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Effective Leader Development Within a Church-Planting Organization for a Changing and Chaotic World

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Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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Date: June 28, 2023

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School of Educational Leadership

Effective Leader Development Within a Church-Planting Organization for a Changing and

Chaotic World

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Jeremy A. Davis

July 2023

Dedication

For Whitney, Adilyn, Myla, and Polly. Also, I dedicate this to all Christian missionaries who, with great love, inspire others to discover, believe in, and grow into their full created potential in Christ.

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Abstract

A challenge in cross-cultural church planting is developing leaders. Cross-cultural church-planting organizations like Latin American Mission (LAM; pseudonym) that lack a leadership development strategy struggle to form lasting leaders, sending missionaries with Biblical training but not leader development training. Additionally, developing leaders in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment creates specific challenges that missionaries must address. The purpose of this qualitative, Delphi method study was to investigate the leadership development perceptions and experiences among existing LAM missionaries in the regions of Latin America (Colombia, Cuba, Mexico City, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador) to provide suggestions for improving effective leadership development within a VUCA environment. Understanding the LAM missionaries' perceptions and experiences provided insight into best practices and strategies for developing leaders. Thus, the problem was that LAM needed to further understand the realities of their missionaries to better equip them to effectively train new church leaders for a VUCA environment. Concepts of positive leadership, vertical leadership development, cross-cultural leadership, followership, and coaching influenced this investigation. This qualitative Delphi method study proved effective in gathering collective wisdom, using consensus data from a panel of experts within a context. Using a three round modified Delphi method, a panel of 17 participants who lived and worked as missionaries in a Latin American context with the LAM church-planting organization provided wisdom for best practices in leadership development within a VUCA context. Five themes emerged from the panel's experience that endorsed many tenets of the conceptual framework, specifically within positive leadership, vertical leadership development, and coaching. The panel confirmed that a VUCA environment affected their experience in developing leaders. Other themes included influences

on leader development like positive organizational climates, both the developer's and new leader's mindset, trusting relationships between developers and new leaders, and positive feedback. The conclusions were that missionaries desiring to develop new leaders in a VUCA world could use the key tenets of positive leadership and vertical leadership development; also, coaching was an effective development tool for a VUCA context.

Keywords: VUCA, culture, positive leadership, vertical leadership development, coaching, church-planting

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Christian missionary work involves an individual, family, or group of people that leave their home culture and move to a foreign cultural context to work in or initiate change through creating new churches or service organizations within this new land (Johnstone, 2011). Often, missionaries spend years in preparation, studying culture, communication, language, anthropology, and theology. Missionaries study strategies to enter a new context, strategies for coping within a new cultural context, strategies for passing along doctrinal teachings important in establishing a new Christian institution like a church or nonprofit aid agency (Waltrip, 2018). With all the preparations, skills, and competencies established, the missionaries face uncertain and complex situations for which they receive no training and for which leadership is needed. Thus, developing new leaders requires something other than traditional development programs, where transferring skills and competencies are the norm, especially facing complex environments (Day et al., 2014).

Many missionaries do not intend to live in their new home forever. According to a 2003 study, Van Meter found the average duration of missionaries' longevity was 12 years. Thompson (2018) discussed other averages that ranged between 6 to 17 years. Regardless, missionaries beginning new churches or organizations must look to develop local leadership to continue the work they started. However, the most recent pandemic exposed a need to further understand leader development both during a chaotic time and how to lead in those same moments. Baumgartner (2019), an expert in Christian leadership development stated that "amidst constant change, a new type of leader is necessary. Leaders that can turn around churches, leaders that are able to fulfill God's mission in a new way and a new context are needed" (p. 17). Sanders (2019) addressed the Christian leadership crisis ranging from abusive leaders to rapidly changing culture

among both Catholic and evangelical churches, proposing authentic leadership development, where skills and competencies were not the focus but rather self-awareness and regulation.

Developing leaders is essential to missionaries' work, which is already complicated in a cross-cultural context (Lingenfelter, 2008). When missionaries fail to develop leaders, the church members depend on the missionary impeding the maturity of the church (Johnson, 2012), which contributes to missionary burnout and frustration (Camp et al., 2014). Furthermore, the church lacks long-term influence in the community because once the missionary leaves, whatever leadership remains was not prepared to lead. Thus, missionary organizations seeking to establish locally led churches and organizations must reconsider training programs to better develop leaders in such a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment.

