adults today will never know the sacrifices you gave for this country and to your families, but I will and will always be thankful to the both of you. I look forward to meeting you again in heaven as I have always felt your support down here on earth and on this path I find myself on.

Acknowledgments

The doctoral path has been one that I could not have completed without the support, care, and love of others. This page is to address those that have assisted me in achieving the path to my doctorate. The amazing staff at Liberty University were there with me every step of my doctoral process. I never felt alone on this journey because of the amazing support at Liberty University. The staff members I feel I must include are my amazing partner and support, Dr. Thomas, my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Hunt, the committee member of support, and Dr. Moore, the Director of Doctoral Programs at Liberty University. Their guidance and support were instrumental and helping me accomplish my dream of receiving my doctorate.

The next acknowledgment and dedication I extend is to my amazing family of support. My parents and my step-dad that I call dad #2 have always supported my dreams in life and been there to nurture me and push me to achieve my goals in education and career. My mother and father have been a huge support during my doctoral journey, always asking me where I am at in the process and am I one step closer. My dad #2 has been in my corner for twenty years and has given amazing guidance throughout my career and dissertation process. Without him, I would not be here to complete this journey and get to the finish line. My parents both raised me to believe that there was nothing I could not achieve with determination and hard work, and I think of God for them each day. I have realized that my love for my God is stronger. The Lord is with me on this journey, and it was not an easy one, so I must think him for the support and guidance I have received along the way as well. I would like to recognize my two nieces and my precious sister, their beautiful mother. My dream is that one day my nieces will search my name and read my dissertation with delight and say, "Wow, that is my Aunt Sissy."

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

This case study was to explore the lack of human resource strategy in various

organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. First, it explored the perspective of the

pandemic on the unpreparedness of human resource professionals during the transition from

traditional work to a virtual work environment. This study explained why human resource

strategy was lacking during the pandemic to handle sporadic change in the work environment by

looking at possible explanatory factors. These factors explored the observations from

participants, individual contributors, and people leaders regarding whether the human strategy

was in place before the disruption. The case study explored if human resource strategies were in

place before the pandemic: executive leadership support or lack of for flexible work

arrangements, human resource partnership or lack of with technology for virtual work, or if the

human resource professionals were prepared for how employees would collaborate digitally

adjusting the employee experience? Human resource leaders will need to examine and rethink

the workforce in employee planning, management, performance, crisis management, and provide

employee experience strategies to support future work challenges or crises.

Background of the Problem

For any organization that desires to thrive, there needs to be a human resource strategy to

support sporadic change and disruption to the work environment. The study focused on the

problem of HRD strategy being present during times of disruption and crisis, which warrants

further study. Carnevale and Hatak (2020) found the COVID-19 pandemic has created a

particularly challenging environment for human resource management (HRM), with leaders

having to venture into the unknown of unknowns as they help their workforce adapt and cope

with radical changes occurring to their work and social environments. There is currently a gap in

the literature that addresses HRD and strategy around disruption to the workplace and the workforce. Yawson (2020) explored strategic flexibility analysis of HRD research and practice post-COVID-19 pandemic, showing that HRD needs to be more predictive in understanding human capital systems and how organizations behave during crisis or disruption. While the literature indicated that HRD strategy was essential, the focus has not been on crisis or disruption. Kowalski and Loretto (2017) found economic, social, and political changes in recent years show a lack of good quality intervention research on employee well-being, in addition to a lack of informed choices about the actions centered on employee wellbeing and human resource intervention. The research indicated HRD solutions were needed during crisis and disruption to the workforce, which supports this case study. Kowalski and Loretto (2017) indicated that good quality research shows HR professionals can better understand well-being is, what it means to employees, and what interventions are most likely to be effective in performance outcomes. The pandemic of 2020 shows a lack of HR strategy to support an abrupt shift in employee well-being towards a virtual work environment.

Problem Statement

The general problem addressed was if there was a failure of human resource (HR) leaders to have a strategy in place for navigating a traditional work environment to a virtual work environment, resulting in diminished productivity and performance. The problem statement represented a gap in the literature on human resource development and practice. Dirani et al. (2020) found most studies in HRD and leadership look at stable work environments; however, the pandemic and past crisis events reveal HRD practitioners need to examine critical interventions that apply during unstable times. Being predictive would show that a human resource strategy should be in place for disruption or displacement in the workplace. Biron et al.

(2021) revealed the COVID-19 outbreak was a stark example of disruptive change requiring

rapid change by the HR function as organizations react to the shift to a work-from-home mode of

operations. The specific problem addressed was if there was a failure of HR leaders in the United

States to have a strategy to respond to crises, as seen during COVID-19 sporadic move from

traditional to virtual operations, resulting in the inability to measure productivity and

performance. The researcher sought to explore human resource development (HRD) strategies

during times of crisis.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative case study was to explore the participants' perception and

experience during the disruption experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 to their

work environment and provide a descriptive analysis, including psychological response to how

participants observed human resource strategic preparation before and during the disruption. The

larger problem stemmed from the lack of research and to focus on human resource strategy

during disruption or crisis. This case study contributed to the body of literature around HR

strategy and crisis intervention methods for handling sudden and sporadic changes to the work

environment. The participant's meanings in the entire qualitative research process keep the

researcher focused on exploring what the participants hold about the problem or issues, not the

meaning that the researcher brings to the research (Creswell, 2014). It was essential to focus on

the participants' perception of the problem and allow the process to change or shift after

collecting the data and doing the analysis. Experiential learning occurs in qualitative case study

research through the candidates' experiences resulting in them learning something by the lesson

learned from that experience, called reflective learning (Adham et al., 2018). The purpose of the

case study method was to determine and explore the rapid move from the ground to the virtual work environment and how HR strategy plays a role in response to this disruption.

Nature of the Study

The study was a flexible design of the qualitative method(s); specifically, a case study design was used. Other methods were not selected, as the qualitative method sought to describe life experiences and give them meaning or insight. The pandemic of 2020 was explored to understand and discover how the HR strategy fell short of moving business operations from the ground to a virtual work environment. The qualitative study sought a subjective approach used to describe life experiences and insight into the phenomenon. It is considered to be a soft science that offers a shared interpretation of what the participants experienced and noticed during the event. The holistic nature of the case study permitted the researcher to picture the problem statement of the study. Through qualitative observation, the researcher engaged in open-ended questions, encouraging participants to express their COVID-19 experience freely. Creswell (2014) found that qualitative research is interpretive research, where the researcher is involved in a sustained and intensive experience with his/her participants. The qualitative method allowed for reporting of multiple perspectives and identifying the factors that precipitated the problem identified, and exploration of a larger picture emerged. Other qualitative studies, such as narrative, phenomenology, and ethnography, were not selected. The narrative research design was not selected as it takes more of a humanities viewpoint and seeks to ask for short stories from the participants that focus on their lives. These stories are retold or restoried by the researcher into a narrative chronology (Creswell, 2014). This would not be appropriate as the researcher sought clarity not to retell stories relating to the pandemic of 2020 and disruption to work and life. The phenomenological research design was not selected as it aims to "study the

phenomenon described by participants that have strong philosophical underpinnings during the interview process" (Creswell, 2014). Grounded theory research design was not chosen as it "draws from the sociology of which the researcher looks at the abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction from the participants" (Creswell, 2014). The ethnography research design was not selected as it "is looking at anthropology when the research is focused on behaviors, language, and culture in a natural setting" (Creswell, 2014). Case study research design was chosen because the researcher is exploring a case, often a program, event, activity, or process of multiple participants; in this case, COVID-19 and disruption to business operations across the United States. Researchers can use a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period.

A quantitative design was not chosen for this study, as it is considered a harder science that is concise and narrow. Typically, the quantitative design tests a theory, using control and instruments to examine cause-and-effect relations deductively. The qualitative case study sought to understand how individual contributors and people leaders interpreted the preparedness in human resource strategy relating to a sporadic move to virtual operations. This is not an exact science that is concise and narrow but about finding common themes or patterns in the qualitative case study. Opinions, perspectives, and experiences are not an exact science and are not narrow in scope; therefore, quantitative analysis was not chosen as the study method. The researcher sought to understand shared experiences during the pandemic and disruption to business operations.

Discussion of Method

The study conceptualized a case study of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and its halt to traditional business in the transition from traditional to a virtual work environment,

demonstrating a lack of human resource strategy to support the sporadic change and impact on

business operations. The qualitative research methodology was based on the review of interview

data to analyze sorting themes, identifying a relationship between human resource strategy and

transition from traditional to virtual work. Interpretive research design uses ethnographic and

hermeneutic methods grounded in organizational practice (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007). The

research paradigm and research design of the proposed topic were discussed in detail. It

supported the case study qualitative research method that interpreted the pandemic impact on

human resource strategy for crisis and disruption in the workplace.

Discussion of Design

The study was conducted using a flexible design of the qualitative method (s);

specifically, a case study design was used. When using the qualitative research method, the

researcher is inextricably linked by understanding how selves shape, create and construct the

research, interpretations, analysis, and theory in the qualitative data (Yeh & Inman, 2007). The

appropriate method for the qualitative study was to collect and analyze data from this case study.

A qualitative study explores an understanding through data collection should focus on its

conclusion without bias (Cypress, 2018). Using the methodology for data collection and analysis

began after determining the research design's specific and preliminary steps. The research

questions defined previously were the starting point and assisted in the primary design process.

The researcher in a qualitative study gathers data and utilizes it to analyze the problem's direct

relationship or nature (Cypress, 2018). The type of data explored was an informal interview with

participants to determine how the human resource strategy was present during a move from

traditional work to a virtual work environment during the pandemic of 2020. Data analysis

techniques included developing and assessing the impact on human resource strategy during the pandemic.

The design is a case study. It is the appropriate design because it sought to understand how the pandemic affected human resource strategy in moving business operations to a virtual environment. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), a case study design should be considered when (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why," (b) cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study, (c) covers contextual conditions relevant to the phenomenon, or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. The research methodology sought to understand how individual contributors and leaders perceived the human resource strategic response to moving operations from a traditional to a virtual work environment.

Research Paradigm

My research paradigm was interpretive. After reviewing the different qualitative research methods, the interpretive approach is aligned with the case study research design. The approach allows the researcher to analyze the human experience (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The researcher must rely on its participants and their perspective towards the situation of study, understanding the research is based on the participant's background and experiences (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The research paradigm meant the researcher did not begin with theory, but focused on developing an organizational theory from a pattern of interpretation using a qualitative data collection method. The study sought to build an argument around human resource strategy and prepare during disruption, adapting to a flexible work arrangement during times of crisis. The research paradigm started with the philosophy of Edmund Husserl's and Wilhelm Dilthey's interpretive understanding called hermeneutics, taking the approach in the

research to understand the human experience. The study relied upon how participants perceived

the current situation of moving from traditional work to virtual work and the perception of

human resource strategy and preparation. The design guided the research study by focusing on

human resource strategy and disruption to the work environment.

The research questions were designed for a qualitative case study asking how and why

the participants experienced human resource strategy in times of disruption or crisis. The

research questions explore the pandemic and how human resource strategy was deployed in the

sporadic move from traditional to virtual. In a case study research design, the research explored

the participant experience. The researcher wants to explore if the individual contributor or

organizational leaders experience human resource strategy during times of disruption. The

qualitative research method's approach was to focus on the commonality of the shared

experience of individual contributors and leaders concerning human resource strategy during

times of disruption. The researcher constructed a universal interpretation of the event,

experience, or situation, arriving at a strong understanding of the specific problem.

Research Questions

The research questions were of a qualitative method that asks "how" and "why" to

determine the pandemic impact on human resource strategy. The case study design is appropriate

for the exploratory study's research questions. Research questions covered topics around human

resource strategy with a focus on the specific problem statement. The research questions were as

follows:

RQ1: How do human resource departments around the country respond to crises?

RQ1a. How are flexible work arrangements embraced by organizations to address

sporadic changes to the work environment?

RQ1b. How do human resource departments transition employees from traditional to virtual work during times of disruption?

RQ2: How is the disruption in productivity measured during the rapid transition from traditional to virtual work?

RQ3: How did human resource departments respond to COVID-19 impact on organizations overall?

RQ3a. How did human resource departments respond to address the travel ban for business travel?

RQ3b. How long did it take for human resource departments across the U.S. to address workforce shifts to work from a home mode of operations?

RQ3c. How were organizations prepared with the technological infrastructure to meet the demand for moving traditional employees to work from the home environment?

RQ3d. How did human resource departments handle quarantine situations with the employee population?

RQ4: How do organizations meet the challenge of emerging HR issues during a crisis impacting the workforce?

The RQ1 is designed to support the specific problem statement. It relates to how human resource departments and their organizations were prepared to move operations from a traditional to a virtual work setting. This explores COVID-19 and the impact on the organization, and whether a human resource strategy was in place to respond to the sporadic change. Sub-questions ponder how organizations embrace flexible work arrangements to respond to the disruption of the traditional work environment. The RQ2 is designed to ask how productivity was measured during the transition to virtual work. This ties back to whether HR strategy was in

place to measure productivity in flexible work arrangements. This would also explore technology

and part of the HR strategy in measuring virtual workplace dynamics. If none of these things

existed, the researcher could surmise that HR strategy could not handle a sporadic shift from

traditional to virtual work. The RQ3 is designed to ask how human resource departments

responded to COVID-19. Part of the HR strategy is to have a response to emergencies that occur

at the organization. The researcher wants to know if anything was in place to handle a sporadic

event like COVID-19 or any other disruption to the workplace. Sub questions address things like

business travel and transition to work from home operations and quarantine situations. The RQ4

is designed to ask if human resource departments were partnering with executive leadership

during the transition. The researcher sought to understand the relationship between the

organization and human resources. HR strategy is about a partnership between the executive

team and the human resource department. If it appears they were not working together, that will

show silos and a lack of human resource strategy in handling sporadic events such as COVID-19.

The research questions supported the specific problem statement and revealed whether

human resource strategy was in place before the pandemic to handle business operations shifting

to a virtual environment. In the case study method, it is essential to study the problem that took

place in organizations all over the country. It is important to explore how individual contributors

felt during the transition and how organizational people leaders felt during the transition to

virtual work. The human resource strategy encompasses training and development for all

employees. Was there training and development in place for people leaders shifting to leading a

team virtually? These were some of the questions the researcher sought to determine.

Conceptual Framework

If we think of the studies centered on human resource strategy, scholarly research that links strategy to performance is relevant. With the sporadic disruption of business operations around the country because of COVID-19, many organizations were lacking in strategy to support a move to a virtual environment. The research framework diagram shows several resource concepts and theories, revealing a link to preparation for these types of disruptions. While COVID-19 is one disruption of work operations in recent years, many other types of worker displacement and disruption occur at different times. The research elements were included in the research framework diagram to show a flow of information and actions that resulted in preparedness for future sporadic disruption of business operations through human resource strategy and activities. Being unprepared can affect the flow of performance, productivity, and employee cohesiveness.

Discussion of Concept One: The Model of Causation in Human Resources

Human resource (HR) activities aligned with the organizational strategy lead to overall business performance (Vulpen, 2020). These research elements explored the experience between human resource management's strategic practices and the organization's performance using the causation model. The causal model shows causation that begins with the overall business strategy through the human resource processes and ends with financial performance. Dirani et al. (2020) found that HRD professionals must support leaders by preparing them to deal with current and future crises. If leaders are unprepared, how can they handle current or future disruptions? Part of that preparation occurs with the support of HRD professionals and executive leadership.

Discussion of Concept Two: The 8-box model of Human Resources

Human resource outcomes lead to critical HR goals such as flexibility, legitimacy, and cost-effectiveness impact business goals such as profit, market share, market capitalization (i.e., viability to the organization; Vulpen, 2020). At any given time, there are different types of operational disruption, such as internal or external factors, that can affect productivity. The 8-box model describes different external and internal factors that can understand human resource practitioners' effectiveness in HR. The model describes factors that influence Human Resource strategy. They are the intended HR practice, actual HR practice, perceived HR practice, and HR outcomes. Dirani et al. (2020) found that the strategic role HRD can play to assist and develop leaders during this pandemic is by (a) providing reliable and robust real ground data, (b) expanding their professional network, (c) promoting innovation, (d) ensuring employees continued learning, (e) facilitate regular meetings, and (f) create a platform to celebrate employees. Human resource strategy can affect organizational outcomes and affect the pandemic of 2020.

Discussion of Concept Three: The Human Resource Value Chain

If human resource management (HRM) activities and HRM outcomes hit their marks, this will lead to better performance (Vulpen, 2020). One of the best-known models, the human resource value chain, states that everything we do (and measure) in human resources is divided into two categories: one of human resource management activities and the other of human resource management outcomes. Arora and Suri (2020) found HRD professionals as critical in preparing employees for steering through and managing a crisis and its recovery; human resource professionals contribute towards facilitating problem-solving and enabling in getting back to situations of normalcy. While the "new normal" keeps expanding into a virtual

community and work environment, it is essential to understand how human resource strategy and planning can affect organizations in getting back to the normalcy of measuring productivity and performance in a new environment, a "virtual community and workplace." This model supported the specific problem statement in showing how HRM activities define HRM outcomes.

Discussion of Concept Four: The Harvard Framework of Human Resource Management

Human resource outcomes define long-term consequences, including individual, organizational, and societal well-being (Vulpen, 2020). The Harvard framework for HRM (human resource management) model comprises six components that take a holistic approach to HR, including different levels of HR outcomes. The six components include the following: stakeholder interest, situational factors, HRM policies, HRM outcomes, and long-term consequences. HRD professionals must respond to this pandemic to build an effective and responsive organization, which is well-prepared to meet the new normal during any crisis (Arora & Suri, 2020). HRD professionals must lead their organizations to be responsive in times of crisis. The Harvard framework supports the specific problem statement that HR strategy (Human Resource activities) defines long-term consequences. Because of the pandemic, human resource strategy is critical.

Human Resource Theories

The Universalistic Approach Theory to Human Resource Management

The universalistic approach theory to HRM shows the direct relationship of human resource strategy with the organization's performance. The theory states that the best HR practices imply that business strategies and HRM policies are mutually independent when determining business performance outcomes. The universalistic perspective of strategic HR competencies is the critical differentiator of an organization's overall performance (Lo et al.,

2015). This theory supports the specific problem statement describing HR strategy or lack of affecting the organization's performance.

The Contingency Theory of Leadership

The contingency theory of leadership explores how specific situations can affect a leader's ability to act. Further, environmental contingency theory logic includes studies designed to fit specific conditions and explore the internal or external environment. External contingency theory includes a firm's environmental uncertainty and turbulence, which influence the planning processes with the tendency for firms to adopt more comprehensive long-range processes (Wolf & Floyd, 2013). This theory supports the specific problem statement describing how situations can affect a leader's ability to act based on environmental factors.

The Attribution Theory for Human Resources

Attribution theory is the idea that is the assertion that people are on a continuous quest to explain the events or actions that they encounter. Hewett et al. (2017) noted that system strength (HRSS) and HR attributions theory (HRA) had invigorated attention in attribution theory. There has been a resurgence of attribution theories explaining the 'black box' between HR and performance (Hewett et al., 2017). Attribution theories have been used in HR to describe interpersonal dynamics and attributions of behavior and events within several specific HR functional areas. This theory supports the specific problem statement describing attributions to events like the pandemic of 2020 in shifting business operations to a virtual environment exploring disruption.

Figure 1

Relationships Between Concepts

Conceptual Framework For Research Concept

Elements

Human Resource Activities -The Causal Model
-HR Preparation of organization leaders

HR Outcomes lead to organization viability 8-Box Model speaks to internal/external factors impacting HR strategy

HR outcomes hit their marks, organizational performance is impacted HR Value Chain Model

Human resource outcomes define long-term consequences, including individual, organizational, and societal well-being Harvard Framework for HRM

Universalistic Approach Theory

Strategic Contingency Theory

Attribution Theory

Individual Contributors

Organizational Leaders

Case Study

HR strategy in place for Covid-19 shift from traditional to virtual work environment.

Patterns and Synergy Amongst Participants in Study

HR Strategy Linked to Performance of Organization

Actors

Perception, Opinion and Experience during pandemic

Categorical Variables

Gender
Industry
Education Level
People Leader
Individual Contributor

Outcomes

Organizations are prepared and can handle disruption & crisis if HR strategy is in place.

Discussion of Relationships Between Concepts

The researcher's conceptual framework is the "system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs the research and is a key area of the researcher's design" (Goff & Getenet, 2017). Further, the conceptual framework visually defines the main things to be studied in critical variables, concepts, factors, and a presumed relationship (Goff & Getenet, 2017). There is a common theme of human resource and organizational outcomes linked to human resource strategy in the concepts and theories described. Without

those essential HR activities and strategies, the organization cannot meet critical performance

during a sporadic disruption or crisis.

Summary of the Conceptual Framework

In qualitative research, no hypotheses or relationships of variables are tested. Instead,

categorical variables (i.e., qualitative variables) are used with no natural sense of order and

measured on a nominal scale. The study's categorical variables were gender, industry, education

level, individual contributor, people leader, and HR leader. Categories cover the human

experience as either trivial, which is not any new knowledge, or hermeneutic, in which an

individual is enlightened with a unique point of view (Nigar, 2019). Qualitative research is the

use of questions that examine patterns and synergy amongst the participants. The study engaged

participants in a structured interview, enabling the researcher to reach beyond the participants'

responses to observe perceptions. The researcher monitored, recorded, and used an interpretive

approach. A small group in this research study established patterns as it described the lack of HR

strategy, preparedness, and the shift to virtual operations as a disruption to operational

performance. The key elements, models, and theories supported the study by showing how HR

strategy affects organizational performance during a crisis.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined to help the reader understand the context of each term

in this case study.

COVID-19: COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from

person to person and has spread throughout the world with symptoms ranging from mild to

severe (CDC, 2020).

Crises: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and effects (Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser, 2020).