The Latin American Mission (LAM; pseudonym) organization trains and sends missionaries to plant churches, developing leaders that will carry on the ministry beyond the missionaries' presence. The problem is that LAM has struggled to effectively train their missionaries to develop local leadership, especially for such a rapidly changing environment. The world is constantly changing, increasing in complexity and uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic that emerged in 2020 exemplified a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment facing organizations across the globe (Singhal, 2021). Governments, businesses, schools, and organizations worldwide struggled to know how to respond to such uncertainty (Harkavy & Hodges, 2022; Powers et al., 2022). With a volatile global economy (Aleem et al., 2021), businesses laid off workers (Richwine, 2020). While, religious leaders struggled, deciding how best to maintain their communities (Campbell & Sheldon, 2021); students and teachers moved to remote learning, as parents juggled working from home with a house full of children (Smith & Schlaack, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic caused leaders in all

arenas to make decisions with little and frequently changing information, resulting in varying degrees of success (Reyna et al., 2021). Moreover, the term "unprecedented" emerged as a frequently used qualifier when leaders across all organizations announced a decision (Joslyn et al., 2021). These realities indicate that organizations must develop a specific kind of leadership to effectively operate in such a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world.

The term VUCA emerged to describe volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous leadership situations (Swanwick & McKimm, 2017). The military adopted the term to describe current wartime situations, but now VUCA describes the economic realities affecting business and organizational leaders globally. Some scholars have explored the types of leadership skills necessary in a VUCA world (Kucukozyigi, 2020; Rose et al., 2019). Others have emphasized mindsets and behaviors leaders need in such an environment (Peniwati, 2020). Gottfredson (2021) repurposed the acronym to describe a VUCA leader as "versatile, unshaken, candor-inducing, and adventurous" (p.32), responding to each characteristic of the VUCA environment. Consequently, organizations must consider how best to develop leaders to operate in a VUCA world.

In the context of Christian religious work, church-planting agencies send missionaries to serve in VUCA environments. Missionaries across the centuries have worked in complex cross-cultural environments with volatile social, economic, and political situations (Tucker, 2004). Furthermore, there is a level of uncertainty and ambiguity revolving around how to lead as outsiders and develop local leaders for their ministries. For example, Featherstone and Harvey (2020) found that servant leadership among the Konyak people of India where brutality and volatile leadership was the cultural norm did not function well, needing to investigate other metaphors for leadership that connected with the culture. In Latin American cultures, benevolent

dictators with a patron/client relational leadership structure influence the establishment of leadership within organizations (Romero, 2004). Thus, missionary training organizations lacking leadership training programs for such complex environments may struggle to achieve their organizational goals (Niemandt, 2019; Van Wynen & Niemandt, 2020).

For organizations like LAM that engage in leadership development, reconsidering their leadership programs will be important (Martínez Guerra, 2018). Yung (2004) called for new models of church leadership development in East Asia as many local leaders were not adequately prepared for changing contexts. Effective local leadership is crucial for community development and improving quality of life, urging global mission agencies to pursue effective leadership development (Kabongo, 2019). Briscoe (2022) demonstrated the importance of local leadership in community development and the complexity that cultural perceptions had on leadership. Thus, cross-cultural organizations must focus on leadership training in a VUCA world.

In LAM's 2020 Spring report, the author described the organization's belief that the best way to minister and serve a community is to establish a "strong, local church" that works to serve their community (Cromwell, 2016). LAM's director of team training described a strong church as a community of faithful disciples of Christ with capable local leadership to lead the church in its ministries without dependency on outside financial and human resources (personal communication, April 8, 2022). Developing new leaders was paramount in LAM's goals for planting strong churches, but LAM's Director of Latin Teams admitted their missionaries have struggled to develop and equip local leadership (personal communication, April 9, 2022). LAM includes trains missionaries to practice spiritual and servant-leadership. However, LAM's training in how to develop new leaders is lacking, especially when considering training for a VUCA environment.

LAM missionary teams often function in a VUCA environment, making it necessary to reevaluate their leadership development program. Furthermore, LAM missionary teams must not only receive leadership training but also learn to develop local leadership specifically for a VUCA world (Chelsey et al., 2020). Considering the goal is planting strong churches with local leadership, LAM benefits from further understanding and implementing effective leadership development in a VUCA world. The following sections include a brief discussion of some concepts influencing the study from which I will examine leadership development within a VUCA context. I discuss the purpose, outline the direction for the research, and include the question that will guide the investigation. I also provide relevant definitions of key terms for clarity.

Statement of the Problem

Many of LAM's missionary candidates come equipped with skills to lead churches. However, they often lack training on how to adequately prepare local leaders, which is essential to planting sustainable churches. The problem is that LAM lacks a leader development training program and instead focuses mostly on individual and team development. Therefore, LAM needs more understanding of what type of leader development program to implement, especially considering the VUCA environment missionaries face.

The VUCA environment creates new problems for leaders, requiring new solutions and new understandings of leadership development. Elkington et al. (2017) differentiated *leadership* development from *leader* development. Leadership development is a process that inspires leaders to emerge from a supportive organizational culture. Conversely, leader development focuses on building individual leader capacities (Elkington et al., 2017). LAM and other church-planting organizations have often focused on equipping the missionaries with needed skills and

competencies to lead. However, local church members view the formally trained missionaries or pastors as the experts, creating a barrier for lay leadership to emerge, sparking some mission agencies toward a renewed focus on informal leadership training (Kohl, 2021). Abidi and Joshi (2018) proposed that leaders in a VUCA world would not be viewed as experts but as learners that are agile and adaptable, adjusting to the unknowns.

Some researchers have argued for vertical leader development in a VUCA world, described as a mindset shift different from skill development, equipping leaders to learn in the moment and training others through interpersonal engagement and mentoring (Chelsey et al., 2020; McGuire & Palus, 2019). Curiosity and imitation, or modeling, have also been named as important in leader development (Hortsmeyer, 2020; Silberman, 2018). Additionally, an inherent complexity for missionaries is the role of culture within leadership development, requiring attention to cultural leadership norms, including how followers contribute to the process (Javidan et al., 2006; Jiang et al., 2021). Day, Riggio, Tan, et al. (2021) in a summary of the state of leadership development stated:

> A more holistic view of leader development would not only incorporate adult development theories and concepts, but incorporate the role of followers, the specific leadership context, as well as the culture and environment in which the leader is embedded. It is clear that a major challenge to leadership development is the need for a comprehensive theory to guide the complex learning that takes place. (p. 3)

Therefore, LAM must consider leader development in a VUCA environment, requiring more understanding of effective models to train missionaries to know how to cultivate other leaders better.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, Delphi method study was to investigate the leadership development perceptions and experiences among existing LAM missionaries in the regions of Latin America (Colombia, Cuba, Mexico City, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador) to provide suggestions for improving effective leadership development within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. The LAM church-planting organization currently lacks a leadership development program that can help their missionaries train new leaders in a VUCA context. Understanding the LAM missionaries' perceptions and experiences provided insight into best practices and strategies for developing leaders. Thus, the problem was that LAM needed to further understand the realities of their missionaries to better equip them to effectively train new church leaders for a VUCA environment.

Research Question

According to LAM missionaries' experience, what type of leader development program does the LAM organization need to implement to effectively train their missionaries to develop church leaders in a VUCA environment?

Definition of Key Terms

Ambiguous. The result of an environment produced by volatility, uncertainty, complexity to the multiple ways of interpreting a situation. Due to its novelty, no prior information aids in determining future outcomes (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Codreanu, 2016).

Coaching. A leadership development tool that depends on the interaction of a coach and a coachee using reflection, collaboration, inquiry, and accountability to achieve a personal or an organizational goal (Halliwell et al., 2022).

Complex. the interaction of multiple moving parts providing an overload of information from sources such as cultural diversity and causes disruption (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Codreanu, 2016).

Positive leadership. Practices that leaders employ to generate positive emotions with the goal of helping followers and organizations thrive (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012).

Thriving. In positive leadership, to thrive is to excel beyond what is considered normal expected outcomes. Thriving happens in an individual when the individual engages life and work with vitality, passion, happiness, living in their best possible self (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014; Quinn, 2015).

Uncertain. The absence of past precedent for current problems, making the future largely uncertain (Peschl, 2019).

Vertical leadership. An approach to leadership that utilizes various levels of thinking or sense-making, providing the leader with the mindsets necessary to lead in complex situations and contrasted with the addition of leadership skills or competencies (Petrie, 2014).

Volatile. The rapid and voluminous pace of change in a global economy that cannot depend on past experiences for problem-solving (Codreanu, 2016; Swarbrick & Stearman, 2012).