Disruption: A perceived misalignment of the dramaturgical structure of interaction in coordinating expected lines of action (Tavory & Fine, 2020).

Executive team: The executive team initiates, shapes, and directs strategic reorientations of organizations changing the strategy, structure, and relationships with stakeholders (Garg, 2017).

Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA): Flexible work arrangements that provide where and when an employee works outside a firm's premises according to personal needs and require special permission to deviate from the standard work model (Neirotti et al., 2019).

Human Resource Development (HRD): Human resource development (HRD) is a process of developing human expertise through organization development (OD) and individual training and development (T&D) to improve the organization (Swanson, 1995).

Human Resource Director: The human resource director will plan, lead, direct, develop, and coordinate the policies, activities, and staff of the HR department, ensuring legal compliance and implementation of the organization's mission and talent strategy (SHRM, 2020).

Human Resource Strategy: SHRM defines strategic human resource management as involving implementing HR programs that solve business problems and contribute to significant long-term business initiatives (SHRM, 2020).

Human Resources: SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) defines human resources as the process of enhancing the effectiveness of an organization and its well-being (SHRM, 2020).

Individual Contributor (IC): An individual contributor is a professional without management responsibilities who contributes to an organization in support of its goals and mission; the (IC) is responsible for managing themselves in a reporting relationship with the supervisor (Indeed, 2020).

Pandemic: A new virus that has not circulated in humans previously, the disease is widespread geographically, there is apparent person-to-person spread, and outbreaks are explosive, with a relatively high case-fatality rate (Green, 2020).

People leader (PL): People leaders build relationships with colleagues, coach employees to reach their potential, and align teammates toward a common goal, which can be influential in motivating employees to feel engaged at work (Ernst, 2019).

Quarantine: The movement restriction of persons who are presumed to have been exposed to a contagious disease but are not ill, either because they did not become infected or because they are still in the incubation period (Wilder-Smith & Freedman, 2020).

Traditional work environment: In a conventional work environment, employees have a physical workspace to accomplish their job (Hill et al., 2003).

Travel ban: Stopping travel of such high-risk individuals altogether (i.e., a complete border closure; Burns et al., 2020).

Virtual work environment: In the virtual office, employees have a portable means to accomplish their job and are often granted the authority to work where it makes sense to achieve business objectives (Hill et al., 2003).

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

Assumptions

At least three assumptions were relevant to the qualitative case study. First, participants

are expected to complete the interview independently and without any influence or discussion.

Interviews were conducted in a Zoom conference call and separated from other participants. The

second assumption was that participants would truthfully respond to each question based on their

experience and perception. The positivist qualitative and interpretive approaches differ in their

aims and assumptions about the world, but share a common commitment to rigorous empirical

research consistent with the research process (Darby et al., 2019). Participants provided their

perception of HR strategy during the pandemic of COVID-19 and responded to the move-in

operations from a traditional work environment to a virtual work environment. Concerns

regarding anonymity were mitigated using a user-friendly layout for the Zoom interview/call and

anonymity reassurance. Third, the interview will be kept active in case further study is warranted

with follow-up questions. The purpose of the interview for qualitative inquiry is to create a

conversation that invites the participants to tell their stories, accounts, reports, and descriptions

of their perspectives, insights, and experience in an active way (Smith & Sparkes, 2019). Using

the NVivo platform provided an organization of the data and video files for the qualitative case

study. NVivo kept research organized and supported the study's data analysis, along with any

follow-up from the interviews that were warranted.

Limitations

There may be some possible limitations in this case study. It is essential to recognize the

limitations of the qualitative case study. The sample size/sample bias, as the interview process

comprised participants in different roles of business. Each participant had a unique perspective,

but there was commonality in the themes of disruption and human resource strategies. Individual

results do not necessarily represent the entire population. Finding common themes and patterns

was essential to the case study validity. There were various ways to collect data, including

interviews, surveys, and questionnaires. The way the data were collected might pose a limitation

since the answers to the interview process can vary. The study was based upon the perceptions of

HR strategy in the rapid move to virtual operations. Therefore, the study was subject to bias

based on how each participant experienced the sporadic changes during the COVID-19 pandemic

of 2020—finding common themes and patterns mitigated all these limitations, as each participant

had a familiar and unique experience. There are opportunities for future research relating to

human resource strategy and outcomes for an organization during disruption or crises.

Delimitations

The qualitative case study was chosen for the interpretive research of an intensive

experience as witnessed in the COVID-19 pandemic sporadic shift of ground business operations

to virtual operations. Developing a holistic account is characteristic of qualitative design. The

researcher is developing a complex picture of the issue involving multiple perspectives.

Quantitative research involves an interrelated set of variables where the researcher identifies any

relationship between those variables in terms of magnitude or direction. Qualitative case study

research allows the participants to learn the meaning of the problem they experienced. The study

comprised interviewing participants about their perceptions of HR strategy during the sporadic

shift from the ground to a virtual work environment. The qualitative design allows the researcher

to explore an event such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The case study comprised interviewing

selected participants. According to Creswell (2014), the sample size depends on the qualitative

design. The boundary of the United States was established as the geographical domain, and the

study was delimited by individual contributors, people leaders, and HR leaders within U.S.

organizations. The results were attributable to organizations that (a) were in the United States,

(b) moved operations to virtual in 2020, and (c) have human resources in place at their

organization.

Significance of Study

Reduction of Gaps

The study affected human resource development (HRD) to discuss flexible work

arrangements and future virtual work challenges during crisis and disruption, not just a

pandemic. The case study provided opportunities to look at how human resource departments

work with their executive teams to support flexible work arrangements. Infrastructure with

technology will be a focus in future research because of the rapid move to virtual operations.

Whether there were HR strategic partnering with information technology is another opportunity

to further scholarly research and study resulting from this case study research. This case study

filled the gap between HR strategy and executive support for crisis intervention strategies to be

in place for the next sporadic disruption.

Implications for Biblical Integration

Christians are stewards by nature, overseeing creation where there is a disease, human

suffering, and war. I believe some of these evils are mitigated through Christian research and

study. In Genesis 1:31, God finished his creation and "saw that it was good." Part of that creation

was commanding man to become the steward of his "good creation" in Genesis 1:28 and 29

(King James Bible, 1973). There are challenges in the area of integrity when it comes to

research. This is revealed in some of the recently published medical research as it relates to

COVID-19. Unfortunately, in a rush to disseminate information involving the Coronavirus, it has

exposed cracks in our scholarly research system by submitting disinformation. Is this the rush to be first or to be accurate? According to Inside Higher Education (2020), many researchers are publishing versions of papers that have not yet been peer-reviewed on preprint services such as arXiv, bioRxiv, and SSRN ("New MIT Press," 2020).

Further, preprint services are essential to scholarly research as a platform for researchers to gain early feedback on their research. As a result, MIT Press and the Berkeley School of Public Health launched a COVID-19 journal that will be peer-reviewed, elevating good research and debunking the bad per Inside Higher Education ("New MIT Press," 2020). As a researcher, it is vital to have ethical and unbiased motives in your research. Ethics tie into Christianity and telling the truth to the best of your ability is essential when conducting research. Christian researchers are unique in providing an ethical voice in their research in following God's principles in conducting that research. The researcher can be statistically and spiritually informed by conducting a study.

Relationship to Field of Study

Preparing for organizational disruption should be commonplace with human resource strategy. Such massive changes brought about by the pandemic of 2020 have created challenges for human resource practitioners and strategy. This massive change escalated the importance of HR's role within the organization as 73% of U.S. workers turn to HR leaders to guide how to navigate and prepare for the future of work (Meister & Brown, 2020). Human resource development (HRD) gained new insight into flexible work arrangements and the community in a virtual environment. Understanding how to lead and manage in a virtual environment will be a key focus for future HRD literature. Studies centered on crisis management will expand beyond the "active shooter" scenario to crisis management planning regarding managing and measuring

productivity when employees are shifted sporadically to a virtual environment. Human resource strategy will need to include moving operations at a moment's notice, preparing for technological challenges, and building an infrastructure to support employees in a virtual work environment.

Summary of the Significance of the Study

With the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, human resources and business leaders have been challenged with the crisis and disruption of moving business operations from the ground to the virtual. Meister and Brown (2020) found that 34% of organizations did not have an emergency preparedness plan before the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, scholarly research is gaining attention due in part to the pandemic of 2020. Current theory and models support the specific problem statement that discusses preparedness in human resource strategy during times of disruption and crisis. The researcher is looking for findings that support the human resource strategy was lacking during the sporadic shift in business operations from a traditional to a virtual work environment in 2020. The researcher reviewed the recent pandemic phenomenon to look for patterns and synergy amongst the interviewed participants. The interviewed participants comprised of individual contributors and people leaders that shifted operations to their organization during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research sought to understand the patterns and support that human resource strategy is necessary for organizational viability, performance, and response to a crisis. While there were some limitations in the scholarly research to suggest human resource strategy links to corporate performance, it is clear in the recent literature that human resource strategy was lacking in response to the pandemic. The research location or region of the study was U.S. employees affected by a shift to virtual business operations and explore their understanding of whether HR strategy was in place during the disruption and if

productivity was lagging. Future HR partnerships and procedures are needed to prepare for sporadic organizational change, organizational crisis, and employee displacement.

Further research is needed in various industries and their response to the pandemic and future actions. Research should explore how organizations should respond to changes in the workplace. Scholars should explore various aspects of human resource development, reinforcing the need for organizations to partner with human resources to develop a more agile and flexible workforce derived from HRD strategies and theory.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The literature review aims to provide relevant information about how human resource strategy is present during disruption or crises. Professional books, scholarly literature, SHRM (the Society for Human Resource Management), journal articles, and peer-review articles were reviewed to provide a foundation for a better understanding of whether HR strategy was in place to respond to the novel pandemic of 2020. Business operations affected by the sudden and mandatory move of ground operations to a virtual work environment have created several challenges. People leaders struggled in an immediate shift in managing individual contributors in-person to virtually. Infrastructure was not immediately in place to transition operations and technology to a virtual community. The literature suggests that executive teams in the past have been reluctant to embrace flexible work arrangements because of the lack of infrastructure for measuring performance and productivity. Recent scholarly research shows that CHROs were not prepared from a crisis management standpoint to move operations from the ground to virtual in 2020.

The articles review human resource leadership theories and methods from authors that focus on the impact of human resource development during times of disruption and crisis. Except

for some books and SHRM, 100% of peer-reviewed articles were published within the last 5

years, and 50 articles were peer-reviewed. The justification for using SHRM articles is that they

were the leading organization and association for human resource professionals, both

domestically and globally. At the start of the pandemic in 2020, SHRM research has conducted

many studies on the impact of COVID-19 on U.S. workers and employers. According to SHRM

(2020), "the Science-to-Practice series is a series of a continuation of the SHRM Foundation's

Effective Practice Guidelines series, which has served as an educational resource for human

resource practitioners and educators worldwide over the past 14 years." This research and

scholarly research helped measure the human resource response during crises and whether HR

strategy facilitates a reaction in times of disruption.

At the onset of the pandemic of 2020, U.S. corporations had moved their operations to

remote work environments practicing social distancing and CDC guidelines. As a small

percentage of organizations had a flexible work from home program, others were prepared and

ready to shift to a new situation because of the pandemic of 2020. The sporadic change in higher

education operations to a virtual function revealed a lack of online learning preparation. The

workforce was affected by moving to an online learning platform to teach. The pandemic

presents a chance to measure real data on productivity and performance, comparing ground

business operations to virtual business operations. Post pandemic research will reveal if

organizations came to a screeching halt or continued uninterrupted based upon occupation and

industry. There are certain occupations where virtual work is not applicable, like manufacturing

or service industries, that rely on the public for interaction.

In 2020, the United States discovered what management looked like in a remote

environment. Research suggests that a new practice of HR strategy and execution must meet

remote work practice and demand. Academic research in HRD is lacking in the method of strategy and execution. This study is critical to HRD as human resource professionals were at the forefront of the pandemic and experiencing challenges each day as they navigated working employee mental health remotely and challenges to the employee population. Top-level executives and HRD will develop strategy and impact decisions related to furloughed employees and laid-off employees and strategize how they will bring back employees later. This requires preparation for what the future of work looks like today and in the future. With CDC guidelines, what plans were in place for traditional office workspace, or have positions identified that could move to remote work? All of these decisions impacted HRD in partnering with the executive team and executing the future work strategy and how it affects employees.

There is significant attention to the pandemic of 2020 and the human resource strategy lacking to move business operations from an in-person environment to a virtual environment. The literature review summary provides a synopsis of multiple factors contributing to the relationship between human resource strategy and response to disruption or crises. The first key element pertains to an introduction to human resources and organizational resilience during times of crisis. The second key element of this literature review focuses on human resources during times of crisis or disruption. The third section involves examining factors associated with human resource preparedness during the pandemic of 2020. The fourth essential element discussed the importance of aligning learning and development with the HRD strategy in responding to disruption. The fifth key element consists of examining flexible work arrangements and how they have been received by executive leadership in the past. The sixth key element explored virtual environments and HRD strategy, which impacted the specific problem statement. The seventh key element explored SHRM and HRD preparedness during crisis or disruption. The

literature review's final element examined human resource theories involving the universalistic approach theory to HRM, the contingency theory of leadership, and the attribution theory that support research factors in the case study.

Introduction to Human Resources and Organizational Resilience

The phenomenon explored in the case study involves the lack of human resource strategy around the pandemic of 2020 and the sporadic shift from ground operations to virtual operations, and the ability to bounce back ties to organizational resilience. Studies suggest that organizational resilience is linked to organizations' ability to adjust to foreseen disruptions and adapt to unpredictable crises. Further research considers organizational resilience to be the ability to resist and recover from disasters that can affect an organization from an external or internal impact on systems. Significant aspects of organizational resilience are the survival skill during the crisis to rebound and bounce back. Another element is the notion that the organization can learn and grow through crisis or disruption to transform the organization. Research suggests that organizations can bounce back in an uncertain environment, becoming more resilient to future challenges. Research regarding organizational resilience can be found in business strategy, human resource management, organizational theory, and strategic management principles. Organizational resilience can be found in the employee's strengths in responding productively to disruption and unexpected change. If employees can cope successfully in the face of a significant crisis or turmoil, the recovery process can resume to a new normal and be more robust than before. HRD strategy can help employees respond and face adversity in a disruptive environment through support efforts from the leadership. Ma et al. (2018) found that scholars define organizational resilience in how the organization can respond to a disruptive environment and strategically meet unexpected events. Further, scholars see organizational resilience as the ability

to be transformative to capitalize on crisis and disruption through innovation. Ma et al. (2018)

found that organizational resiliency is the adaptation capability to be solution-oriented and

creative with proactive solutions during the uncertainty of a turbulent environment stemmed by

crisis or disaster.

The change in "business as usual" showed a lull in measuring productivity because of

unpreparedness in crisis management and lack of human resource strategy to respond to the

pandemic of 2020, technological infrastructure needs, and training development lacking in how

we manage virtually. Research has shown that organizational resilience encompasses more than

adaptation because it implies an organization gains strength in dealing with stressful conditions

and rapid change (Bouaziz & Hachicha, 2018). Further research is warranted in various

industries and their response to the pandemic and future actions. Research should explore the

critical dialogue on how organizations should respond to sporadic changes in the workplace.

Scholars should explore various aspects of human resource development, reinforcing the need

for organizations to partner with human resources to develop a more agile and flexible workforce

derived from HRD strategies and theory. Scholarly research indicates that human resource

strategy impacts organizational performance and productivity.

Current research trends indicate that human resource strategy was lacking in flexible

work arrangements and working virtually. Research suggests that executive teams in the past

have been reluctant to embrace flexible work arrangements due to the lack of infrastructure for

measuring performance and productivity. Recent scholarly research indicates that CHROs were

not prepared from a crisis management standpoint to move operations from the ground to a

virtual workspace. Research questions explored how individual contributors, people leaders, and

human resource leaders perceived human resource strategy or lack of strategy when business operations were moved from the ground to virtual during the pandemic of 2020.

Organizations must respond to crisis or disruption with the onset of rapid change and stressful conditions through human resource strategy and deployment. Bouaziz and Hachicha (2018) found that SHRM found the pattern of planned HR deployments and activities intended to enable an organization to link HRM practices with strategic management. Part of an organization's resilience is how they respond to disruption and get back on track with its business operations. Koronis and Ponis (2018) found the role of the human resources strategy of resilience should provide an ability of an organization to overcome challenges through innovation and to enhance people's resilience during challenging times. Change management is essential to adapt to disruption and crisis through impactful human resource crisis management planning. Through human resource management strategies, an organization can become resilient in times of disruption or crises. Scholarly research suggests that HRD needs a plan to respond to crises or build resiliency as an organization.

According to Lim et al. (2019), human resource professionals must enhance the organization's ability to react and adapt to internal and external threats to its workforce. Attracting the right talent and leveraging the talent to cross-train and support during times of disruption is critical in supporting an organization's resiliency. It is a desirable characteristic of an organization to overcome various types of adversity. Resilience starts with normal accident theory, which adopts a view of management crisis production during "normal accidents" occurring in organizational systems; however, high-reliability organization theory emphasizes executive leadership and human resources in averting and responding to extreme events (Branicki et al., 2019). Human resource management and development play a critical role in

promoting resilience by developing supportive HR principles, architecture, and philosophy in organizational resiliency.

Human Resources in Times of Crisis or Disruption

The case study reviewed current literature and past scholarly literature centered on human resource strategy, crisis management, and flexible work arrangements. This research is essential to human resource development in how organizations respond to disruption by having crisis management plans involving a swift move to virtual operations or any other sporadic disruption or crisis that impacts business operations. Crisis management in human resources has often been overlooked despite the recognized impact of organizational crises on employee performance and outcomes. There are various ways in which HRD can build crisis management capability and strategy within the organization. HRD practitioners' importance in aligning with a development focus, orientation, and approach to overall crisis management efforts is essential to responding in times of disruption.

Wang et al. (2009) found that despite a decade of witnessed terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and ethics violations, fewer than 60% of employees reported that their organization was not well prepared to respond to crises effectively. The research (2009) revealed that 40 percent of human resource specialists surveyed by SHRM revealed that their organizations were not prepared for crises and lacked crisis preparedness planning or any disaster plan (Wang et al., 2009). Researchers have found that this lack of preparedness ranges from insufficient resources to assumptions that the organization is "immune" from crises. With the onset of technological complexity, the need to align crisis management with HRD and business strategy becomes prominent.

Further research suggests HRD involvement in each stage of the crisis management process; however, HRD is primarily confined to crisis training (Wang et al., 2009). This perception removes HRD from a strategic partnering role and prohibits HRD from contributing to crisis management planning. The research (2009) addressed HRD to be transformed from being task-oriented to results-oriented, focusing on strategic interventions (Wang et al., 2009). Research has shown that a human resource strategy is instrumental in the organization's crisis management framework. Nizamidou et al. (2019) found that the HR department, with direct and constant interaction with the employees and responsible for employees' wellbeing, contributes to high safety, quality, and crisis management. Scholarly research suggests that human resource strategy should be part of organizational continuity. HR is unique to impact crisis long before it strikes through crisis response and recovery. Part of the operations' continuity has a crisis management plan that includes immediate response to natural disasters, health disasters, and other crises impacting overall business operations for recovery and flexibility involving future crises. Vardarlier (2016) suggested that HR practice should include forming a task force that meets regularly to discuss crisis management.

HRD can be utilized at every crisis management stage to support leaders in addressing crises or disruption through planning and implementation. HRD can impact crisis management planning and internal learning capabilities learned from a previous crisis or disaster situation. This allows the organization to gain knowledge and identify what will be needed in terms of individual abilities and adapting to new work conditions. Rasli et al. (2017) found that creating an environment focused on learning and performance intervention through HRD can be an essential step to improving the organization's crisis management planning. Research suggests that organizations focus on recovery and learning from a crisis versus actively engaging in

ongoing crisis management to detect the early warning signs. The research indicates that

organizations plan after the fact, which can challenge HRD, and the organization is unprepared

for the next event.

Human Resource Preparedness During the Pandemic of 2020

Research has shown a lack of human resource strategy at the beginning of the pandemic

of 2020. According to Gómez et al. (2020), crises that arise, whether natural, economic, political,

or health, have to carefully review their capabilities for alternatives for improvement.

Educational institutions were hit hard during the pandemic of 2020. Scholarly research suggests

that there were lessons that we could glean by unities to enhance human resource strategy and

respond to disruption or crisis being paramount. Izumi et al. (2020) found that risk assessment

and related information sharing were identified as the most significant shortcoming and the lack

of collaboration in universities, budget, awareness, and human resources to enhance disaster

preparedness capacity on campus. Collaboration between departments is key to a response

during a crisis or disruption. It starts with human resources, executive leadership, and other

departments coordinating efforts during a disruption. In higher education, the HRD strategy for

deployment of a crisis management plan was lacking for taking students from a face-to-face

campus environment to an online learning environment.

There have been documented challenges in the transition from traditional face-to-face K-

12 learning to a virtual online learning environment. Current empirical literature relevant to the

research questions and case study discusses reshaping HRD in the post-COVID-19 context and

after that. Human resources continue to evolve and change during the pandemic relating to

virtual work measurement and response to crisis management and disruption. Arora and Suri

(2020) found that HRD professionals contribute to facilitating problem-solving and getting

situations back to normalcy. There is an opportunity to examine crisis management for HRD and understand the crisis in terms of nature and the extent to which employees are impacted, what processes and strategies are operational, and start to redefine the deviation from what is "normal." Research suggests that HRD should review their communication plan with employees, whether face-to-face or virtual, look at training and development models that suit the organizational needs, and propose what might be needed to change the corporate model.

Further research suggests that structuring innovative responses to human resource challenges is necessary for business operations continuity. This will require an innovative response to crisis and disruption from human resource practitioners. Biron et al. (2021) found that scholars have described how the HR function can shape employees' innovative behaviors through adapted HR strategy and practice, altering organizational responsiveness during rapidly changing external conditions affecting corporate products and services. Future research will help to understand the impact of working virtually for individual contributors and people leaders. HR will be exploring wellbeing in the era of COVID-19 and its implications during times of crisis. Currently, we know very little in HRD research about organizing structures for dealing with non-routine threats and opportunities impacting the organization's human resources function.

Leadership competencies are challenged during times of crisis, and human resource development will be essential in times of disruption to business operations. Dirani et al. (2020) found that employees' voicing their concerns is critical and that HRD leaders listen to and provide psychological empowerment for employees in times of disruption and crisis. It is crucial to understand how we work and where. There is substantial literature that compares three work venues (i.e., traditional office, virtual office, and home office), which influences aspects of work and personal/family life. As the future of work is changing, demonstrating the problem statement

is worth exploring to understand the need for HR strategy centered on crisis management, training and development, leading in a virtual environment, and measuring performance and productivity. As change occurred during the pandemic of 2020, employees' well-being shifted to a new virtual work environment. It is essential to know how this impacts individual contributors and people leaders now and in the future. Yawson (2020) found that our way of life, how we work in our environment, and how technology is utilized will impact and create new challenges for HRD theory, research, and practice. After a review and case study of the COVID-19 epidemic and its impact on business operations, future scholarly research will benefit HRD in strategic planning and crisis management for organizations.

Impact on Employees During Crisis and Disruption

The pandemic has created challenges and room to grow through vital strategies centered on employee wellbeing, safety, mental health, and flexibility. Gallup conducted a poll in 2020 from June 8-14, revealing U.S. employees and managers are 20% less likely than in May to agree that they feel prepared on the job, that their employer has a clear plan of action to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that their immediate supervisor keeps them informed (Gandhi, 2020). HRD tells stories, gives voice to their workers, exposes wrongdoing, and advocates for positive change in the organization. Bierema (2020) found that HRD scholars must be bolder in determining the benefits and working conditions that emerge from the pandemic.

Further research from Gallup suggested that global citizens' fears and confidence during crises in the last 80 years concluded that people look to leaders for crisis management and need trust, stability, compassion, and hope (Bierema, 2020). Employees are looking for leaders that can emerge from the pandemic and rethink ways to improve job satisfaction and productivity, focusing on remote work practices that can promote productivity, engagement, and overall well-

being. HRD scholars have an opportunity post-COVID-19 to research how the employees felt about employer response and HR strategies for improvement.

Human resources and human capital are not financial capital but are considered the most valuable asset that impacts the organization's success and ability to adapt. When employees leave the organization, their knowledge goes with them, and the ability to obtain that experience is affirmed during times of disruption or crisis. Organizations will reduce employees during times of crisis but still expect resiliency from their employees that remain. During the pandemic of 2020, research has found that employees respond differently during crisis or disaster situations, and any discomfort, fear, or frustration can impact productivity and performance. HRD can have an impact on connecting employees and their leaders. Employees' are looking to have a voice an address their concerns about remote work and suggest solutions to their leaders. HRD can impact communication at the organization by keeping employees informed and updated on their status and business operations. Dirani et al. (2020) found in uncertain times; morale can be impacted if the economy threatens jobs; employees are seeking boosted motivations and engagement with their supervisors. The pandemic has presented new challenges to employees in their new work environment. Supervisory support and HRD strategy can help leaders increase employee retention and performance during a crisis or disruption (Dirani et al., 2020).

Aligning Learning and Development with HRD Strategy

When the pandemic of 2020 hit, there was no playbook, as HR professionals stated. There was an expectation to respond to the crisis by adapting and acting quickly to a new working environment. It is essential to focus on resiliency and flexibility in the overall HR function. There are still issues the HRD research will need to explore. That is how HR leaders will prepare managers to lead remote teams for a duration of time, preserve the organizational

culture, and motivate employees in a cost-constrained virtual work environment. The challenge

with higher education and organizations was moving from ground to virtual operations.

Managers indicated they lacked the training to manage people virtually. Technology and

infrastructure were a challenge to moving operations to virtual 100 percent. While flexible work

arrangements were in place, research indicates that it lacked a technological support framework.

Evaluating the organization's capabilities to maintain a competitive advantage is paramount.

Panda et al. (2014) found that the organization's business strategy aligns with learning and

development (L&D), where the strategic lever for competitive advantage and execution can

happen. HRD framework enables the organization to evaluate and assess through knowledge,

skill set, and people's abilities. Professors were used in student-faced teaching and had not

typically taught online. Most institutions had adjunct faculty teach in their online programs.

Training and development are vital in responding to disruption and crises. In the

pandemic of 2020, professors could not react quickly to their classrooms, moving to virtual

online platforms due to lack of training. This is part of HRD and shows the lack of HR strategy

during this recent crisis. By aligning the business strategy with HRD, the better an organization

will perform overall. Executing an L&D strategy is a newfound process for implementing

strategy. Recent studies suggest that a learning development strategy can assist with strategic

execution. Part of this requires a learning leader to keep the organization moving when

challenges occur to the business. Leaders that take this approach can gain insight through these

challenges and determine a new strategy for better execution in the future. This can be done

through various assessment surveys, engagement surveys, and customer satisfaction surveys.

Further research is warranted to explore this type of change to the business culture is needed to

achieve the execution of strategy.

Flexible Work Arrangements and Their History

Historically, U.S. organizations have been reluctant to embrace virtual work due to constrictions with technology and trust factors associated with measuring performance in a virtual environment. Scholarly research indicates that flexible work arrangements have been looked upon either from organizations' or employees' viewpoints. The flexibility from each of those unique perspectives varies widely. The controversy established in the literature is that flexible work arrangements have been dominated by employer concerns and not from the employee's perspective for decades. The pandemic of 2020 forced the issue out in the open with the mandatory movement from ground operations to virtual operations. Leaders realized how inflexible their work from home policies was, and it was an area that had to alter due to the sporadic move to work from home situations. Carnevale and Hatak (2020) found that HRM challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic involved adjustments for new and current employees and their altered work conditions, implementing a new workplace policy to limit human contact in person. This research is essential to human resource development in how organizations respond to disruption by having crisis management plans involving a swift move to virtual operations or any other sporadic disruption or crisis that impacts business operations. Scholarly research indicates that flexible work arrangements have been explored either from organizations' or employees' viewpoints. Hill et al. (2003) found that flexible work arrangements were always seen as an exception to the expectation of the "ideal worker" and seen more to be accommodation to balance work/life balance. This research further found that these arrangements were a business imperative and should be a strategic business priority for reducing costs, increasing job performance, enhancing job satisfaction, and enhancing career opportunities.

The extent to which leadership embraces flexible work arrangements resolves around supervising and attitudes towards FWAs, the impact on training, recognition, and the norm. Sweet et al. (2017) found that managers can change their attitudes with strong practices and policies that advocate for FWA expansion. There was evidence in this research that flexible work arrangements improved job performance and played a critical role in enhancing workplace diversity and facilitating the family role. Sweet et al. (2017) found that flexible work arrangements were unevenly and sometimes sparingly distributed as leaders were reluctant to entertain the prospect of working differently. With the pandemic's impact in 2020, leadership had to quickly change how they felt about flexible work arrangements and found, in many cases, increased productivity out of their workers during the move to the virtual work environment. Research indicates that managers gained a greater skill-set in supervising when they were managing virtual employees. As research suggests that there was little support for long-term remote working, HRD strategy was not tailored to react to the recent crisis of 2020.

Strategy for building successful virtual teams is critical, and trust is at the crux of a successful outcome when creating and managing a virtual team and a work-from-home arrangement. Virtual teams had started to grow before the pandemic of 2020 and employed technology to measure productivity and performance with cross-functional teams. Organizations had found it desirable to have employees physically located with no permanent presence to address market concerns while utilizing organization-wide resources and expertise. These virtual teams existed and allowed the organization to minimize employee travel costs, gain access to knowledge across the globe, and maximize local employees' input for a project or routine task. Trust has been the previous focus of virtual teams and individuals working from home but not at the main headquarters. Many factors can impact successful virtual teams. Research shows a great

deal of trust is involved in that virtual teams are focused on outcomes, initiate interaction, and

have productive feedback with their leaders. As it is hard to observe day-to-day interactions and

nonverbal communication, the leader must be transparent and build and sustain trust. Ford et al.

(2017) found that the information flow can be limited in virtual teams, so ongoing

communication is key to virtual teams' success. Further research talks about the importance of

onboarding virtual teams to provide inclusion and extra information about the individual team

members, backgrounds and experiences, work style, and qualifications using technology for

face-to-face introductions (Ford et al., 2017).

SHRM talks about the pandemic and rise of working remotely in 2020 and business

continuity. Organizations were forced to comply and shift ground business operations to remote

work. Large tech organizations such as Google, Apple, Facebook, and Microsoft, which had

significant employee populations in Seattle, ramped up remote work plans for their employees

located around the world. Continued lockdowns have changed the way employees work in the

United States. According to Zeidner (2020), in 2017-2018, only 25 percent of workers in the

United States worked remotely, and only a few had days of which they worked at home,

according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Organizations did not embrace flexible work

arrangements to include remote working. So the question becomes, was HR strategy in place to

sporadically move operations to virtual during the pandemic of 2020? More and more

organizations began to embrace flexible work arrangements and remote work as critical in daily

business operations to prevent the virus's infection in the workplace. This was uncharted territory

as organizations struggled with measuring productivity. People managers found themselves ill-

equipped to understand how their workers are working, what tools they needed to work remotely,

and understanding their people's productivity in the sudden shift to remote work.

The pandemic of 2020 forced the issue out in the open with the mandatory movement from ground operations to virtual operations. Ab Wahab and Tatoglu (2020) found a balance between chasing productivity and balancing work/life balance in flexible work arrangements, and HR support is instrumental in deploying these efforts. The executive team's support is key to the human resource strategy's success in supporting flexible work arrangements. If there is a lack of executive team support, crisis management for a sporadic move to virtual operations does not exist. Several instances would demonstrate the need for flexible work arrangements. There could be a natural disaster like a hurricane, a mass shooting, or a pandemic that redefines what work looks like in this country. Neirotti et al. (2019) explored the design of flexible work practices for job satisfaction, and the relationship between job requirements and work disaggregation in different work arrangements is essential to this study. This research is necessary for establishing the importance of having flexible work arrangements available to respond to disruption or crisis during a unique moment in time. Neirotti et al. (2019) found that flexible work has become a vital characteristic of the modern workplace; current literature is incomplete regarding how it is supported by technology and the overall organization. There is evidence to support recent higher education challenges due to the current pandemic. Many institutions admitted that there was no plan to move higher education to a virtual learning environment. Infrastructure on the technical side was not in place to respond to moving students to virtual learning environments during the pandemic.

Recent scholarly studies suggest that traditional ground professors were not equipped from a technological standpoint to move to a teaching environment using interactive tools. Khalili (2020) found that interprofessional educators were expected to employ virtual education but lacked the knowledge and expertise to create and facilitate an engaged, positive, and

supportive online environment for their students. This falls under the human resource strategy

relating to training and development, one of the competencies to which SHRM measures human

resource practice. Professors that are only equipped to teach in-person learning can impact a

higher learning institution if they cannot transition to online learning during times of disruption.

This shows a lack of cross-training for professors in the classroom and the virtual classroom

environment. Murphy (2020) found that extraordinary times call for exceptional measures, which

is a common theme in education systems around the world, and response to the pandemic with

"emerging eLearning" protocols in the rapid transition from face-to-face classes to online

learning systems is paramount. Higher education will need to review human resource strategy

and the response during disruption to measure productivity, training, and adapting to new

learning systems that require virtual tools.

Top Management Support for HRD Efforts

Scholarly research suggests that HRD must support executive leadership to succeed in

developing critical strategies and execution. The alignment of HRD efforts with the executive

leadership team is essential to its business strategy and continuity. The executive team comprises

executives at the C-Suite level in organizational structure. The team has the authority to impact

corporate funding, resources, and human capital within the organization. Studies have linked

transformational leadership in the CEO to support collaboration with the organization's HRD

function. It is seen as a critical element to HR strategy success and implementation. Recent

SHRM research focuses on optimal HRD configurations, particularly the impact of

transformation leadership in a CEO to organizational and individual outcomes through

collaborative HRD. Transformational CEOs have a collaborative HRD system to foster the

desired behavioral results in their employees. They are capitalizing on high-tech and information

sharing, along with knowledge transfer, which impacts the organization's competitive advantage. Su et al. (2020) found in a recent study that CEO transformational leadership impacts HRD effectiveness and lower-level employees influencing individual effectiveness overall. Collaborative HRM relationships can affect the organizational level of turnover, employee morale, and innovative behaviors.

In the literature, HRD scholars have argued that executive leadership support and buy-in determine the Strategic Human Resource Development (SHRD) process, programs, and impact on organizational change and culture. The team influences job satisfaction and how the workforce commits to the organization's mission. The SHRD affects shared vision from the executive leadership team. Organizations that pursue a partnership with their HRD professionals can influence strategic execution from the top/down. Lee et al. (2017) found that executive leadership and support of HRD allows them to be successful in shaping strategy, securing budgets, implementing interventions, and gaining support from stakeholders. HRD can impact overall strategy as they directly link to the employees (Lee et al., 2017). Interventions are essential to discuss as it relates to how to respond to crisis and disruption. Partnering and empowering HRD practitioners allows them to execute the organization's mission, prepare for a crisis event, and impact employees and their lives. Establishing a clear direction and vision, sharing that vision for the workforce, and engaging in supportive behavior can impact organizational performance. Executive leadership affects the organization's vision and mission, impacting employee behavior and attitudes towards their shared goals. HRD and its strategy can facilitate a shared vision to execute strategy and maintain engagement in the execution of company strategy and redefined fiscal plans.

Past literature discusses a fundamental criticism that HRD is not aligned with its strategy and business needs. This leads to research that suggests the lack of alignment is due to not being an active participant in the business planning process and design. In my previous research, I found that the pandemic of 2020 has created a partnership with HRD to develop strategy and execution (Kinchen, 2020). HRD can create a plan for communication with the employees and deploy it to the organization. There is an opportunity for HRD to impact strategy through the job description, identifying a chance to update new competencies and behavior needed to execute the organization's strategy. According to Kinchen (2020), recent scholarly researchers such as Sablok et al. (2017) found that HRD alignment should be focused on strategic planning through which the human capital of the organization can grow and play a critical role in shaping the overall organization business strategy and development. HRD is the people driver of the organization and the pathway to the successful execution of strategy. In the past few years, SHRM has brought visibility and support to how HRD impacts the overall business strategy execution. According to Sablok et al. (2017), SHRM has linked HRD alignment to strategic management to include training and development in executing the organizational business strategy. While there are some limitations in the scholarly research to suggest human resource strategy links to corporate performance, it is clear in the recent literature that human resource strategy was lacking in response to the pandemic. Lack of strategy with people management can impact productivity and performance. It was reported that leaders lacked the training for managing a virtual workforce, and thus, productivity was affected in the early stage of the pandemic of 2020.

Recent Crises Experienced in the HRD Literature and Preparedness

Some crises impact people, communities, and organizations, which have a significant impact on business. Human resource practitioners are responsible for addressing issues that affect employees when a crisis occurs. In a natural disaster, employees at the organization that is impacted feel the sporadic emergency's effects. It is essential to include HR progressions in the emergency planning and crisis management plan to identify procedures and policies pertinent to employees' management during crises. According to Mann (2014), employees understand the policies and procedures of their organization as well as specific roles and responsibilities in disaster and response; however, stress occurs when it is unclear what they are facing at home and in the workplace. Some scholars argue that human resources have a "duty of care" responsibility for crisis management and employees' wellbeing. According to Harvey et al. (2017), global human resources have a strategic social responsibility to ensure that they are equipped to deal with global challenges.

Mann (2014) looked at the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The Mississippi Gulf Coast employees were unclear about their post-disaster duties in their workplace, which caused stress in their personal lives (Mann, 2014). These events that have occurred in the past have caused enormous financial loss and mismanagement of financial resources, providing work conditions to respond to various labor incidents, cybercrime, computer viruses, and union strikes. Natural disasters often disrupt the organization and can cause substantial damage and loss to business operations. Often these crises have caused the loss of human lives. Such terrorist attacks like 9/11 in the United States (2001), natural disasters like Hurricane Rita and Katrina of the United States (2005), the tsunami in Japan (2011), and other global disasters have intensified in

magnitude as time passes, impacting HRD crisis management and practice (Nizamidou &

Vouzas, 2018).

The experience of Hurricane Katrina impacted HRD in theory and practice relating to

crisis management. Post Katrina, research found that HRD can play an important role in crisis

management. There were several highlighted areas where HRD could make an impact during

crises such as natural disasters. Research has found a broader plan that consists of improving

employees' lives and their standard of living. Some lessons gleaned from HRD processes were

the critical sharing of information and several actionable items to support personnel development

during crises. HRD learned through Hurricane Katrina that it was necessary to implement

effective strategy and problem solving to impact action-learning scenarios such as rescuing

personnel and providing support services in crises. Simulation activities must be realistic so that

critical players' participation encompasses all variables, and follow-up meetings should be part of

the crisis management planning and execution.

The main takeaway is swift execution during an event like Hurricane Katrina. According

to Germain (2010), HRD can facilitate and network amongst agencies dealing with a particular

crisis by capturing and disseminating knowledge. Hurricane Katrina showed a need for

teamwork to be embedded and the collaboration firmly established during a disaster or crisis

event (Germain, 2010). HRD can harmonize operations to foster critical thinking and identify

clear roles to form a readiness team in crises. Such an approach should also permeate training

provided to officials within a readiness plan. Crisis management planning can be part of the

organizational culture. It is essential to challenge the norms and assumptions to improve crisis

response when new challenges present themselves. Human resource practitioners have a vital

role in creating a learning culture of individual development and reflecting and questioning

continually to better processes and improvement in managing crises. Learning at the organizational level can allow for goals and purpose to translate into a transformation of consciousness-raising. Part of advancing HRD should comprise a mission to impact societal and community outcomes for their support. Germain (2010) found that the lessons gleaned from Hurricane Katrina emphasized HRD involvement in agency support and community involvement, impacting employees struck by crises.

People are impacted by these events in feeling safe and confident when the crisis has passed to get back to their everyday lives. The development of events management strategies is critical for HRD in these situations that have impacted the business and employees during a crisis. Nizamidou and Vouzas (2018) found that the ultimate benchmark is to help organizations return to normalcy and minimize organizational losses.

HR strategy should be in place to manage sporadic events and the impact on business operations. Similar to the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic, organizations should be prepared to handle this continued disruption to structure and adapt to crises, whether financial or natural disaster, in addition to facing labor surplus and layoffs. According to Farndale et al. (2019), consciousness-raising may change if they cannot respond to crises and economic context. Further, vertical alignment with the disrupted financial condition, national context, organizational strategy, operational and leadership needs, and values needed for employees must occur to maximize its effectiveness (Farndale et al., 2019).

The HRD must ensure that organizations have trustworthy and prepared leadership in preparing them for adapting to crises. One of the common deficiencies is that crisis management planning fails to consider the employees before policies, procedures, systems, and infrastructure are finalized. Nizamidou and Vouzas (2018) found that even though HRD has a pivotal role to

perform during crises, organizations do not always have an HRD manager on the crisis

management team, and the framework should specify how activities conducted in response to the

crisis support the organization's goals. Employees at any organization must be provided with

some security and protection that sustains their operations and business continuity. HRD can

identify which candidates are most capable of organizing, planning, and implementing a crisis

management plan while protecting employees' interests (Nizamidou & Vouzas, 2018).

Virtual Environments and HRD Strategy

The world of higher education was impacted during the pandemic of 2020. Scholarly

research discusses the lack of strategy in moving traditional ground student learning to a virtual

learning platform. In many respects, traditional higher education was not ready to shift its

operations or have professors teach online. While the pandemic impacted many organizations'

business operations, it seemed as if higher education was feeling a similar impact. The rush to

move student-faced learning to the world of online learning lacked crisis management from

leaders and human resource leadership input the crisis management plans. Some institutions only

had some online classes, to begin with, and we are facing 100% online learning for the first time

in these institutions' histories. According to Li et al. (2020), comments were made to re-envision

higher education through the lens of human resource development (HRD) with three main

objectives, align pedagogy in higher education with HRD knowledge base, identify the

pedagogic opportunities arising from the sporadic digital pivot and recommending HRD

practices to facilitate the rapid adoption of digital pedagogy in higher education. These

comments indicate a lack of HRD collaboration or input to crisis management and process. HR

was left out of crisis management teams, and potential strategies to manage crisis and disruption

were not in place for specific events. In recent months of the pandemic, HRD has taken a

decisive role in crisis management to help employees in their new work environment. Higher education has also moved to involve HRD in opportunities to handle and respond to crises now and in the near future.

The current pandemic of 2020 has caused HRD to partner and work with leadership in executing business strategy and strategy in higher education. U.S. companies and learning institutions' direction and business strategy have seen a pivot with remote working and how to stay in business during successive government and statewide shutdowns. While current research is limited to showing how HRD impacts strategy execution, scholarly researchers will be reviewing how organizations adapted during the recent pandemic. Izumi et al. (2020) found research suggested that organizations and higher learning institutions were not prepared in their crisis management plans to address pandemics and continuity for extended periods. The pandemic of 2020 revealed that several organizations were not prepared for the global pandemic and lacked business continuity.

Further research indicated that while organizations and universities had some form of crisis management, they lacked a permanent emergency management office or business continuity plan to deal with a prolonged pandemic situation. According to Izumi et al. (2020), 30% of higher education institutions revealed they lacked strategy and needed to move urgently to respond in this area with better plans and resources to impact global scale disasters, including pandemics. A study showed that 67% of universities admitted that they did not have a business continuity plan where instructions were communicated quickly, and information shared to generate a smooth process.

The shutdown stemming from the pandemic of 2020 resulted in the nation's economy shifting and moving to the new and uncharted territory of virtual business operations. The

sudden shift in operations has brought visibility to the practice of HRD in both developing new

strategies for virtual work and crisis management collaboration. With the furloughs and layoffs,

HRD strategy will be necessary for maintaining the execution of company metrics while

focusing on retaining employees concerned about their uncertainty. As the United States begins

to consider a reopening of the economy, HRD will be at the forefront of creating policies and

practice around bringing back employees safely following new guidelines from the CDC.

Partnering with executive leadership and having a seat at the table to best impact the employees

will help organizations define the new workplace of 2021.

HRD Strategy and Partnership

The current pandemic of 2020 has created a partnership with HRD on the development of

strategy and execution. HRD can impact the strategic planning process of the annual strategic

plan. HRD can create a plan for communication with the employees and deploy it to the

organization. HR strategy should be aligned with executive leadership so that all people/HR

programs connect to the organization's overall strategy. There is an opportunity for HRD to

impact strategy through the job description, identifying a chance to update new competencies

and behavior needed to execute the organization's strategy. Sablok et al. (2017) found in recent

scholarly research that "alignment is key and that HRD is focused on strategic planning through

which human capital of the organization can grow and play a critical role in shaping the overall

organization business strategy and development." Alignment is something that scholarly research

touches upon in that the HRD strategy and organizational strategy should align for the desired

business outcome. Academic research acknowledges that HRD is the people driver of the

organization and, therefore, the pathway to the execution of strategy and initial development of

the organizational strategic planning process. In the past few years, SHRM has brought visibility

and support to how HRD impacts the overall business strategy execution. SHRM has linked

HRD alignment to strategic management to include training and development in the execution of

the organizational business strategy (Sablok et al., 2017).

SHRM on HR Preparedness During Crises

Reviewing the SHRM viewpoint of the pandemic of 2020 is essential to understanding

how HR practitioners and leaders responded to the sporadic disruption to business operations.

Vantagen (2020) found that SHRM researched that two-thirds of organizations had a crisis

management plan and process, but less than half of those plans addressed disease. The pandemic

created a huge opportunity to make systematic changes in the workplace. Many organizations

have crisis management teams with representatives from HR, information technology,

operations, and legal members. According to Harbert (2020), such crisis management plans

should have been there all along, and organizations should make them permanent. Several trends

have emerged according to SHRM, including digitization, automation, and remote work. This

presents an opportunity for HRD to look at workforce planning processes. A McKinsey study

found that 33% of organizations spend more time on workforce planning over the next fiscal

year, ranked as the highest priority, more than recruiting, learning, development, and

engagement (Harbert, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic transformed HRM's role for good.

According to Aurelia and Momin (2020), it has brought new demands, new challenges, new

tools, and more responsibility towards all stakeholders. Some recent SHRM concerns address the

technology with the continued disruption of working from home. The IT firm Doodle revealed in

a survey that only 16% of HR professionals in the United States are prepared to use virtual

platforms for recruiting and onboarding activities, which begs the questions of whether HR is

prepared during times of crisis to meet the needs of the business during a crisis (Aurelia &

Momin, 2020). There is a demand for more research at different phases of the pandemic of 2020,

which explores insights into HRM's evolving role and the post-COVID-19 world of business

operations. SHRM often speaks to crisis management planning and how HRD is involved in

human capital. According to Nizamidou and Vouzas (2020), when it comes to a crisis

management plan, many organizations repeat the same error they prioritize operations systems

instead of paying attention to human capital. There is an interconnection between HRD and crisis

management, underscoring the strategic role the HRD may play in overcoming such crises.

During the pandemic, HRD scholars provided research to define how post-COVID-19

processes should look. Yawson (2020) discussed four levels of change consisting of anticipating,

formulating, accumulating, and operating. Research indicated that it is essential to look at

scenarios or provide "stories" about possible future crises. This allows for discussion about how

the pandemic shaped our way of life, how we worked, and how we used technology. HRD

research in post-COVID-19 aftermath is vital to adapting in practice. For these scenarios,

strategies should be determined for different conditions. The research focused on which HRD

functions to prioritize during another event and how elements like technologies, capabilities, and

assets will be required to execute strategy. HRD scholars focus on contingency elements required

for an options-based approach (Yawson, 2020). Steps to capture the most critical elements of

COVID-19 will determine options to exercise or abandon based upon need.

Hutchins (2008) found that HRD activities are vital to crisis management policies and

execution. Given there have been multiple organizational crisis events over the years, HRD

should consider factors outside of HR's commonly recognized areas like training, organization

development, and career development. They can be a significant contributor to crisis efforts in

organizations and business continuity. While the focus of HRD has been on those principles of

the HR foundation, crisis management is an opportunity as HRD is uniquely linked to employees at the organization. HRD must take an integrated and expanded perspective that considers emerging definitions of HRD in preparing and developing individuals to identify and respond to crisis events (Hutchins, 2008). Some of the research revealed that most crisis events arise out of natural disasters and terrorist attacks. However, the longest sustained temporal dimension, such as labor shortages or a pandemic, is not explored. How organizations plan for crises rather than incidents reveal the need for different HRD strategies. HRD scholars and practitioners consider how HRD might be impacted by prolonged and sustained disruption or crisis. These limitations provide HRD researchers the opportunity to inquire into how organizations manage crises and leverage HRD.

Theories to Support Research Factors

The universalistic approach theory to HRM shows the direct relationship of Human Resource strategy with its performance and productivity. The research questions discuss how human resources respond to a crisis, disruption, and overall response to specific situations during the pandemic of 2020. The contingency theory of leadership explores how specific situations can impact a leader's ability to act. If the human resource side of the organization lacks in flexible work arrangement policy, crisis management, and support, it can inhibit HR strategy and the ability to act; thus, impacting HR performance. The universalistic approach to HRM is considered the best practice and approach in human resource management. Iqbal (2019) found in universalistic practice that human resource management has an impact on organizational performance in two ways: human resources basic and developmental needs which an HR has to possess like employment security, recruitment, job design, incentive pay, and high wage, which influences employees' motivation and enthusiasm which promotes performance towards the

organization. This is critical to the research questions in how they explore preparedness during crisis or disruption. The theory explores if basic employee needs are being met, which impacts HRD and employees' performance. The universalistic approach theory to HRM explores HR preparedness during a crisis and correlates with performance and productivity if employees' employment security or motivation are impacted. The pandemic has presented employee vulnerabilities in uncertainty in their job security and direction because of rapid deployment to a work-from-home situation.

The contingency theory of leadership has required that scholars recognize the context of situations that can disrupt a leader's effectiveness. According to Waters (2013), the contingency theory of leadership explores an applied cookie-cutter approach to understanding leadership by examining an individual's traits and skills. Data suggest that contingency theory studies demonstrate the impact of the situations and predict the probability of leadership effectiveness for a given situation (Waters, 2013). One of the critical aspects of the contingency theory of leadership is that it does not expect to lead in every case examined but tries to place leaders in optimal conditions. The research questions relate to and explore whether HR or people leaders were put in optimal conditions to impact the pandemic. With the pandemic of 2020, HRD leaders and people leaders had to respond to crises and disrupt their work environment. People leaders struggled in the new virtual environment to lead virtual teams and anticipate needs with remote employees and family situations. The theory applies to skillset and whether people leaders could manage employees remotely during the pandemic. Without those individual traits, it can impact productivity and performance if lacking in a leadership role.

Attribution theory asserts that people seek to explore and understand the events they have encountered. Fritz Heider originally developed this theory in the early part of the twentieth

century. Hewett et al. (2017) found that attribution theories, HR attribution theory, are utilized in

HR to explain attributions of behavior and events within HR functional domains. Going back to

Heider's theory, employees make internal and external attributions relating to the intent of HR

practices. Internal attributions are within the organization's control, while external attributions

are out of its control. For example, to enhance commitment would be internal, whereas union or

legal compliance would be external forms of control. The support for flexible work arrangements

within the organization would be the internal attribution, while the pandemic of 2020 would fall

under the external attribution and not within its control. The second area or dimension of

Heider's theory is whether HR practice's intended outcomes positively or negatively impact the

employees. The intended outcomes that can affect employees relating to the research questions

explore whether HR strategy was present to react to disruption or crisis, impacting employees

directly. The third dimension focuses on the practice where wellbeing and exploitation focus on

the individual, affects performance or productivity, or the organizations' cost-saving approach.

The third dimension correlates with the research questions on how HR handled issues directly

impacting the workforce during the pandemic. The question allows for HR leaders, people

leaders, or individual contributors to answer how the pandemic affected their wellbeing,

impacting their performance. This impacts productivity and performance with the sporadic move

of business operations to virtual business operations. The external attributions would not be

expected to relate to the latter two dimensions because employees would see it outside an

organization's control. The dissertation's theoretical foundation applies to the specific problem

statement by exploring human resource development, responding to crisis management, and

managing sporadic disruption to business operations.

Summary of the Literature Review

The current contributions to the field of HRD are found in scholarly literature. The focus was on flexible work arrangements and human resource strategies that emphasized flexible work arrangements to meet employer and employee needs. The strengths of current literature are that they lead to a specific problem statement. The scholarly focus was on whether executive leadership at various organizations could trust a virtual work environment or provide flexible work assignments. The literature indicated there had been pros and cons in implementing these types of work arrangements. This is attributed to the lack of human strategy in place for the crisis management involved in moving ground operations to virtual during the pandemic of 2020. The literature's overall weakness would suggest that scholarly studies were not as focused on flexible work arrangements or different levels of crisis management when studying the field of human resource development. Understanding human resource strategy and its impact on overall business performance and productivity is lacking in the literature. The next steps for research will be to review HR and crisis management, HR and flexible work arrangements, trust from organizations involving flexible work arrangements, and additional new academic research involving pandemic 2020 and human resource strategy. The research gap addressed in the case study explored the perception of U.S. individual contributors, people leaders, and HR leaders during the swift and mandatory change in business operations during the pandemic of 2020.

There were six themes identified that emerged during the research process of the participant interviews and the survey respondent results for triangulation. These shared commonalities with the literature discussing human resources during disruption and crisis. Communication was the main issue for human resources during crisis and disruption and communication related to the partnership between the executive team and human resources.

Participants indicated that communication was a problem, and constant miscommunication from the top/down caused chaos. The second theme that emerged was organizations not having a policy to allow for work-from-home arrangements and the lack of support for virtual work arrangements prior to the pandemic of 2020. This theme was in keeping with the literature that suggested work from home, or flexible work arrangements were not always supported. Theme three was the infrastructure of which the word chaotic and sporadic resonated with interviewed participants and survey respondents to describe infrastructure in place prior to the pandemic and how infrastructure held up during the pandemic with the rapid move to remote operations. Literature was lacking in this area, so this was an anticipated theme regarding how organizations would handle infrastructure during the shift to remote work. Theme four emerged to describe the lack of training for leaders for managing remote teams. The literature suggested that training and development might be lacking with leading remote teams. Theme five revealed that the transition to move office operations to remote operations was smooth. Theme six emerged regarding organizations lacking a crisis management plan to adjust to long-term closures prior to the pandemic. Interview participants and survey respondents revealed that no crisis management plan addressed a long-term closure related to a pandemic. The current literature was lacking on crisis management. While there was crisis management for hurricanes, tornadoes, and often research discussing active shooter type events, nothing was present involving long-term closure. Participants indicated they had a crisis management plan that handled hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, mass shootings, and other events, but not something in place that would require a long-term closure that continues to impact organizations. This was in keeping with the literature discovered during the research process.

Research suggests that HR practitioners can play an essential role in supporting practices involving crisis. Limited research explores concrete ways that make for a challenging environment for HRM. Leaders who adapt to help their workforce cope with sporadic changes to their work and social network are vital. Employees around the world are likely working from home and will encounter challenges as they do so in the presence of their families and everyday work plan. Many employees are also handling their children's education as their learning environment has been sporadically moved from in-person engagement to virtual engagement. Gigauri (2020) found that HRM policies and practice influences employee behavior and performance, and overall wellbeing. HRM has been challenged with addressing the new workplace stressors that can arise out of employees' inability to connect as they are used to doing. Employees depend upon timely access to information and resources, which can create anxiety and job burnout.

The role of HRD is to ensure employee safety and allow for flexibility, which might amount to fragmented work as family boundaries are removed. Organizations can support their employees by maintaining an adequate family role in balancing work from home and family responsibilities. It is important to note that single employees can face loneliness and social isolation in the new work-from-home arrangement. HR strategy can evolve to address the initial crisis and people aspect in understanding teleworkers' challenges and their risk of isolation. According to Gigauri (2020), the post-pandemic opportunity has presented itself for e-HRM to arise utilizing information technologies and virtual platforms to positively influence firm innovation and enhance forms of recruitment, selection, and training instead of face-to-face interactions.

Organizations will prioritize the post-COVID-19 situation in ensuring the health and

CDC guidelines of safety for their employees, and leaders will focus on the next set of workforce

challenges with a crisis management plan. One of the challenges will be recovery and tension

associated with examining the workspace and CDC guidelines. The research detailed the

perception of what recovery entails. The importance of the organization's mission and core

values integrating wellbeing was a critical element of recovery. They are rethinking the potential

of employees and what can be achieved if remote work continues for individuals and teams.

HRD practitioners will focus on moving into the future with several critical actions that include

recovery and sound workforce strategy focused on leaders' action, ensuring safe workspace, and

arming workers with the skillset and training needed to meet work requirements in meaningful

work. Rethinking the workplace is critical as the pandemic continues into 2021 and responds to

continual rapid shifts to virtual work as part of the transition plan. Communication to the

employees will focus so that employees understand the organization's steps during the pandemic.

HR priorities will change as the new resiliency era requires HRD to respond rapidly to changing

business requirements.

HRD can play a strategic new role as change agents to support employees across many

occupations. HRD can support employees through frequent engagement that is substantive and

interactive, creating authentic communication with colleagues in a virtual space. This will build

organizational resilience during this challenging time. HRD practitioners have an opportunity to

prepare employees, teams, and the organization to prepare for work from home situations

involving displaced workers. This may be the future of work, and managing that change in

partnership with executive leadership will be critical moving into 2021. As this is a new

unexplored frontier, HRD can bridge employees with leaders to have open discussions about

coping, responding, and preparing for the future when sporadic disruption or crises occur. Li et al. (2020) found that there was not a positive view about work from home arrangements pre coronavirus as the workplace was defined by physical, face-to-face work-life. Some employees enjoyed going to work and socializing throughout the day to transform their role and the organization. It is the collaboration and interaction that drives employees to go above and beyond, some would argue.

Transition and Summary of Section 1

Working from home is now a new challenge, which presents an opportunity for HRD to create new ways to introduce new remote work policies and plan for a new workspace that might include a hybrid of work from home or the in-person physical presence. HRD has an opportunity to collaborate and support a new way of recruiting and onboarding employees and helping employees by providing the tools they need to be successful in a virtual environment. The ability to be agile and pivot when future disruptions occur will be critical to HRD success and the organization's success. Section 2: The Project revisited the purpose statement along with a discussion on methodology, the role of the researcher, flexible design, ending with population and sampling.

Section 2: The Project

The case study project consisted of the interview process with selected participants sharing their experiences during the pandemic of 2020 related to the human resource response to crisis and disruption of sporadically moving ground operations to a virtual work environment. The qualitative research paradigm intends to understand a particular event, role, group, or interaction where the researcher, over time, makes sense of the event by comparing, replicating, and classifying the object of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative case study was to explore the participants' perception and experience during the disruption experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 to their work environment and provide a descriptive analysis, including psychological response to how participants observed human resource strategic preparation before and during the disruption. The larger problem stems from the lack of research and focuses on human resource strategy during disruption or crisis. This case study contributed to the body of literature around HR strategy and crisis intervention methods for handling sudden and sporadic changes to the work environment. The participant's meanings in the entire qualitative research process keep the researcher focused on exploring what the participants hold about the problem or issues, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research (Creswell, 2014). It was essential to focus on the participants' perception of the problem and allow the process to change or shift after collecting the data and doing the analysis. Adham et al. (2018) found that experiential learning occurs in qualitative case study research through the candidates' experiences resulting in them learning something by the lesson learned from that experience, called reflective learning. The purpose of the case study

method was to determine and explore the rapid move from the ground to the virtual work

environment and how HR strategy plays a role in response to disruption.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher conducted an independent interview process with follow-up as needed to

clarify specific questions related to the specific problem statement. It was essential to avoid

personal bias in the interview process in identifying experience as a human resource practitioner.

This type of bias can be what researchers refer to as bracketing, which refers to the researcher's

identification of personal experience, cultural factors, assumptions about the study, or any

hunches that can influence the study's outcome. The researcher had set aside assumptions during

the study so that the data could be presented appropriately per participant. The researcher

explained the study without biasing the potential participants before the interview process.

Interviews were appropriately conducted following the qualitative design of the study. It was

necessary for the researcher to make appropriate field observations. Handling data per design is

essential in analyzing and interpreting the data outcome and keeping with data integrity. The

researcher's role in qualitative research is to assess the perception of its participants, which can

be a daunting task. This involves interviewing people about something personal to them, and

while it might be fresh in the participant's mind, it required reliving the experience. The primary

responsibility of the researcher was safeguarding participants and their data that were shared

with the researcher. Part of that was clearly articulating to the participants that data would be

safeguarded and approved by the research ethics review board before the study/interview process

commenced.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted using a flexible design of the qualitative method(s); specifically, a case study design was used. When using the qualitative research method, the researcher is inextricably linked by understanding how selves shape, create and construct the research, interpretations, analysis, and theory in the qualitative data (Yeh & Inman, 2007). The appropriate method for the qualitative study was to collect and analyze data around the problem statement. Cypress (2018) noted a qualitative study that explores an understanding through data collection should focus on its conclusion without bias. Using the methodology for data collection and analysis begins after determining the research design's specific and preliminary steps. The research questions defined were the starting point assisted in the primary design process. Cypress (2018) noted the researcher in a qualitative study gathers data and utilizes it to analyze the problem's direct relationship or nature. The type of data explored was an informal interview process of participants to determine how the human resource strategy was present during the move from traditional work to a virtual work environment during the pandemic of 2020. Data analysis techniques included developing and assessing human resource strategies during the pandemic. The qualitative research method's approach focused on the commonality of the shared experience of individual contributors and leaders concerning human resource strategy during times of disruption. The researcher constructed a universal interpretation of the event, experience, or situation arriving at a strong understanding of the specific problem.

Discussion of Flexible Design

The design is a case study. It is the appropriate design because it sought to understand how the pandemic impacted human resource strategy in moving business operations to a virtual environment. The research methodology sought to understand how individual contributors and

leaders perceived the human resource strategic response to moving operations from a traditional

to a virtual work environment. The design was flexible. It is iterative and emergent and may

require the researcher to change or adapt the research process as the data reveals emerging

results. Qualitative research is different from quantitative research allowing for the flexibility to

pivot throughout the research process.

Discussion of (Chosen Method)

My research paradigm is interpretive. After reviewing the different qualitative research

methods, the interpretive approach is aligned with the case study research design. The researcher

must rely on its participants and their perspective towards the study situation, understanding the

research is based on the participant's background and experiences (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

The research paradigm means the researcher did not begin with theory but focused on developing

an organizational theory from a pattern of interpretation using a qualitative data collection

method. The study sought to build an argument around human resource strategy and preparation

during disruption adapting to a flexible work arrangement during times of crisis. There is a

variety of methodology in how data are collected in qualitative research to include observations,

analysis from books or video, and an individual or group's interview process. Some of the most

common methods in a qualitative method are interviews or focus groups.

Discussion of Method(s) for Triangulation

Triangulation was used to collect data about the same phenomenon. The survey was a

random data collective process in asking a series of questions similar to the participants'

interview process. The researcher sought triangulation from a different data source by examining

additional evidence from sources to build coherence and justification. This supported the validity

of the study. The survey allowed for a similar data stream to be collected about the same

phenomena related to the human resource response during disruption or crisis. Triangulation is typically used in qualitative studies and may consist of interviews, observation, or field notes. In this case, a survey that draws from participants' experience in how they perceive human resources during times of disruption can be used for triangulation and the interview process with participants selected for the case study. This leads to determining the validity of the study.

Summary of Research Methodology

The research paradigm started with the philosophy of Edmund Husserl's and Wilhelm Dilthey's interpretive understanding called hermeneutics, taking the approach in the research of understanding the human experience. The study relied upon how participants perceived the current situation of moving from traditional work to virtual work and the perception of human resource strategy and preparation during the crisis of 2020. The design guided the research study by focusing on human resource strategy and disruption to the work environment.

Participants

Participants in the case study interview process consisted of human resource professionals, people leaders, and individual contributors. This was done purposefully in terms of the selection process. As typically found in qualitative research, this does not suggest random sampling or selecting a large number of participants. The number of participants depended on the type of qualitative study, four to five cases in a case study design (Creswell, 2014). The case study focused on a population that worked in various industries during the pandemic of 2020 in the United States. This provided a unique perspective as each participant had a different observation of the phenomenon. These individuals had a different perspective on how human resources handle disruption or crisis coming from their current role in their organization. The pandemic of 2020 was discussed to learn the perceptions of these participants. This cross-section

of participants allowed for a different perspective in the case study in how human resources

responds in times of crisis or disruption, mainly focused on the specific problem statement. Upon

approval from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board, a consent form (see Appendix B)

in addition to a recruitment template (see Appendix B) was sent to engage participants both in

participant interviews and for survey monkey survey respondents. Participant interview's

preferred method of contact was an email, of which agreed upon a time for Zoom meeting was

discussed and scheduled. I was flexible with the interviewees' scheduling and their availability,

understanding that during the data collection process, I would have to adjust and make

adjustments to the interview schedule. I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board

at Liberty University prior to sending out consent forms (see Appendix B).

I was flexible with my interviewees' schedules and availability; while understanding

throughout the data collection process, I may have to make special arrangements or reschedule,

understanding participant schedules might change. However, I first obtained approval from the

Institutional Review Board at Liberty University. I sent a consent form (see Appendix B) to

prospective research participants. Research participants were contacted electronically, discussing

the research study and selecting a convenient time for the Zoom interview, which was recorded

in a private location. Additionally, the survey monkey for survey respondents and triangulation

was created following the approved guidelines from the Institutional Review Board at Liberty

University and of which the anonymous survey required consent to proceed, and data were

collected from 135 survey respondents for triangulation purposes.

Population and Sampling

The population consisted of 15 participants in the in-depth interview process. The

interviews were conducted in person using a Zoom call to conduct the questions relating to the

case study and specific problem statement. Sampling via a survey consisted of additional survey

participants for triangulation with interview participants related to the phenomenon of how

human resources reacted to disruption and crisis, particularly during the pandemic of 2020. The

qualitative research for this case study should be stressed by conducting in-depth interviews

instead of random sampling. The emphasis was on quality rather than quantity with the aim to

not maximize numbers but to reach saturation with how human resources handle crisis or

disruption. The specified criteria were to interview participants that work in various

organizations to gauge their perspective on the specific problem statement and their willingness

to speak freely with the interviewer. In qualitative research, interviews are one method where a

case study can reach data saturation. Research suggests that the number of interviews needed for

a qualitative study cannot be quantified. It was necessary for the interview questions to be

structured to facilitate asking multiple participants the same questions; this facilitates data

saturation. When conducting the interviews, one area to have caution is that the interviewer

might have technical information on the topic, which may overshadow the data, whether

intentionally or inadvertently, so care must be taken. In contrast, data collection and data

saturation were secured.

Discussion of Population

The case study population comprised of professionals who work in the United States and

experienced disruption during the pandemic of 2020, evaluating the human resource response to

the crisis. The population consisted of 15 eligible business professionals within the United

States. They worked in various business roles to create a unique perspective to gauge the

perception of the pandemic of 2020 and response from human resources in their workplace in

moving ground operations to virtual sporadically. This was appropriate for the study as the

researcher evaluates how human resources handled crises and unexpected disruption, using the

specific problem statement addressing the pandemic of 2020.

Discussion of Sampling

Sampling is the researcher's selection process to participate in the research investigation

on the ground and provide relevancy to the research problem. In some cases, the researcher

cannot collect everything in a qualitative research interview process, but this entails a subset of

the population referred to as a sample when following a research inquiry. The sample frame is a

device that evaluates the researcher's population of interest or study. The sample frame defines

elements from which the researcher selects an identified sample of the target population. If the

study refers to comprehensiveness, the degree to which the sampling frame covers the entire

target population for the case study. The sample frame consisted of a list of things to draw the

researcher's sample. For example, it can be names of people identified for the interview process;

the sample space would consist of all the possible interview outcomes: one person, two people,

up to 10 or more. The sample size of 15 participants allowed for saturation when data in all

categories were saturated, and gathering new data no longer sparked insight or revealed any new

properties (Creswell, 2014).

Summary of Population and Sampling

In summary, the population and sampling used in the interview process for the qualitative

case study allowed for saturation to determine validity. Judgment sampling was used

subjectively and relied on the researcher's judgment when selecting or choosing participants.

Participants were chosen to reflect a cross-section of unique individuals and position types with

different experiences during the pandemic of 2020 to reflect on their opinion or elicit views of

the specific problem statement. The researcher chose a sample to approach participants with

specific or individual characteristics specifically. This type of sampling can be seen when individuals are canvassed for public opinion in qualitative research theory. Qualitative research allows for the researcher to purposefully select participants that allow for the researcher to understand the specific problem statement. Interviews are appropriate when participants cannot be directly be observed, which allows for the researcher to control the line of questioning.

Data Collection and Organization

The data collection and organization of the project were key to the success of the case study and outcomes. This was broken down in how the data were collected and triangulated for validity. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative data can be instrument data, observational checklist, or numeric records, such as census data. The intent of the data collected was to locate and obtain information from a smaller sample of participants but to gather extensive information from the sample of participants.

Data Collection Plan

The data collection plan consisted of Zoom conducting interviews with business professionals in the following roles: human resource professional, individual contributor, and people manager. It was important to get the overall point of view from these professionals as it relates to human resource preparedness during crisis or disruption. The data were collected using an interview guide so that there was consistency with the interview process. This was appropriate for case study qualitative research. Member checking and follow-up interviews occurred to validate the participant's responses for validity and accuracy. An additional survey of questions was executed with triangulation in mind. This was placed on the Survey Monkey platform to gauge response around interview questions to triangulate interviews and increase the validity of the case study. The data collection strategy collected data from October through November 2021,

which included bi-monthly, 45-minute interviews recorded by Zoom. A survey of 135 candidates

was conducted to determine triangulation in October 2021.

Instruments

Instruments were used to give a semi-structure to the interview and survey processes to

triangulate the study. Appendix I. provides the semi-structured interview for participants in the

case study. Each question asked addressed the research questions provided for the case study.

Interview questions are useful because the researcher is looking for the story behind a

participant's experience, which can provide in-depth information around the specific problem

statement. The survey for triangulation was conducted by Survey Monkey to engage 135 full-

time U.S. participants, all genders and household income up to $200,000 to survey participants

on their perspective on how human resources handles crisis and disruption. Archival data are the

information that is already present from other scholarly research, considered secondary data, or a

similar effort to compare to the new case study research. The current data addresses the research

questions as they relate to the specific problem statement. The current scholarly research was

timely and ongoing during the pandemic of 2020, which established human resources able to

adapt to crisis and disruption. Further, the scholarly research discussed a lacking of crisis

management plans to address the pandemic of 2020.

Data Organization Plan

The data were organized by interview process and follow-up questions if needed as well

as information that came from the additional survey to triangulate. Archival data supported the

case study interview and survey process through current research on human resource response

during times of crisis and disruption. This is appropriate to determine perspective in the case

study on how human resource professionals handled crisis and disruption during the pandemic of

2020 with the move from ground operations to virtual. Kegler et al. (2018) found that qualitative methods help us understand the context, explore the phenomena, identify new opportunities for research questions, and uncover new models of change. These qualitative methods of inquiry were key to evaluating context exploring new phenomena in different perspectives, which led to extending theory.

Summary of Data Collection and Organization

Data collection and organization were key to the case study outcomes. It is important to stay organized and aware of the procedure in a qualitative case study. The researcher should focus on inductive and deductive data analysis. Qualitative researchers are attempting to see patterns, categories, and themes in order to build from the bottom up. By being inductive, the researcher is working back and forth in identifying themes and the database of responses until the research at such time can establish themes. By being deductive, the research can look back at the data to see if they must gather more information.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was important, and the semi-structured interview provided in Appendix I. allowed for me to elicit similar core information from each one of my participants but allowed for flexibility based on position and provided for a rich description of what the participants experienced and share-alike. Coding interrater reliability development of themes were important to qualitative analysis of data. I reviewed the participant's interviews to find meaningful units in their words and sentences to convey a similar meaning identified and coded. The coding procedure and process allowed for interpreting text and similar portions of information. It was important to evaluate and identify the meaningful units to show linkage to identified and common themes. With this case study, I was seeking to identify common perceptions and themes

by position or job title. Linking direct quotes from the participants to support a rationale for each

common theme was helpful to identify and distinguish trends of the various participant

perceptions. It was important to handle and sort the data facilitating emerging primary and

secondary themes that impact the research outcome.

Emergent Ideas

Emergent ideas connect to the data and the problem the researcher is examining. The

contingency of interpretation is a correlation of emergence reflecting a theory. The word

emergent in design is traditional to qualitative research methods and is not predetermined. If a

design emerged, it was not finalized, and the strategy for data collection remained open

depending on context. Revisions due to emergent ideas were made until the researcher had the

greatest potential for discovery and meaning, and generated new questions. Qualitative

researchers have the option to revise as the research progresses as a qualitative design evolves

and likely will not have clarification until data collection ends.

Coding Themes

Qualitative researchers can become skilled at coding and finding common coding themes

or patterns through analytical induction. Various ways to make sense of the data are provided as

graphics, video, audio, and text which require clear examination aided by theory, models, and

perhaps metaphors. As qualitative data are less prescribed, the main goal is to discover new ideas

and associations. New techniques, strategies, and procedures aid the qualitative researcher in

extracting meaning from the data and improve interpretation to enhance the complex

phenomena. One aspect of qualitative data is the constant comparison which is a process that

begins with reasonable codes, categories, and themes (i.e., emerging theory). The source of the

data is compared to tentative theory, which becomes a task of constantly comparing emerging,

but tentative new information until the scheme for classifying the meaning of data becomes

coherent. The "core" category defines properties and dimensions integrating the top of the

conceptual hierarchy. The goals were to form a storyline for communicating elements of the

generated theory of the case study.

Interpretations

There are many interpretations considered before the researcher built a coherent

argument revealing how the research concluded. Qualitative researchers use deductive reasoning

if a very specific hypothesis can be deduced from the general theory, which allows for qualitative

researchers to explore common data collection methods such as interviews, observation, and

retrieval of documents. Qualitative researchers can predict outcomes that are evident through

interpretation. Qualitative data lives in narrative text, commonly gathered from interviews,

survey questions, journals, recorded observations, or existing documentation. To combine into

the meaning of an interpretation, this data must be sorted, interpretations are considered, and

eventual conclusions reached. Conducting the interview process produced many detailed notes,

so this information was critical to examine and carefully interpret while challenging synthesis.

Data Representation

Qualitative interpretivism has greater flexibility when data analysis happens. These

research methods are not routine, so there are different ways to think about the research and

interpretation. A creative approach can be used, which contributes to the science with a strong

chain of reasoning multiple sources of evidence that converge. This supports the explanation and

representation with convincing arguments and solid data collected. It is important to visualize the

date for interpretation. This allows the researcher to show correlation and representation of the

data outcome. Scholars write about data representation implying that researchers do anything to

retell participant stories, but it can be intrusive or presumptuous if trust is violated. These stores

make for changes in attitudes, policy, and practice. Qualitative study is not just reproducing data

but interpreting participants that convey their opinion and views for interpretation. If researchers

fail to synthesize the data from their findings, there is a risk of having studies excluded.

Analysis for Triangulation

Satisfying the principle of triangulation increases the validity of the study conclusions.

The researcher should retrace their thinking to contribute to emergent new ideas and an

interpretive path not yet examined or any connection to early and newly developed themes.

Qualitative research relies on several ways of keeping data as memos and written ideas, as these

methods allow for the researcher to sort data into categories and define their properties to make

sense of them. Qualitative data reached a point of saturation, which signals the completion of the

study when the research can determine if there are diminishing returns and no need for further

sampling. It is important to achieve dependability in order to enhance the qualitative strategy,

such as triangulation. Triangulation combines data that are drawn from different sources and

from different people. Triangulation allows for new perspectives of data emerging apart from

interviews. Electronic data such as surveys are opening up further possibilities of triangulation

with traditional electronic data. The survey was a source of independent data for triangulation.

NVivo was used to manage the qualitative data from the multitude of sources used for the case

study. NVivo managed and organized the qualitative data from Word or Excel, and survey data

from tools such as SurveyMonkey. This allowed for imported research data from any source to

include interviews and surveys.

Summary of Data Analysis

Qualitative researchers, per scholarly journals, can struggle with the technological new age. The change can have implications for research practice. It is important that research is grounded in principle and procedure. The key element for interpretation in terms of the different types of qualitative data was to use techniques available for more than one type of analysis for triangulation. This allowed for the researcher to analyze the data but from different points of view, understanding the phenomenon fully.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two paradigms that take a different approach to establishing truth in a study. Regarding qualitative research, there are many points of view where on key criteria addressed by positivist researchers is the procedures developed for establishing reliability and validity. These procedures seek to ensure internal and external validity and objectivity, and reliability. This refers to the credibility or trustworthiness in evaluating the plausibility of research findings.

Reliability

Determining reliability means the researcher is demonstrating that the study uses a naturalistic approach seeking to interpret data collection procedures, and they can be repeated with similar results. Using a survey of similar participants determined the reliability of interview participants in the triangulation of the data compiled. The credibility of the research depended on the researcher's ability to determine the reliability of the member checking. When the researcher addresses the concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research, typically, this is referred to as credibility, which in turn refers to the trustworthiness of the study in terms of importance. Reliability leads to a credible and defensible result both in documenting high-quality research

and finding trust in the research itself. My objective was to maintain trustworthiness in the study and collect data as it revealed different perspectives and remained objective in the analysis. Leaving my bias out of the study was important to validate the interview process and survey responses for reliability and validity purposes. I showed that the findings are applicable to other contexts, using external validity and positivist paradigm. To establish reliability, I demonstrated credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility establishes confidence and truth in the researcher's findings. Transferability demonstrates that the findings from the research can be applied to other contexts by external validity. To establish reliability, dependability should show that the findings can be repeated.

Using survey responses in addition to the interview participant process, the dependability of the data established itself. Conformability is objectivity or neutrality to the findings of the study and that they are shaped by the participants and not the researcher. Saturation determined a repeated response gleaned from the interview process and survey participant responses. Patterns emerged and saturation was established within the research. According to Wuest (2011), interviews are a method to reach data saturation, therefore, the number of interviews needed for a qualitative study to reach saturation is a number that cannot be quantified. The interview questions must be structured to facilitate asking multiple participants the same questions so data saturation can be achieved. It is recommended that people that normally would not be considered be interviewed to avoid the shaman effect because someone familiar with the information might overshadow the data unintentionally (Wuest, 2011). As the researcher, I took care in the process to not hamper completion of data collection and data saturation, identifying appropriate participants that might not be as familiar with the purpose or subject of the study.

Validity

There are tests that the researcher did to determine the validity of the study. Construct validity is demonstrated when the researcher identifies operational measures to create a natural setting to attempt to interpret concepts or phenomena being studied and what it means to the participants. Internal validity seeks to establish a causal relationship that leads to other conditions in the research. External validity defines the researcher's findings in order to generalize the results. We show reliability when the researcher takes a naturalistic approach to better understand the data collection procedures.

Bracketing

This type of bias can be what researchers refer to as bracketing, which refers to the researcher's identification of personal experience, cultural factors, assumptions about the study, or any hunches that can influence the study's outcome. Researchers can use this method to mitigate unacknowledged preconceptions that relate to the research. This can increase the rigor of the project if there is a close relationship between the researcher and the topic. This also protects the researcher when they examine emotionally challenging material or subjects. If it is determined a lengthy research endeavor, the challenging topic can infuse the researcher with challenges. This can make the research an arduous process and skew results or interpretations by the researcher. Bracketing is an essential tenet of studying an event or phenomenology, requiring researchers to set aside their personal assumptions, theories, or inherent knowledge of the subject to not impact the research process (Baksh, 2018).

Summary of Reliability and Validity

The researcher sought to keep things consistent to determine whether the findings were accurate and similar. The researcher incorporated validity strategies to enhance the ability to

convince readers of accuracy. Using rich description to convey the findings of the research allow the readers to be transported (Creswell, 2014). Allowing for detailed descriptions adds validity and reliability to the findings of the study.

Summary of Section 2 and Transition

The qualitative case study sought for explanation an understanding of human resources during crisis and disruption. The research questions explored the relationship between the executive team and human resources with a successful understanding of the pandemic of 2020. I conducted participant interviews with individual contributors, people leaders, and human resource professionals that worked in the United States. Section 2 began with the reiteration of the purpose statement along with the methodology and design outlined for the population sample. Additionally, the survey was reviewed for triangulation. The discussion discussed how data would be collected, analyzed, and the reliability and validity would be achieved. In order to conduct a successful research project, the focus was on a strong qualitative case study and data collection. Reliability and validity were critical to the success of the study and in determining interview narrative and triangulation. The organization was paramount to data collection and in keeping with the anonymity of interview participants and survey respondents. The continued focus was on staying consistent in the data collection method and the overall triangulation so that validity was established in the case study method.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 of the case study assesses the professional practice and implications for change. Section 3 presented themes discovered from the interview process and the triangulation discovered from the survey process. Themes were compared to the interview and survey questions and how they addressed the problem statement. The relationship between the findings was reviewed at length. The application to professional practice and implications for change concludes the perceptions that were relevant to the research case study.

Overview of the Study

This qualitative case study was developed to address the problem statement of the study. From the research questions, participants in the interview process and survey process had to be aged 18-99, an individual contributor, people leader, or human resources professional working. The participant interview process and survey respondent process for triangulation allowed data to be collected to answer the four research questions and support the body of knowledge in human resource development. During the interview process, 15 participants were interviewed and 149 participants were surveyed, which were narrowed to 135 completed surveys versus preliminary surveys for triangulation. The interview process was conducted using Zoom, recorded, and lasted up to 45 minutes. There were five sections of research questions addressing: introduction of the participant, issues and ideology, relationship to the pandemic of 2020, flexible work arrangements, and the response from the organization during the pandemic of 2020. Additional insights were gained by the final interview question, which posed to the interviewees and survey respondents what they would like to add to their response. Survey respondent process for triangulation, research interview questions were kept very similar to the interview research questions to triangulate the response of the participant interviews and build coherent themes.

Presentation of the Findings

The presentation of findings section of the case study supports the emergent themes discovered and their alignment with the latest human resources literature available addressing times of crisis and disruption. In addressing the problem statement, 15 participants were interviewed, and 135 completed survey participants were surveyed to triangulate common themes. Once the research concluded, six themes emerged during the uncovering process.

Themes Discovered

Emergent themes were obtained during the open and axial coding process using NVivo software and platform. The coding process using NVivo allowed the data below by interviewing multiple participants and the survey process for triangulation.

Theme One: Communication during times of disruption and crisis with the HR team and the executive team.

Theme Two: No policy that allowed for work from homework arrangements prior to COVID-19.

Theme Three: Chaotic infrastructure during the shift to work from a home mode of operations.

Theme Four: No training or development for people leaders to lead virtual teams prior to the pandemic.

Theme Five: Sporadic transition in moving ground operations to virtual during the pandemic.

Theme Six: No crisis management plan in place to respond to COVID-19.

Missing Theme: The aftermath of working from a home mode of operations in terms of mental health and coming back to the office as we continue to redefine the workplace.

Interpretation of the Themes

There were six themes identified that emerged during the research process of the participant interviews and the survey respondent results for triangulation. Communication was the main issue for human resources during crisis and disruption and communication as it relates to the partnership between the executive team and human resources. Participants indicated that communication was a problem and constant miscommunication from the top/down. The second theme that emerged was organizations not having a policy to allow for work-from-home arrangements and the lack of support for virtual work arrangements prior to the pandemic of 2020. Theme three was the infrastructure of which the word chaotic and sporadic resonated with interviewed participants and survey respondents to describe infrastructure in place prior to the pandemic and how infrastructure held up during the pandemic with the rapid move to remote operations. Theme four emerged to describe the lack of training for leaders for managing remote teams. Theme five revealed that the transition to move office operations to remote operations was smooth. Theme six emerged regarding organizations lacking a crisis management plan to adjust to long-term closures prior to the pandemic. Interview participants and survey respondents revealed that no crisis management plan addressed a long-term closure related to a pandemic. Participants indicated they had a crisis management plan that handled hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, mass shootings, and other events, but not something in place that would require a long-term closure that continues to impact organizations.

Theme One: Communication. One unanticipated emergent theme that was prevalent during the interview and survey process was communication during crisis and disruption of both the pandemic of 2020 and between the organization's human resources and executive team function. Participants placed a strong emphasis on it during the interview process and the survey

process for triangulation. Understanding this was a different crisis to the organization than a

hurricane or mass shooting event; for example, the theme that emerged was communication and

was at the forefront of the research study. Misinformation was central to the participants, which

occurred when the CDC released different information daily, causing organizations to pivot daily

and change messaging daily to their employees. Employees were confused from individual

contributors, people leaders, and human resource professionals' standpoints. Participant 14

expressed that communication and being on top of it was critical to any organization. Participant

14 stated, "that the main issue is communication and how it is current and flowing in a way that

helps to dispel any worry or fear which is integral to an organization and its employees."

> Participant 9 discussed,
>
> communication as critical to the employees and organization as a whole and was key, that
>
> the executive team and communications team had to be out front all the time, that regular
>
> communications about what the organization was doing, what the organization wanted to
>
> do, and how the organization wanted to address things during the pandemic played an
>
> integral part in the success of his team and the six-week transition.

Theme Two: Virtual Work. Virtual work was prevalently not in place, according to

interviewees and survey participants prior to the pandemic. Participants shared in the interview

process that while some employees could work from home for health reasons or a one-time

request for accommodation, virtual work was not part of their work policies. A critical area of

the research as organizations rapidly moved their operations on-site to remote/virtual operations

overnight during the pandemic. When asked if there was support for virtual work from home

prior to the pandemic of 2020 or if there was a policy in place, or if virtual work was frowned

upon, Participant 9 stated, "no, however, I think COVID-19 has enlightened us to the need for

more flexibility in work arrangements." Participants in the interview process conveyed an

unwillingness for their organizations to consider work from home arrangements. This aligns with

the scholarly research that organizations largely frown upon flexible work arrangements because

they feel performance and productivity cannot be measured effectively in a remote work

situation. Participant 2 stated that

> while we did offer flexible arrangements based on employee need, it was not necessarily
>
> a policy as much as a recognition that certain people during different courses of their
>
> lives need to pick up their kids from school or needed to be able to coach their kids in
>
> little league, or have standing doctor's appointments that they need to get to or have
>
> second jobs, so we accommodated that; however, there was not a permanent work from
>
> home policy in place.

Participants conveyed that their remote work experience was proof that people can be honest and

work from home in a productive manner. Participants shared that work/life balance, a phrase

thrown around over the years, came to fruition during the pandemic of 2020 when people could

work virtually, take care of their families and produce at the same time.

> **Theme Three: Infrastructure in Place**. A theme was prevalent in the research that

revealed that infrastructure was not a smooth transition during the rapid move from office

operations to remote work. Most times, the participants described chaos or sporadic involving

the shift of computer equipment, network access, network security, and the change to working

from home environment. In many cases, the interview participants and survey respondents

indicated that this was a chaotic moment for their organization and most organizations at that

time. While it was clear that infrastructure was not always in place to handle a massive move to

remote operations, other challenges emerged (e.g., the lack of equipment, security concerns,

network access, or broadband to handle a historical number of employees using this access at once). Participants revealed challenges from a software perspective regarding how they were going to communicate and leverage software with their teams remotely and create a working relationship remotely. Participant 2 indicated the challenges with infrastructure at the beginning of the pandemic by stating,

> our stumbling block was that not everybody was set up to work remotely, we still had people issued desktops versus laptops, we had access issues from a network security standpoint that we had to work through, and while I think overall that we probably adjusted as best we could, it took 30 days, maybe 45 days for all of those issues to be rectified, and it was just a simply a matter of not being ready to be 100% remote with our corporate offices.

Participant interviews and survey respondents for triangulation revealed that while their organizations were not ready, there was an eventual adjustment to provide this new environment to their employees depending on position and make those accommodations. Participant 9 indicated there were many things to consider with the rapid move to work from a home mode of operations. It had to do with technology and whether it was in place or not. Participant 9 stated,

> we had to look at the technology piece of this, right, so the equipment necessary for those folks that had systems at home, what were the applications that we needed to leverage, how would we get the licensing for that, how would we roll it out, how do we ensure the security is in place for it, what are the policies necessary from an HR perspective for a broader scope of work at home and ours, and so I think that there was a lot to consider that we maybe had not considered for a broader scope, that being said, the team just buckled down and put in much burning the midnight oil to adapt.

Theme Four: Training and Development to Manage Remote Teams. The theme was prevalent in the research after interview participants and review survey respondents for triangulation revealed that training and development for leaders were not in place for managing virtual teams. Interview participants indicated they had training and development, sometimes professional development for their leaders; however, nothing prepared them to provide that type of training for their remote workers and lead a remote team. Participant 6 acknowledged that the organization was not ready with training and development for remote teams. Participant 6 stated,

> now, that is one of those areas that we had to do some work on, which we were not ready for, we were not where we needed to be, and so we have had to develop training to help facilitate that.

This emerging theme presents a challenge as a rapid shift to work from a home mode of operations caused leaders to evaluate how they would lead a remote and virtual team. In a virtual environment, does the question then become how a leader can motivate and lead a team they have no face-to-face contact with? Participant 14 indicated that there was no training in the beginning, stating,

> it was not until we were actually at the beginning of August as the pandemic hit in March, that we were able to deal with the lack of training and preparation which was crammed into the first two weeks of August to get leaders get up to speed; in leading remote teams.

Further research regarding this topic, understanding that the pandemic of 2020 continues to create challenges for leaders in a remote work environment, is warranted. Survey respondents indicated by almost half of the responses for triangulation that there was no training and development for leaders in managing a remote team.

Theme Five: Transition Moving Ground Operations to Virtual Operations. A theme emerged that the transition during the pandemic of 2020 was smooth for the most part. Interview participants indicated that the move was overnight with not enough time to adapt to state-wide mandatory closures and response to the CDC health concerns. The transition was ongoing; participants indicated that infrastructure was a root cause, the lack of equipment and access to perform their work from home was chaotic initially, and lack of communication from the top/down caused panic and frustration at the beginning of the pandemic. People leaders in the interview process indicated that the communication or miscommunication was primarily due to the state mandates and CDC guidance which could change daily. Participant 9 indicated it was

a tremendous transition because we are in healthcare, we had to figure out how we continue to support critical operations, whether for health plans, certainly, people are going to need their health plans, right, so how do we support remotely, and there are some aspects of our clinical operations in our medical groups where we had to figure out how can we do this remotely and still maintain a base of operations to meet the community needs, as such this was immediate embraced by the executive team and championed by the CIO.

Some participants indicated it was chaotic participant 14 stated, "the transition to remote work from home operations was very chaotic and was not defined either like there was no timeline or plan for what was moving forward." This part of the research might be skewed as individual contributors might have perceived sporadic communication. At the same time, people leaders were frustrated with changing communication and shift operations daily due to state-wide mandates and CDC guidance.

Theme Six: No crisis management plan in place to respond to COVID-19. A theme prevalent during the interview and survey process for triangulation indicated no crisis management plan to respond to a long-term closure event prior to COVID-19. While interview participants indicated a crisis management plan was in place for active shooter events, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes, there was nothing in place for the what-if scenario of a pandemic requiring a mass shift to work from home operations and closure of the organization. With the state-wide mandates and the CDC's recommendations, this was a crisis and disruption with no long-term crisis management plan to address long-term closure and work from a home mode of operations. Participant 4 indicated that crisis management plans were in place; however, there was nothing to address a long-term closure. Participant 4 stated,

> it was not designed for a pandemic, but we had disaster plans in place, for instance, how we would work if the building were not available due to natural disaster or an act of terrorism and those kinds of things, we just really had to expand the timeline on it, make it longer because everything pre-pandemic was okay for a temporary situation, not a long-term one.

Crisis management involving long-term closure and the event of the pandemic of 2020 will require an adjustment to respond to different strains and further needs that arise to close or continue work from a home mode of operations. Participant 10 indicated similar sentiment by stating,

> so like yes and no to crisis management in the sense of being in Florida, you have hurricanes, right, so we had, you know team A and Team B, and there was always discussion on which teams were essential, how to relieve them and who was nonessential and needed to stay home in the event of a natural disaster; however, we did not have

something past a hurricane and to some degree we could utilize that thinking when the

pandemic hit, but nothing existed prior to that.

Researchers Hutchins (2008) found that HRD must take an integrated and expanded perspective

that considers emerging definitions of HRD in preparing and developing individuals to identify

and respond to crisis events.

Representation and Visualization of the Data

Table 1 provides collected data obtained during the interview process and the survey

process conducted for triangulation. The table contains literature that pertains to human

resources in a time of crisis or disruption. Table 1 represents a comparison between the research

questions of the case study, the data collected from the interview participants, and scholarly

literature centered on human resources during crisis and disruption and human resource response

during the pandemic of 2020. Table 2 represents a comparison between the survey-research

questions of the case study, the data collected from 135 survey respondents, and scholarly

literature centered on human resources during crisis and disruption and human resource response

during the pandemic of 2020. The purpose of both tables was to provide a visualization for

anticipated themes and case study research.

Table 1

Representation and Visualization of Interview Data

Anticipated Themes	Section of the Interview which themes emerged	Relationship to Literature	Participant Quotes Addressing Research Questions
Communication	Section Two	Ford et al. (2017) found that the information flow can be limited in virtual teams, so ongoing communication is key to virtual teams' success (Ford et al., 2017).	Section 2: RQ1: I would say one of the biggest things or challenges that we have as a company is that we have a large workforce spread out amongst multiple states in the field. They do not have access. Communication is sometimes the biggest problem that we run into, being able to effectively communicate any pertinent things that are going on, especially in the pandemic, communicating anything directly from HR to the employees where it is

			not relayed from the ops manager or district manager, but that comes directly from us and is communicated exactly the way leadership wants to communicate it is one of the biggest hurdles that we had to overcome." Participant 6
Virtual Work	Section Two	Sweet et al. (2017) found that flexible work arrangements were unevenly and sometimes sparingly distributed as leaders were reluctant to entertain the prospect of working differently (Sweet et al., 2017).	Section Two-RQ 5: "Before COVID-19, there was not much virtual work that happened before COVID-19; it became more common as we went along." Participant 13
Infrastructure	Section Three	Research has shown that organizational resilience encompasses more than adaptation because it implies an organization gains	Section Three-RQ3: "So it was less than less than ideal, and it probably took us 30 to 45 days to get materials ordered, whether that was

			strength in dealing with stressful conditions and rapid change (Bouaziz & Hachicha, 2018).	laptops or a source over laptops, get those swiped and get set up and then get network access, remote network access for everyone." Participant 2
Training and Development to Manage Remote Teams	Section Four	According to Sablok et al. (2017), SHRM has linked HRD alignment to strategic management to include training and development in executing the organizational business strategy (Sablok et al., 2017).	Section Four-RQ4: "Now, that is one of the areas that we have had to do some work on, which we were not ready, we were not where we needed to be, and so we have had to develop some training to help facilitate that." Participant 6
Transition moving ground operations to virtual operations	Section Three	Arora and Suri (2020) found that HRD professionals contribute to facilitating problem-solving and getting situations back to normalcy (Arora & Suri, 2020).	Section Three-RQ3: "It was not smooth in the sense that it was for us; it was one day we were in the office, the next day everybody was home. So, getting everything they needed, printer monitors, and

			equipment to work from home because we completely shut our corporate office down for months. That was challenging, and we had the support that we needed. Sometimes it was just difficult getting the items shifted to the people at their homes." Participant 6
No Crisis Management plan in place to respond to COVID-19/pandemic	Section Five	The research (2009) revealed that 40 percent of human resource specialists surveyed by SHRM revealed that their organizations were not prepared for crises and lacked crisis preparedness planning or any disaster plan (Wang et al., 2009).	Section Five-RQ3: "Well, you know, that is a yes and no. Being in Florida, you have hurricanes, right? So, we had teams A and B, and there were always discussions on the team that was essential team B, relieving them and everybody else was nonessential and needed to stay home. So, we did have that from our past with

			hurricanes. Thus, to some degree, we were able to utilize some of that thinking, but no, we had no crisis management plan for this situation." Participant 10

Table 2

Representation and Visualization of Survey Data-135 respondents-Triangulation

Anticipated Themes	Section of the Interview which themes emerged	Relationship to Literature	Survey Respondents Addressing Research Questions
Communication	Section Two	Ford et al. (2017) found that the information flow can be limited in virtual teams, so ongoing communication is key to virtual teams' success (Ford et al., 2017).	Survey Monkey: Section Two-RQ1: Survey respondents were asked an open-ended question as to what they believe are the main issues that challenge human resources during times of disruption or crisis? "Communication is not consistent, constant, clear, equal, and concise."

			Respondent 36
Virtual Work	Section Four	Sweet et al. (2017) found that flexible work arrangements were unevenly and sometimes sparingly distributed as leaders were reluctant to entertain the prospect of working differently (Sweet et al., 2017).	Survey Monkey: Section Four-RQ1: Survey respondents asked if their organization offered flexible work arrangements before COVID-19, yes, or no? 45.93% of survey respondents stated yes, while 54.07% of survey respondents stated no.
Infrastructure	Section Three	Research has shown that organizational resilience encompasses more than adaptation because it implies an organization gains strength in dealing with stressful conditions and rapid change (Bouaziz & Hachicha, 2018).	Survey Monkey: Section Three-RQ3: Survey respondents were asked an open-ended question about how they would describe the infrastructure to support this move at the beginning of the pandemic? "At the beginning of the pandemic, our infrastructure was drastically sub-par; however, the executives worked

			hard to get things upgraded and in place." Resp. 35
Training and Development to Manage Remote Teams	Section Four	According to Sablok et al. (2017), SHRM has linked HRD alignment to strategic management to include training and development in executing the organizational business strategy (Sablok et al., 2017).	Survey Monkey: Section Four-RQ4: Survey respondents were asked if people leaders were trained and developed to lead a virtual team during this early transition of the pandemic, yes, or no? 50.37% of survey respondents stated yes, while 49.63% of survey respondents stated no
Transition moving ground operations to virtual operations	Section Three	Arora and Suri (2020) found that HRD professionals contribute to facilitating problem-solving and getting situations back to normalcy (Arora & Suri, 2020).	Survey Monkey: Section Three-RQ1: Survey respondents were asked during 2020 when organizations were moving ground operations to virtual immediately, whether it was a smooth transition, yes or no? 57.04% of survey respondents stated yes, while 42.96% of

| No Crisis Management plan in place to respond to COVID-19/pandemic | Section Five | The research (2009) revealed that 40 percent of human resource specialists surveyed by SHRM revealed that their organizations were not prepared for crises and lacked crisis preparedness planning or any disaster plan (Wang et al., 2009). | survey respondents stated no Survey Monkey: Section Five-RQ3: Survey respondents were asked an open-ended question to describe if there was a crisis management plan in place between the executive team and human resources regarding closures or the need to adopt a work-from-home strategy. "HR had crisis plans in place that provided a minimal framework of how to proceed in a short-term crisis, although long-term needs were not addressed in the plan. As such, some departments or individuals were able to transition smoothly, but others lagged and had difficulties." Resp. 37 |

Relationship of the Findings

During the interview process and the survey respondent triangulation process, findings related to the critical areas of the research proposal. The researcher wanted to determine HR's response during crisis and disruption. The information gathered in the interview and the survey process for triangulation revealed some major themes; some were anticipated, and others were unanticipated. The interviews revealed that while the pandemic of 2020 was an unforeseen event, the workplace was re-defined overnight. The findings discussed the lack of flexible work arrangements in the immediate move to remote work from a home mode of operations. The information collected also revealed unanticipated themes such as cooperation and support for human resources from the corporate perspective. The exhaustive literature review detailed areas that discussed the importance of HRD in collaborating and being a part of crisis management and organizational strategy. During the interview process and from the surveys for triangulation, the research supported the emerging theme of positive support and partnership between the C-Suite and human resources.

Further, the findings from the research revealed that further research is required to address the partnership between human resources and the technical teams that support the infrastructure during crisis and disruption. During the research, participant interviews indicated that sometimes, human resources was not part of the process when it related to infrastructure, and partnership with the CIO was not part of the equation. Researchers Dirani et al. (2020) found that the strategic role HRD can play to assist and develop leaders during this pandemic is by (a) providing reliable and robust real ground data, (b) expanding their professional network, (c) promoting innovation, (d) ensuring employees continued learning, (e) facilitate regular meetings, and (f) create a platform to celebrate employees. The partnership between the CIO and the C-

Suite members is critical for HR professionals to navigate their employees during the transition

to virtual remote from home operations to hybrid forms of work as we continue to experience

challenges during the pandemic.

The Research Questions

The following four research questions guided the study. The information collected

through the interview process and survey process for triangulation for the case study was

developed to support and answer the four research questions. The questions that supported the

case study were the following:

RQ1: How do human resource departments around the country respond to crises?

RQ1a. How are flexible work arrangements embraced by organizations to address

sporadic changes to the work environment?

RQ1b. How do human resource departments transition employees from traditional to

virtual work during times of disruption?

RQ2: How is the disruption in productivity measured during the rapid transition from

traditional to virtual work?

RQ3: How did human resource departments respond to COVID-19 impact on

organizations overall?

RQ3a. How did human resource departments respond to address the travel ban for

business travel?

RQ3b. How long did it take for human resource departments across the U.S. to address

workforce shifts to work from a home mode of operations?

RQ3c. How were organizations prepared with the technological infrastructure to meet the

demand for moving traditional employees to work from the home environment?

RQ3d. How did human resource departments handle quarantine situations with the employee population?

RQ4: How do organizations meet the challenge of emerging HR issues during a crisis impacting the workforce?

Following the research questions, the interview guide was created aligned with the case study research questions—section two of the interview guide approved by IRB, aligned with research questions RQ1 and RQ1a. The focus of this area of the study was to discuss the main issues that challenge human resources during times of disruption, provide issues that exist between the executive team and human resources when handling crisis or disruption, discuss the partnership that is existent or non-existent between the C-Suite and human resources, reveal if human resources are supported during crisis or disruption from the corporate level and explain support for virtual work prior to the pandemic of 2020, to determine whether a policy was in place for virtual work prior to the pandemic. Section three of the interview guide approved by IRB, aligned with research questions RQ1b, RQ3, and RQ3c. This area of the study was to discuss the relationship to the pandemic of 2020 and its outcomes. This area focused on organizations immediately moving ground operations to virtual and whether it was a smooth transition or lacked support. This section reviews the readiness of human resources and the executive team at the time of the pandemic. The section discussed the infrastructure to support the rapid move to remote operations and whether HR had a crisis management plan to move operations rapidly to remote and respond to the leadership challenges. Section four of the interview guide approved by IRB, aligned with the following research question RQ2. This area of the study was to discuss flexible work arrangements and whether the organization offered flexible work arrangements prior to COVID-19, discuss the transition from traditional to virtual

work at the organization, discuss if there was a disruption of productivity and performance

during the early transition of the pandemic, and whether people leaders were training and

developed to lead a virtual team during the transition to virtual operations. Section five of the

interview guide aligned with research questions RQ3a, RQ2b, RQ3d, and RQ4. The focus of this

area of study was to discuss the response from the organization during the pandemic of 2020.

This area of the study reviewed how long it took for human resources to address the workforce

shift to work from a home mode of operations, discuss the strategy for travel ban, describe if

there was a crisis management plan in place regarding closures or the need to adopt a work from

home strategy, and determine when participants saw a shift with human resources supporting

work from home employees and their needs. From this alignment of interview guide questions,

relationships and themes emerged. This area of the study was to explore how the findings

addressed each research question of the case study.

Relationship to the Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by information collected from the interview process and survey

process for triangulation. The actions were reviewed that prepare for the future sporadic

disruption of business operations through human resource strategy and activities. The

researcher's conceptual framework is the "system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs,

and theories that supports and informs the research and is a key area of the researcher's design"

(Goff & Getenet, 2017). Further, the conceptual framework visually defines the main things to

be studied in critical variables, concepts, factors, and a presumed relationship (Goff & Getenet,

2017). This study was guided by four concepts in human resources and three theories, first, the

universalistic approach theory to HRM, which shows the direct relationship of HR strategy with

the organization's performance; second, the contingency theory of leadership, which explores

how specific situations can impact a leader's ability to act and third, the attribution theory which

is the idea that the assertion that people are on a continuous quest to explain the events or actions

that they encounter; used in HR to describe interpersonal dynamics and attributions of behavior

and events within several specific HR functional areas. These guiding theories allowed the

researcher to gather detailed data about human resources during crises and disruptions. The data

obtained in the human resource theories and concepts align with the information collected

through the interview process and survey process for triangulation. Other human resources

concepts such as the model of causation in human resources, the eight-box model of human

resources, the HR value chain, and the Harvard framework of human resources management

guide the researcher in collecting information for the case study focused on human resources

during crisis or disruption.

The model of causation in human resources shows causation that begins with the overall

business strategy through the human resource processes and ends with financial performance.

Using the causation model, these research elements explore the experience between human

resource management's strategic practices and the organization's performance. Dirani et al.

(2020) found that HRD professionals must support leaders by preparing them to deal with

current and future crises. This model guided the research as there is a need to explore the

preparation that occurs with HRD professionals' support from executive leadership.

The 8-box model of human resources shows human resource outcomes that led to critical

human resource goals such as flexibility, legitimacy, and cost-effectiveness, which impacts

business goals such as profit, market share, capitalization that are viable to the organization

(Vulpen, 2020). The idea behind the 8-box model of human resources is that there are different

operational disruptions at any given time, such as internal or external factors that can impact

productivity and performance. This model was instrumental in discussing whether productivity

and performance were impacted during the height of moving office mode of operations to

virtual/remote operations. The 8-box model describes different external and internal factors that

can understand human resource practitioners' effectiveness in Human Resources. Dirani et al.

(2020) found that the strategic role HRD can play to assist and develop leaders during this

pandemic is by (a) providing reliable and robust real ground data, (b) expanding their

professional network, (c) promoting innovation, (d) ensuring employees continued learning, (e)

facilitate regular meetings, and (f) create a platform to celebrate employees. The research was

guided by impact and interview participants' perception of how human resources respond during

crisis and disruption, particularly with the pandemic of 2020.

The human resource value chain concept guided the research developed. The human

resource value chain concept states that everything we do (and measure) in human resources has

two categories: human resource management activities and human resource management

outcomes. Arora and Suri (2020) found HRD professionals critical in preparing employees for

steering through and managing a crisis and its recovery; human resource professionals contribute

towards facilitating problem-solving and enabling in getting back to situations of normalcy. This

model supported the research to the specific problem statement in showing how HRM activities

define HRM outcomes.

The Harvard framework of human resources guided the research to evaluate human

resource outcomes that define long-term consequences, including individual, organizational, and

societal well-being (Vulpen, 2020). The HRM (human resource management) model consists of

six components that take a holistic approach to HR, including different levels of HR outcomes.

The six components included stakeholder interest, situational factors, HRM policies, HRM

outcomes, and long-term consequences. This framework guided the research as the researcher

sought to understand the situational factors and long-term consequences of HR's response to the

pandemic of 2020. HRD professionals must respond to this pandemic to build an effective and

responsive organization that is well-prepared to meet the new normal during any crisis (Arora &

Suri, 2020). The framework supports the specific problem statement and gathers research in that

HR strategy (human resource activities) defines long-term consequences. Due to the pandemic,

human resource strategy was and continues to be critical to the overall organization's workforce

strategy and success.

　　　　The HR theories of the case study supported the researcher in collecting information

about human resources during crisis and disruption. These HR theories aligned with the data

obtained through the interview and survey participant information for triangulation. The

universalist approach theory to human research management shows the direct relationship of

human resource strategy with the organization's performance. The theory states that the best

human resource practices imply that business strategies and HRM policies are mutually

independent when determining business performance outcomes. Lo et al. (2015) noted that the

universalistic perspective of strategic HR competencies is the critical differentiator of an

organization's overall performance. This theory supports the specific problem statement

describing HR strategy or lack of impacting the organization's performance overall. This theory

guides the researcher in determining if human resources during crisis and disruption handled the

rapid move to a home mode of operations caused by the pandemic of 2020.

　　　　The contingency theory of leadership explores how specific situations can impact a

leader's ability to act. Further, environmental contingency theory logic includes studies designed

to fit specific conditions and explore the internal or external environment. External contingency

theory includes a firm's environmental uncertainty and turbulence, which influence the planning

processes with the tendency for firms to adopt more comprehensive long-range processes (Wolf

& Floyd, 2013). This theory supports the specific problem statement. This theory guides the

researcher in determining how human resources and leaders can be impacted by the external

environment when uncertainty and turbulence occur, as in the case of the pandemic of 2020.

The attribution theory of human resources is that people are on a continuous quest to

explain the events or actions they encounter. Hewett et al. (2017) noted that system strength

(HRSS) and HR attributions theory (HRA) had invigorated attention in attribution theory. There

has been a resurgence of attribution theories explaining the 'black box' between HR and

performance (Hewett et al., 2017). This theory supports the specific problem statement and

guides the researcher. The participant interviews revealed common emergent themes where the

participants' experienced and encountered events like the pandemic of 2020 in shifting business

operations to a virtual environment.

Relationship to Anticipated Themes

The findings related to the anticipated and unanticipated themes that developed in the

research and were collected. Some anticipated themes were supported in the findings as they

relate to the main issues that challenge human resources during times of disruption or crisis.

Participants and survey respondents indicated that communication was a challenge for human

resources during disruption or crisis. The research revealed that organizations had little to no

policy for remote work/virtual work prior to COVID-19. These immediately disrupted

organizations as they were caught off guard to immediately shift from in-office operations to

remote work from the home mode of operations. Infrastructure was lacking in the move to a

remote mode of operations in many cases. Some organizations in the participant interview were

better prepared with technology than others. The participant interviews and survey results

indicated that equipment, network access, and more were short in moving to remote operations

overnight. Participants indicated that their organization had little to no flexible work

arrangements prior to COVID-19. This was a common theme in the participant interviews and

survey process for triangulation results. Another anticipated theme was performance and

productivity impact during the disruption of the pandemic. Participant interviews and survey

results revealed that this impacted the early stages of the pandemic. Another common theme was

a crisis management plan to handle a long-term closure. While interview participants and survey

respondents indicated a crisis management plan was in place, it did not address a long-term

closure. The unanticipated theme was that while organizations were prepared for hurricanes,

tornadoes, earthquakes, mass shooting events, and other types of short-term crises, they were not

prepared for an ongoing long-term crisis, in particular a pandemic event.

Relationship to the Literature

Information was collected from the participant interview and survey process, which had

similarities and differences to the current literature regarding human resources during times of

disruption and crisis. Six anticipated and unanticipated themes that emerged after conducting the

research were the result of conducting the interview process and a survey process for

triangulation. The purpose of this section was to provide a review of the research findings related

to the literature focusing on both similarities and differences as it relates to human resources

during crisis and disruption.

Themes One and Two Relationship to the Literature

The similarity between the scholarly literature and the research regarding human

resources during crisis and disruption was collected from the participant interview process and

the survey process for triangulation. Interview participants posed questions designed to identify

the main issues that challenge human resources during times of disruption or crisis. There were

two anticipated themes that emerged, revealing the importance of communication to employees

and whether organizations supported virtual work from a home mode of operations prior to the

pandemic of 2020. These emergent themes of the research were like the findings of the literature

regarding the importance of communication and the thought process around flexible work

arrangements. Emergent theme one identified from the participant interview process and the

survey process for triangulation stressed the importance of communication during times of

disruption and crisis. These findings from the participant interviews and survey processes were

like the scholarly literature, emphasizing the importance of communication in an organization

and the reluctance to offer flexible work arrangements at times. The findings from the literature

were similar during the participant interviews and survey process for triangulation in identifying

"that communication to employees can be limited in virtual teams, so ongoing communication is

key to virtual teams' success" (Ford et al., 2017).

The second theme was the emphasis on explaining the organization's support for virtual

work from home prior to the pandemic of 2020, whether there was a policy in place and if virtual

work was frowned upon. Multiple interview participants indicated there was no policy or an

unwritten policy that required approval as needed for the employees to work from home. This

aligned with the literature as leaders have been reluctant to support work from homework

arrangements. Researchers suggest that leaders found that flexible work arrangements were

unevenly and sometimes sparingly distributed as leaders were reluctant to entertain the prospect

of working differently (Sweet et al., 2017). Further findings from the scholarly research were

like the findings in the participant interview process and survey process identifying challenges

resulting from a lack of workplace policy supporting the new work environment organizations

found themselves in at the height of the pandemic. Literature found that HRM challenges from

the COVID-19 pandemic involved adjustments for new and current employees and their altered

work conditions implementing a new workplace policy to limit human contact in person

(Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). As a result, participant interviews and information collected

identified that virtual work was not permitted or a policy was not in place for fully remote work.

Themes Three and Four Relationship to the Literature

Themes three and four had similarities to the literature from the participant interview and

survey process collected. Infrastructure and training and development for leaders supporting

virtual workers emerged that related to the current literature. During the participant interviews

and survey process for triangulation, questions were posed and developed to identify human

resources during crisis and disruption. From these questions, two themes emerged. Was

infrastructure in place, and was the organization prepared in advance for technology? The rapid

move at the beginning of the pandemic was, on all accounts, good if the organization was

prepared tech-wise. According to the interviewed participants, the transition was not smooth if

the technology or equipment was not in place prior to the pandemic. The third theme discussed

infrastructure and the interview process identified a similar theme of the literature, and that was

"that flexible work had become a vital characteristic of the modern workplace; current literature

is incomplete regarding how it is supported by technology and the overall organization" (Neirotti

et al., 2019). This theme was anticipated before the interviews and uncovered a need for more

literature about technology during a rapid shift to work from the home mode of operations. The

fourth theme was anticipated before the participant interview process and the survey process for

triangulation. Literature was abundant on the importance of training and development in

anticipating organizational needs. Multiple interviewed participants and survey respondents

indicated that training and development were not in place to lead a virtual team during the

transition to work from home operations. SHRM has linked HRD alignment to strategic

management to include training and development in executing the organizational business

strategy (Sablok et al., 2017).

Themes Five and Six Relationship to Literature

Themes five and six had similarities to the literature from the information collected

during the participant interviews and survey process for triangulation. The two similarities were

(a) the rapid transition to moving office operations to work-from-home operations and (2)

whether a crisis management plan regarding closures was addressed in the participant interviews

and the survey process for triangulation. Multiple interview participants and survey respondents

indicated that the transition took weeks in some cases and, at times, was chaotic. In contrast,

other participants indicated they had the infrastructure and policies to support it. Therefore, it

was smooth and took a matter of days. Researchers such as Carnevale and Hatak (2020) found

the COVID-19 pandemic has created a particularly challenging environment for human resource

management (HRM), with leaders having to quickly venture into the unknown of unknowns as

they help their workforce adapt and cope with radical changes occurring to their work and social

environments. The findings from scholarly literature were like the findings in the interview

participant process and survey process identifying fractures in overall crisis management plans.

While participants in the interview process and survey process indicated a crisis management

plan was in place for temporary closures, there was nothing in place for a long-term closure that

would require remote work from home. The HR department, with direct and constant interaction

with the employees and responsible for employees' well-being, contributes to high safety,

quality, and crisis management (Nizamidou et al., 2019). Many interview and survey participants indicated that no one was prepared for the crisis at hand.

Relationship to the Problem

The study's findings relate to the problem of the failure of HR leaders to have a strategy in place for navigating a traditional (office) work environment to a remote-virtual work environment, resulting in diminished productivity and performance. The problem statement represents a gap in the literature on human resource development and practice. Dirani et al. (2020) found that most studies in HRD and leadership look at stable work environments; however, the pandemic and past crisis events reveal HRD practitioners need to examine critical interventions applicable during unstable times.

The similar themes found in the scholarly literature supported the interview and survey findings. The research study discovered the relationship between the problem statement studied and the participant interviews and survey findings for triangulation. Section two of the interview guide approved by IRB posed questions to the interview participants and the survey respondents centered on the main issues human resources face during crisis and disruption. By asking interview participants and survey respondents if their organization supported virtual work prior to the pandemic or frowned upon it, the researcher collected and coded data to help identify common themes. One central theme emerged that there was no work policy to allow for virtual work. Some participants indicated it was on an as-needed basis or did not exist at all. This theme was indicated in the exhaustive literature review process. The literature review contained within the case study presented an exhaustive overview of the need for flexible work arrangements. Sweet et al. (2017) found that flexible work arrangements were unevenly and sometimes sparingly distributed as leaders were reluctant to entertain the prospect of working differently.

The emergent theme found within the scholarly literature supported the findings from the

participant interviews and survey respondents. Interview participants noted there were no

policies in place to allow for virtual/remote work prior to the pandemic, or if work from home

was allowed, an approval process was required for an as-needed basis. Information that was

collected from the exhaustive review and study of the scholarly literature and the findings

collected from the participant interview process and survey process addressed the problem under

investigation within the case study.

The other finding that had a direct relation to the problem studied is crisis management.

Wang et al. (2009) revealed that 40% of human resource specialists surveyed by SHRM revealed

that their organizations were not prepared for crises and lacked crisis preparedness planning or

any disaster plan. During the pandemic of 2020, leaders and human resources struggled with

crisis management plans that only addressed temporary closures. The participant interviews and

survey process designed for triangulation revealed that crisis management plans did not address

long-term closure but only temporary closures. This can cause a shift in productivity and

performance relating to the problem of the case study. A question was posed in the participant

interviews and the survey process regarding whether there was a disruption in productivity and

performance during the pandemic. Most of the participants indicated a disruption to productivity

and performance. Not having this type of crisis management "what-if" scenario causes a

disruption in productivity and performance, which directly correlates with the problem under

investigation in the case study. Hutchins (2008) found that HRD must take an integrated and

expanded perspective that considers emerging definitions of HRD in preparing and developing

individuals to identify and respond to crisis events. Participants indicated many challenges with

the previous crisis management plan that now required a new enhanced overall crisis

management plan that is constantly changing and evolving.

Summary of the Findings

The qualitative case study was chosen to develop and address the following four research

questions. This was accomplished by conducting 15 in-person Zoom interviews with individual

contributors, people leaders, and HR professionals. To meet the study's eligibility requirements,

participants must have been 18 years of age or older, an individual contributor, people leader, or

human resource professional working in a full-time position. The interview participants were

asked the following questions from the interview guide approved by IRB. From these interviews,

six themes emerged, and these six themes were:

Theme One: Communication during times of disruption and crisis with the HR team and

the executive team.

Theme Two: No policy that allowed for work from homework arrangements prior to

COVID-19.

Theme Three: Chaotic infrastructure during the shift to work from a home mode of

operations.

Theme Four: No training or development for people leaders to lead virtual teams prior to

the pandemic.

Theme Five: Sporadic transition in moving ground operations to virtual during the

pandemic.

Theme Six: No crisis management plan in place to respond to COVID-19.

Themes were identified through open coding and axial coding after the interview and

survey process for triangulation. The six emergent themes identified addressed the study's

research questions, the general problem of the study, the specific problem of the study, and the

purpose of the study. Further emergent themes revealed from the interview process, and the

survey process for triangulation supported the findings in the scholarly literature and the case

study's conceptual framework. The summary of findings summarized the emergent themes

identified in the case study. The five sections of the interview guide were developed to align with

the four research questions. Each section of the interview guide was developed to address one

research question and sub-research question if applicable. According to Creswell (2014),

"triangulation in the survey process conducted is to utilize different data sources of information

by examining it and using it to build coherent justification for themes." The survey respondent

information collected for triangulation established emerging themes that added to the case

study's validity.

Section two of the interview guide approved by IRB posed questions to identify and align

with research questions RQ1 and RQ1a. The focus of this area of the case study was to discuss

the main issues that challenge human resources during times of disruption, provide specific

issues that exist between the executive team and human resources when handling crisis or

disruption, discuss the partnership that is existent or non-existent between the C-Suite and human

resources, reveal if human resources are supported during crisis or disruption from the corporate

level and explain support for virtual work prior to the pandemic of 2020, and whether a policy

was in place for virtual work prior to the pandemic. Two anticipated and unanticipated themes

emerged to address research questions, RQ1 and RQ1a, which were communication-related to

the main issue that challenges human resources during times of disruption or crisis. The

anticipated theme was communication. Participant interviews indicated that communication is

the main challenge that HR face during disruption or crisis. Survey respondents for triangulation

were asked what they believed were the main issues that challenge human resources during times

of disruption or crisis, and "communication" and "lack of communication" were the most

dominant words used in response to the survey question. The other unanticipated theme from the

participant interview process was that the partnership between the C-Suite and HR was existent

versus non-existent in most cases. Mostly, the participant information collected confirmed that a

partnership existed between the executive team and human resources. The survey data

triangulated this theme which emerged as the most dominant word used, "existent," which

revealed that human resources and the executive team were working together. The exhaustive

study of the literature review revealed that "alignment is key, and that HRD is focused on

strategic planning through which human capital of the organization can grow and play a critical

role in shaping the overall organization business strategy and development" (Sablok et al., 2017).

Section three of the interview guide aligned with research questions RQ1b, RQ3, and

RQ3c. The focus of this area of the study was to discuss the relationship to the pandemic of

2020. This area focused on organizations immediately moving ground operations to virtual and

whether it was a smooth transition or lacked support. This section discussed the readiness of

human resources and the executive team at the time of the pandemic. The section evaluated the

infrastructure to support the rapid move to remote operations and whether HR had a crisis

management plan to move operations rapidly to remote and respond to the leadership challenges.

One unanticipated theme emerged from the participant interviews and survey data for

triangulation. Participants during the interview process were asked to describe the readiness of

human resources and the executive team at the time of the pandemic. Information revealed that

HR and the executive team were working together to resolve the issues surrounding the rapid

move to work from a home mode of operations.

Survey respondent data for triangulation when asked how they would describe

preparedness from HR from a crisis management standpoint, in moving operations rapidly and

responding to leadership challenges, "prepared" was the dominant word used in the surveyed

data collected. Participants in the interview process and survey respondents for triangulation

were asked to describe the transition from ground operations to virtual. For the most part, it was

a challenging transition but one of cooperation. Survey respondents for triangulation when asked

if the transition to a virtual model of operations was smooth or not, 57.04% said yes, it was

smooth, while 42.96% of the survey respondents stated no. Both interview participants and

survey respondents for triangulation indicated that the transition did not lack support. Survey

respondents for triangulation when asked if the transition lacked support, 61.48% of the

respondents stated no, the transition did not lack support, while 38.42% stated yes, it did lack

support. Participants in the interview and survey respondent processes for triangulation were

asked how they would describe the infrastructure to support this move at the beginning of the

pandemic. As a result, the anticipated theme emerged, which identified that the infrastructure in

many cases was not there immediately related to hardware, equipment, network access, and

software for communication and workflow. Both themes were anticipated due to the exhaustive

literature review. Carnevale and Hatak (2020) found the COVID-19 pandemic has created a

particularly challenging environment for human resource management (HRM), with leaders

having to quickly venture into the unknown of unknowns as they help their workforce adapt and

cope with radical changes occurring to their work and social environments. The findings from

section three of the interview guide approved by IRB helped to identify the research questions

RQ1b, RQ3, and RQ3c by revealing that human resources had some level of readiness with the

transition to work from a home mode of operations which could seem sporadic, ultimately was a

smooth process. Participant interviews identified that the executive team and human resources

worked cooperatively and quickly in most cases to respond to the crisis and disruption of the

pandemic of 2020.

Additionally, infrastructure was not always in place to support the massive shift of

employees in an office environment to a work-from-home mode of operations. Participant

interviews indicated that they were changing support for infrastructure as they move through the

pandemic and continue to face the challenge of offering hybrid virtual work and in-office work,

which is now being considered. The emergent themes that were identified in section three of the

interview guide approved by IRB addressed the problem of study.

Section four of the interview guide aligned with research question RQ2. The focus of this

area of study was to discuss flexible work arrangements and whether the organization offered

flexible work arrangements prior to COVID-19, discuss the transition from traditional to virtual

work at the organization, discuss if there was a disruption of productivity and performance

during the early transition of the pandemic, and whether people leaders were training and

developed to lead a virtual team during the transition to virtual operations. There was anticipated

an unanticipated theme that emerged from the information collected. Findings from the

participant interviews and survey data for triangulation addressed the second research question

by identifying those flexible work arrangements prior to the pandemic were not in place. If they

were, it was on an "as-needed" basis. Data for triangulation revealed that 54% of the survey

respondents stated "no" when asked if their organization offered flexible work arrangements

prior to the pandemic. Participant interviews revealed that no policy was written for flexible

work arrangements prior to the pandemic; however, remote work was granted on an "as-needed"

basis sometimes. The transition of traditional to virtual work at the organizations was difficult,

which emerged with participant interviews and was often sporadic. The survey respondent data

for triangulation indicated mixed sentiment as the participant interviews revealed on the

transition, as 57% of respondents indicated it was smooth.

In comparison, 42% of respondents said no to a smooth transition to working from a

home mode of operations. Additionally, participant interviews indicated when asked if there was

a disruption in productivity and performance during the early transition of the pandemic that

there was a disruption during the early onset of the pandemic. Participant interviews indicated

that there was a disruption to productivity and performance. Survey respondents for triangulation

stated yes to a disruption to productivity and performance in the early transition of the pandemic,

as 57.78% said yes, as opposed to 42.22% that stated no. Participant interviews indicated that

when asked whether people leaders were training and developed to lead a virtual team during the

transition to virtual operations, many of the interview participants stated no. However, as they

progressed into the remote mode of operations, new training emerged. When asked if people

leaders were trained and developed to lead a virtual team during the transition to virtual

operations, 50.37% of respondents stated yes, while 49.63% indicated no. This would indicate

that some organizations reacted to training leaders to manage remote teams, while others did not.

The themes that were identified in section four of the interview guide addressed the problem of

study.

Section five of the interview guide aligned with research questions RQ3a, RQ2b, RQ3d,

and RQ4. The focus of this area of study was to discuss the response from the organization

during the pandemic of 2020. This area of the study reviewed how long it took for human

resources to address the workforce shift to work from a home mode of operations, discuss the

strategy for travel ban, describe if there was a crisis management plan in place regarding closures

or the need to adopt a work from home strategy, and when participants saw a shift with human

resources supporting work from home employees and their needs. Findings from section five of

the interview guide helped address RQ3a, RQ2b, RQ3d, and RQ4, identifying two main

challenges and themes related to the problem statement. Participants were asked how long it took

for human resources to address the workforce shift to a work from a home mode of operations.

This took weeks, not days, in the participant interview information gathered. Survey

respondent data for triangulation when asked if it took a few days or weeks for human resources

to address the workforce shift to work from a home mode of operations, survey respondents

indicated at 54.07% "a few weeks," versus 45.93% of the survey respondents indicating "a few

days." Additionally, when participants were asked when they saw a shift with human resources

supporting work from home employees, the participants indicated a few weeks versus a few

days. For triangulation, the survey respondents indicated "a few weeks" as the most critical word

occurrence in the survey response. Additionally, another central theme an obstacle emerged

relating to a crisis management plan between the executive team and human resources regarding

closures or the need to adopt a work from home strategy. Participants during the interview

process indicated that there was no crisis management plan or strategy for the pandemic that

addressed long-term closures and work-from-home mode of operations. Participants indicated

they had a crisis management plan for hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, rapid freeze/snow

events, and mass shooter events; however, they did not have a crisis management plan for long-

term closure or work from a home mode of operation strategy. The survey data for triangulation,

when asked to describe if there was a crisis management plan in place between the executive

team and human resources regarding closures or the need to adopt a work-from-home strategy,

the two most dominant word occurrences were "None" and "No plan." The themes that were

identified in section four of the interview guide addressed the problem of study. During the

interview process and survey process for triangulation, each emergent theme identified was

supported by multiple interview participants in addition to the existing literature about human

resource resilience, human resources during crisis and disruption, and current literature on HR

and the executive team response during the pandemic of 2020.

The research findings are promising for human resource development as the emerging

themes demonstrated the response to the crisis from human resources and the executive team

during the pandemic of 2020. Arora and Suri (2020) found that HRD professionals contribute to

facilitating problem-solving and getting situations back to normalcy. The research revealed that

HR and the executive team, in most cases, were working together in collaboration to resolve an

uncommon occurrence which was the beginning of a pandemic and the long-term impact on

employees and the organization overall. The research did emerge to suggest that crisis

management and communication is a challenge for HR when partnering with the executive team

to meet and address challenges faced during crisis and disruption. Additionally, an obstacle

emerged with allowing for flexible work arrangements that mirror the exhaustive literature

review.

Further research is warranted to examine the aftermath of how the workplace has shifted

to a remote work from the home environment and the impact of new hybrid and work from home

modes of operations. When participants were asked if they had anything additional to add, they

were forthcoming with looking at the new work environment that has evolved since the

pandemic started. They volunteered that we now know with certainty that people can be

productive and meet performance goals in a remote working environment. Participants also

indicated that it would be prudent to look at work/life balance in the new remote setting. They indicated employees are becoming mentally impacted and fatigued.

Overview of Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the interview participant's perception and the survey respondent's view of HR during times of crisis and disruption. The study used 15 interview participants, which consisted of individual contributors, people leaders, and human resource professionals. The anonymous survey was conducted with Survey Monkey for triangulation comprising 135 individual contributors, people leaders, and human resource professionals. Scholarly research lacked HR during crisis and disruption; it was critical to investigate if the problem existed. The general problem statement addressed the failure of HR leaders to have a strategy for navigating a traditional work environment to a virtual work environment, resulting in diminished productivity and performance. The study used a case study approach because it allows the researcher to describe an individual case or situation and identify those critical issues of the case. The case study approach allows for multi-faceted exploration of real-life settings. It is recognized in business, law, and other research fields.

The experience of the interview participants and survey respondents allowed for understanding the relationship between human resources and the executive team during times of crisis and disruption, particularly focused on the pandemic of 2020. The case study design facilitated identifying themes from participant interviews and survey respondents, allowing the researcher to describe the commonalities between the interview participants and survey respondents for triangulation. Based upon the interview participants and survey respondents, there was a lack of communication, infrastructure for remote work, training and development for leading remote teams, and an impact on productivity and performance early on in the pandemic

of 2020, a crisis to organizations across the United States. The research findings did show

collaborative, albeit chaotic, efforts to bring departments together to respond to the crisis and

show effective leadership during this time.

Application to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to contribute to the overall body of

knowledge relating to how human resources respond to crisis and disruption. Several recent

studies have discussed how human resources support the organization overall, but how they

handle crisis or disruption considering the pandemic of 2020 will specifically address how

human resource development processes and procedures will align with the organization's

response crisis and disruption. The collected data were used to expand on current literature that

addresses human resources during crisis and disruption and how human resources support and

partner with other departments for infrastructure and flexible work arrangements. This area of

the research case study discusses how the research can improve overall general business

practices.

Improving General Business Practice

Research data collected from the interview participants and survey respondents for

triangulation for the research case study revealed six emergent themes. The themes identified

were revealed during the findings section of the qualitative research case study. Each theme

consisted of areas that addressed human resources during times of crisis and disruption directly

impacted by the pandemic of 2020. This section of the research study discussed how human

resources and leadership partnered during the rapid move from an in-person office setting to a

remote/virtual work setting. The crisis that occurred during the pandemic of 2020 provides more

insight into how human resources and leadership dealt with the crisis and disruption of the

pandemic and continue to partner moving forward. Results obtained from the case study

provided insight into how human resources and leadership will engage employees and other

departments during times of crisis and disruption.

The interview participants were asked during the interview and survey process for

triangulation. They observed the main issues that challenge human resources during times of

disruption and crisis. The first theme demonstrated that communication to employees funneled

from leadership was chaotic or changing depending on CDC and statewide guidelines.

Participants noted that communication and how it was delivered during this crisis are paramount

to the organization and employees' well-being. The second theme identified from the interview

and survey processes was that virtual/remote work was often never discussed or supported.

Participants indicated that remote work was frowned upon or not discussed at all. Some

participants indicated that flexible work arrangement approval was a one-off. It was approved by

upper management but not necessarily a policy that provided for remote/virtual work

opportunities. This provided research that general business practices will have to change in the

future to ebb and flow with the challenge faced by crisis and disruption. These findings

supported the current literature, which indicated that flexible work arrangements were often not

an option at organizations for not acknowledged at all. Hill et al. (2003) found that flexible work

arrangements were always seen as an exception to the expectation of the "ideal worker" and seen

more to be an accommodation to balance work/life balance. This is in line with the participants

in that it was an exception made but not the norm. These findings found that leadership and

human resources have now had to redefine work in a virtual environment experienced during the

pandemic of 2020. The current scholarly literature supported these findings from the interview

process and survey process, identifying the importance of being flexible in working and

providing opportunities to work remotely in a virtual environment due to crisis or disruption.

Understanding the infrastructure and need to partner during a crisis of this magnitude is essential

to the organization's success and general business practice in the future. Being open to flexibility

in how employees work is critical to their success. The organization is during times of crisis or

disruption. In the case of the pandemic of 2020, which continues to persist, it was necessary to

change general business practice from a virtual/remote work setting and adjust during employee

illness. Flexible work arrangements will be an integral part of the future of an organization's

success. However, there is still a need for more literature to support the new way we work and

are productive.

Two additional themes that the case study revealed during the interview and survey

processes were infrastructure and training and development of leaders for remote teams. The data

collected from the interview participants and survey participants found that infrastructure was

not always in place to rapidly shift an in-person office group of employees to an immediate

virtual work environment. This was not always a smooth process during the crisis and disruption

with the pandemic of 2020. Human resources and leadership partnered with information

technology teams were critical as some organizations fared well during this disruption. In

contrast, others struggled with the shift and need for technology during this rapid move to remote

work.

Further, literature is needed to address business practice, technology, and infrastructure

needed during disruption and crisis. Results identified some gaps and issues with infrastructure

and partnership during the pandemic of 2020. Training and development were lacking for leaders

managing remote teams. Interview participants and survey participants stated there was little to

no training on managing remote teams. Results of the case study identified training and

development lacking in understanding how to manage a remote team in a virtual environment.

Current literature identified that training and development should be aligned with strategic

management to execute general business strategy. According to Sablok et al. (2017), SHRM has

linked HRD alignment to strategic management to include training and development in executing

the organizational business strategy. The interview participants and survey respondents' case

study findings support current literature that could improve general business practices identifying

leadership for remote teams and training and development to support leading a remote team.

Potential Application Strategies

Application strategy integrates new strategies for future general business practices. If the

application strategy is successful, it can contribute to the organization's success and its

employees' success. The research case study presents potential application strategies for human

resource development and leadership to handle crises and disruptions in the present and future.

From the research case study, an application strategy emerged. Four steps are presented to

execute the actions for the application. Human resources and leadership must understand that

crisis and disruption can occur, and part of that has a robust crisis management plan that

addresses several scenarios. Interview participants and survey respondents indicated no crisis

management plan for long-term closure or even intermittent remote work was in place. In

partnership with HR and information technology, the executive team should develop a crisis

management plan. This should address all the moving parts of general business practice. This

should include "in the event," planning for the organization, and what tools and policies will be

in place if a closure occurs or a long-term shift to remote work impacts the organization. The

application strategy should execute a flexible work arrangement policy that addresses crisis and

disruption. The executive team and the organization's human resource function should draft and agree on what flexible work policies will look like in the future.

One of the emerging themes from virtual work ideas and perceptions was that those interview participants and survey respondents agreed that employees could be productive in a remote work situation. Allowing for flexibility aligns with current literature that touches on flexible work arrangements. Carnevale and Hatak (2020) found that HRM challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic involved adjustments for new and current employees and their altered work conditions, implementing a new workplace policy to limit human contact in person. Step three of the application strategy should address communication during a disruption or crisis. Based on the research case study, interview participants and survey respondents indicated that communication was chaotic and challenging. Research revealed that communication was sometimes confusing and chaotic between leadership and the human resource team. This strategy application should include a communication plan aligned with IT, an executive team, and a human resources team during times of crisis and disruption to include displacement.

The current literature discusses the importance of communication in the organization. The findings from the literature were similar during the participant interviews and survey process for triangulation in identifying "that communication to employees can be limited in virtual teams, so ongoing communication is key to virtual teams' success" (Ford et al., 2017). The final and fourth step of the application strategy was to create an ongoing training and development plan for leaders to strengthen their skill set in leading remote teams in a virtual environment. The interview participants and survey respondents indicated no training and development in place for leading a remote team. Past literature is limited in leading remote teams; however, there has been some recent scholarly research addressing the challenges with leading a remote team in a virtual

environment because of the pandemic of 2020. As this continues to impact general business

practice, this professional development will be critical to the organization's success in a remote

or hybrid work environment. The action plan involves this research case study's findings to

include current literature on human resources during crisis and disruption. The results from the

case study have strengthened with insight into how human resources and leadership can partner

during crisis and disruption. The emergent themes identified and the participant and survey

interview process findings support the action plan for implementation. If implemented, this

action plan addresses problems identified in the participant and survey interview process. This

four-step action plan can provide a roadmap for general business practice in a crisis or disruption

to include long-term closure or intermittent closure and remote work in a virtual work

environment.

Summary of Application to Professional Practice

HR and the importance of a partnership with the executive team are critical to the overall

organization's success. Carnevale and Hatak (2020) found the COVID-19 pandemic has created a

particularly challenging environment for human resource management (HRM), with leaders

having to quickly venture into the unknown of unknowns as they help their workforce adapt and

cope with radical changes occurring to their work and social environments. With the unknowns

continuing to change work environments and how we work, whether remote, hybrid, or in-

person, the context of work changes in terms of how upper leadership collaborates and partners

with IT for infrastructure and HR in the future during times of crisis or disruption. While the

study focused on the executive team and human resources during crisis and disruption, its

findings discuss the importance of partnership and a mutual understanding of how organizations

operate and handle crises, including all critical departments, if they weather the storm.

Organizations will need to start planning for the "what-if" scenarios and have crisis management plans to manage rapid shifts in work environments and infrastructure those disruptions might impact.

Recommendations for Further Study

There was a follow-up question in the study that generated further input from the participants and survey respondents, and that was, is there anything they would like to add? Participants were quick to respond that further study on the aftermath of the pandemic of 2020 and what working remotely is like in terms of mental health and leading remote teams would be critical to pursue in terms of scholarly research.

Based upon the findings of the study, training and development that involves how leaders manage remote teams will be beneficial in furthering research opportunities. Additionally, participants added that crisis management plans would need to change and be more fluid during a crisis. Some participants mentioned will hybrid or remote work will marginalize employees in the sense that they are no longer working in-person and have a face-to-face connection. Other participants indicated that how organizations prepare with technology will dictate how they handle future crises and disruptions. Future scholarly research has opportunities to further this study in speaking about technology in the aftermath of a crisis, communication in the aftermath of the crisis, and how human resources and executive leadership partnered in the aftermath of a crisis. Some of the implications of working remotely and work/life balance were mentioned, along with mental health challenges resulting from the rapid move from in-person to remote/virtual work, which was discussed during the study process. These are human resource opportunities to learn more and delve more into flexible work arrangements during crisis and disruption and how they can impact the overall organization and quality of work and life.

Reflections

As I researched flexible work arrangements and general partnership between the executive team and HR, it became clear that there was no singular approach to how organizations, prior to the pandemic of 2020, provided flexible work arrangements or even supported them in the scholarly research I found. It became clear that organizations were experimenting with flexible work arrangements; some looked upon them as isolated events but not a part of work culture. Other organizations were beginning to embrace flexible work arrangements to see if they could measure productivity and progress remotely/virtually. During this study, virtual work became "remote work," a newly coined phrase, and new styles of work were being introduced like hybrid work where an employee comes into the office a couple of days, while other days were in a remote work from a home mode of operations. During this study, organizations started to admit that people were more productive working from home than an in-person office mode of operations. During my study, organizations started announcing they would take the 100% working remote approach and no longer be required to work in person. Some organizations shut down their home base of operations and proudly announced that every employee would be remote.

As an HR professional who worked for different industries over the years, I was amazed to see a rapid shift of mindset come into play in terms of value towards information technology departments and HR departments. The shift to embrace remote work was rapid, and organizations changed their work cultures overnight. This will be something scholarly researchers continue to study for years to come. The aftermath of the pandemic of 2020 in terms of leadership, partnership, infrastructure, and adaptation of work environments will continue to change and warrant further research and study.

Personal and Professional Growth

      Conducting the research has provided me professional and personal growth in terms of mindset in how HR responds to crisis and disruption. In speaking to my peers in human resources, it was a collaborative effort with the executive team to scramble and, in some cases, redefine corporate structure and culture. I discovered that employees could be productive in a remote setting when they have a work/life balance with their families. My passion for human resource development strengthened when I interviewed participants consisting of C-Suite to individual contributors. The majority of those participants all said that while chaotic, the organization's executive team and HR teams could respond to the crisis and form an overnight partnership that may not have existed in the past. While chaotic in the pandemic of 2020, work and mode of operations flourished in ways nobody ever imagined. Employees saw that they could get their work done more efficiently in a remote environment. There were challenges that I feel need to be explored, including mental health and the isolation of not having interactions face to face with peers and leaders has impacted employees in this new work environment. Some organizations, as a result, have immediately offered mental health counseling and EAP programs for their employees during the ongoing crisis and need to work remotely depending on CDC or state guidelines. From a professional growth standpoint, I learned that training and development are critical to an organization's success. Most interview participants and survey respondents indicated that there was no training for leaders managing remote teams.

      This is a drastically different way of managing versus leading in-person. Some participants indicated that they were lost and unsure how to lead remote teams and felt that the organization's response to this was slow. Human resource development needs to focus on

training and development for these types of disruptions as the landscape of work changes and

calls for additional training for unique situations that become the norm.

As I continue to learn and grow and now teach human resource development and

business courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, I focus on imparting the wisdom I

gleaned from this study. HR departments are the heart of the organization and should have a seat

at the table for strategy and growth conversations. The input of human resources as a strategic

partner is invaluable during a crisis or disruption. Their input comes from their employee

viewpoint, the population their departments interact with daily. There have been times when

human resources did not have a seat or were shirked at the thought of discussing flexible work

arrangements with their executive teams. However, the mindset and thinking of executive teams

were challenged in how work is accomplished and in what setting. This study helped me see that

people can change their mindset when they have to. In the case of the pandemic of 2020, forcing

a rapid move to remote work from the in-person mode of operations, all departments had to work

together in this new landscape.

Biblical Perspective

The Bible serves as a guiding principle in business, and it takes place with servant

leadership and community. The study revealed that prior to the pandemic of 2020, there were

perceptions and misunderstandings of what HR does for the organization and trust and faith in

flexible work arrangements. Having faith in your employees to be productive in their roles is at

the crux of good Christian value in our work as a people. There are verses in the Bible that

discuss trust and faith in the workplace. We have learned in the pandemic of 2020 that moving

massively to remote work has challenged leaders in how they think and understand productivity

and having faith in their workers to get work accomplished in a new environment. Having faith

in your employees is key to providing your employees with empowerment regardless of their work environment. Romans 12:2 talks about being transformed, "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (King James Bible, 1973). The perspective has changed with the new work environment of remote work or hybrid mode of operations, so it is essential as a servant leader to have an open mind and trust with faith in your employees and give guidance and support as you would in an in-person environment.

As business leaders grow and develop, they need to remember that they should be careful to honor their boss, the Lord. He has knowingly put obstacles in their path but still sees every deed, thought, and encouragement they give their teams that also work unto the Lord. Treating our employees with support and care that are isolated in their remote mode of operations is vital from a Christian worldview in how we work and lead in the future. Proverbs 16:11 says, "a just balance in scales are the Lord; all the weight in the bag are his work" (King James Bible, 1973). If servant leaders encourage their employees to have honest dealings, case in point, working from home remotely, employees will be proud of what they do and respect the servant leader that supports and does what is right. Several practices and patient core values discuss the characteristics of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. One aspect of servant leadership using Christian principles is community. With the advent of working remotely, community and providing a sense of connection have been discussed in recent studies. Providing a connection with the organization and a sense of community is something leaders have been challenged with as they continue to be servant leaders in a virtual work environment. With employees feeling disbursed, a feeling of self-care

was clear from interview participants. Leaders can impact this by providing care and being

mindful of what time their employees are putting in working remotely. The study revealed that

human resource professionals were worked to the bone in trying to balance the rapid shift to

remote work and the challenges that employees and leaders at their organizations faced while

working in this new environment.

Executive teams must be aware of the challenges that human resource teams continue to

face as the pandemic of 2020 continues going forward. Awareness is part of servant leadership,

so implementing honest and frequent feedback with remote teams regarding what works for them

and what does not is essential to gain that holistic perspective. Part of being a servant leader has

the foresight to predict future occurrences or impacts to the organization. It will be essential to

analyze to understand past events better and predict future outcomes for the future. God wishes

for us to partner with Him in our work and turns away from ourselves as working on our own,

but to turn to Him with the work we want to accomplish and by praying that he gives us strength

and direction as we take every step as servant leaders. In my Christian worldview, the study has

taught me to have faith and trust in the employees you have hired to be there in the mundane of

tasks to everyday tasks, to those complex challenges during crisis and disruption. If we serve our

employees, they will, in turn, serve us as well.

Summary of Reflections

In summary, reflections in this study cover the human resource response during crisis and

disruption. It will be essential to focus on crisis management in the future as it is paramount to an

organization's success. The partnership between human resources and the executive team is

necessary to navigate these crises. The study revealed a chaotic response in terms of

infrastructure and lack of training and development for leaders managing remote/virtual teams.

Additionally, the study revealed that communication was lacking during the crisis and confused employees. There is an opportunity for organizations to focus on communication plans during crises and be transparent in how this information is disseminated to the employee population. There are opportunities for further research study in the aftermath of the pandemic of 2020 and how organizations responded with their human resource teams as the pandemic continued. Also, research that covers flexible work arrangements and approaches will be important literature for human resource development and the field of human resources.

Summary of Section 3

Section 3 addressed future professional practice for HR professionals during times of crisis and disruption. The qualitative case study revealed through interview participants and survey respondents that HR did partner with the executive team, but there were challenges during the crisis of the pandemic of 2020. Lack of crisis management plans to address long term office closures, lack of training and development for leading remote teams, lack of infrastructure and technology to move a workforce to a virtual/remote setting, and lack of consistent communication, which impacted crisis management for organizations at the beginning of the pandemic of 2020. For future challenges to human resources during crisis and disruption, it will be important to consider all of these areas for organizations to be successful in the event of further disruption to the business operations and their employees.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The general problem statement was to address HR during crisis and disruption, and it is affecting productivity and performance. The qualitative case study revealed that productivity and performance were impacted during the pandemic of 2020 in addition to other areas of the organization. Existing literature that was presented in the case study revealed that flexible work

arrangements were something discussed but not always explored by organizations because of issues with measuring productivity and performance. The qualitative case study revealed from interview participants and survey respondents that employees were productive and performed well in a remote work setting. Further study in the aftermath of the pandemic of 2020 on working remotely in a virtual environment will benefit human resource development and organizations in learning to accept flexible work arrangements as part of the new way of doing business when crises or disruptions happen that require remote/virtual work. The conclusion of the study supports human resources as a partner during the crisis, and the need for flexible work arrangements, along with training and development for leading remote teams is important for organizational growth. Further, technology and infrastructure are important for rapidly moving in-person operations to virtual operations. Crisis management plans were lacking according to interview participants and survey respondents to address long-term closure and a rapid move to remote work. The study has provided for leaders and HR professionals to better understand crisis and disruption as well as what is required to weather the storm.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

<u>Preamble:</u> Permission to record

Copyright waiver

<u>Section 1 – Introduction:</u>

What position do you hold within your organization?

- What are your main responsibilities?

- When did you become active in your role?

- Would you consider yourself an individual contributor, people leader, or human resource professional?

- What title do you hold in your organization?

<u>Section 2 – Issues and ideology:</u>

What do you believe are the main issues that challenge human resources during times of disruption or crisis?

- Describe the specific issues that exist between executive team and human resources when handling crisis or disruption?

- Explain your observation of the partnership between C-suite and your human resources department? Is it existent or non-existent?

- Do you feel human resources is supported during times of crisis or disruption at the corporate level?

- Explain your organization support virtual work from home prior to the pandemic of 2020? Was there a policy in place or was virtual work frowned upon?

<u>Section 3 – Relationship to pandemic of 2020:</u>

- During the year of 2020, organizations were moving ground operations to virtual immediately, was this a smooth transition or did it lack support?

- How would you describe the human resources and executive team on readiness?

- How would you describe the infrastructure to support this move in the beginning of pandemic?

- How would describe preparedness from HR regarding a crisis management standpoint to move operation so rapidly and respond to those leadership challenges?

  Section 4 – Flexible Work Arrangements:

- Did your organization offer flexible work arrangements before COVID-19?

- Describe the transition from traditional to virtual work at your organization?

- Was there a disruption in productivity and performance during this early transition of the pandemic?

- Were people leaders training and developed to lead a virtual team during the transition to virtual operations?

  Section 5 – Response from Organization during pandemic of 2020:

How long did it take for human resources to address workforce shift to a work from home mode of operations?

- Was there a strategy in place to address the travel ban for business travel?

- Describe if there was a crisis management plan in place between executive team and human resources regarding closures or need to adopt work from home strategy?

- When did you see a shift with human resources supporting work from home employees and their needs?

  Finally, is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent

Title of the Project: HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION

Principal Investigator: April Kinchen, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a professional

working in the US over the age of 18 in one of the following roles: People Leader, Individual

Contributor, or HR Professional, who can provide your perception of HR during a disruption or

crisis. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in

this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to determine how HR responds to crisis or disruption particularly in

the past year with the pandemic of 2020.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following thing:

1. Participate in an interview (45 minutes).

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include an understanding of how human resources at organizations respond to

crisis management as well as furthering the importance of human resource strategy during times

of disruption.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would

encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information

that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only

the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in

future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any

information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data are shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation via Zoom meeting.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Video recordings will be used for data purposes only and erased after a period of three years. Video recordings will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the recordings.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be entered for a raffle of a $20 Amazon gift card for their participation.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your

current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to

not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the phone number or

email address provided below and inform her that you wish to discontinue your participation.

Your responses will not be included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is April Kinchen. You may ask any questions you have

now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at xxx-xxx-xxxx or

xxxxxxx@outlook.com. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Thomas, at

xxxxxxx@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone

other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971

University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what

the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records.

The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study

after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided

above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ **The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation**

in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix C: Survey Consent Form

Survey Participant Consent

Title of the Project: HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION

Principal Investigator: April Kinchen, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a professional working in the US over the age of 18 in one of the following roles: People Leader, Individual Contributor, or HR Professional, who can provide your perception of HR during a disruption or crisis. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to determine how HR responds to crisis or disruption particularly in the past year with the pandemic of 2020.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following thing:

1. Complete an anonymous survey (10 minutes).

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include an understanding of how human resources at organizations respond to crisis management as well as furthering the importance of human resource strategy during times of disruption.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would

encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only

the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in

future research studies or with other researchers.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future
  presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be entered for a raffle to win a $20 Amazon gift card.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your

current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to

not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, simply exit the survey/close your internet browser,

and do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the

study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is April Kinchen. You may ask any questions you have

now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at xxx-xxx-xxxx or

xxxxxxxxx@outlook.com. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Thomas,

at xxxxxxxx@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone

other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971

University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects

research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations.

The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are

those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty

University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is

about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about

the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received

answers. I consent to participate in the study.