VUCA. VUCA is an acronym describing an environment that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. Volatile refers to the pace of change within a social, economic, or political situation, including major technological changes. Uncertain is the lack of predictability of a future objective. Complex describes the many variables that influence a situation. Ambiguous means the presence of multiple viable options or perspectives, making a clear and singular decision difficult (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). The term VUCA in this study describes the context for which church-planting missionaries work and develop leaders.

Summary

Leadership development is crucial to the church-planting missionary team's goals. Leadership development continues to be a challenge for missionaries, leading to a lack of strong churches they seek to plant. Missionaries work in a VUCA environment, which requires a particular kind of leadership. The lack of understanding about what type of leadership training missionary organizations needed to prepare their missionaries was the problem that required investigation. Examining the leadership development process in a VUCA world through a positive and vertical leadership lens provided a pathway towards discovering effective leadership training programs for church-planting organizations. A review of what is known about developing leaders in a VUCA world helps understand what an effective leader development program could be for church-planting organizations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Considering the abundance of literature on leadership development, church-planting organizations wishing to develop leaders in a chaotic world must implement a clear leader development program whereby leaders are equipped to lead churches in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world. VUCA was a term originally employed by the U.S. military to describe the highly uncertain, constantly changing, complex, and ambiguous environments their leaders faced (Barber, 1992). Cross-cultural missionaries face a VUCA environment when uprooting from their known culture to a foreign context, often very different from their own (Lingenfelter, 2008). Culture describes the beliefs, practices, and norms that make up the life of a people and differ nation to nation (Hofstede, 2001). Thus, culture can represent both national contexts or more specific contexts such as organizations and have an influence on leadership (House, Dorfman, Javidan, et al., 2014; Schein, 2019). Not only is national culture a source of uncertainty, but there are also complexities in power dynamics that create leader development barriers (House, Dorfman, Javidan, et al., 2014). Furthermore, missionary leaders face ambiguity with concepts that were concrete in their home culture but different in their host culture (Giguère, 2018). Thus, missionaries face a VUCA world. Therefore, I examined leadership development among missionaries through the lens of positive leadership to consider how missionaries could or were using elements of positive leadership to develop themselves and others. Additionally, I coupled positive leadership style and vertical leadership development to investigate the perceptions of leadership development among missionaries in a VUCA context.

Rationale Statement

The following sections include a review of leadership development theories and methods that have been researched. Specifically related to the conceptual framework of this study, vertical leadership development and positive leadership are reviewed to further understand effective leadership development for a VUCA world. Therefore, the following is a review of the literature on themes surrounding leader development in a VUCA environment, including the complexities of culture on leadership and followership. Also, the following is a synthesis of the contributions of positive leadership studies, reviewing literature on effective leader development within organizations. Finally, I explored coaching as a practice predicated on the tenets of positive psychology and proposed its investigation as a tool for LAM missionaries to train local leaders within their new church plants.

Research Question

According to LAM missionaries' experience, what type of leader development program does the LAM organization need to implement to effectively train their missionaries to develop church leaders in a VUCA environment?

Literature Search Methods

The Abilene Christian University library database was the main tool for a thorough literature review of leadership and leadership development in a VUCA environment. Most of the sources came from EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and the ACU library search engine. The search included the following keywords to narrow the investigation: *Leader development*, *VUCA*, *cross-cultural or global leadership*, *positive leadership*, vertical leadership, *adult learning theory*, *followership*, *culture*. Additionally, combining the keywords helped locate research where the topics intersected. For example, *VUCA and leadership development* provided

research on developing leaders in a VUCA environment. Additionally, combining *culture*, *leadership*, and *followership* helped discover research where culture had an influence on leadership. I identified foundational leadership texts through the doctoral classes I had completed. Finally, I used the resources mined from bibliographies of relevant resources to identify previously cited research.

Conceptual Framework Discussion

Positive Leadership

Positive leadership developed from positive psychology that focused on leveraging positive emotions to draw out the best in people, leading to human flourishing (Seligman, 2011b; Seligman et al., 2005). The concept of positive leadership posits that leaders can develop themselves and their followers using positive practices to produce flourishing individuals and organizations (Cameron, 2012; Quinn, 2015). Researchers have found that when people experience positive emotions at work, it increases employee motivation, performance, commitment, and creativity (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Thus, leaders can cultivate these beneficial emotions through positive practices.

Positive leadership practices build resiliency, as positive emotions open the mind to creative problem-solving compared to negative emotions which limit openness to new possibilities (Chen & Padilla, 2022). Resiliency is important in a VUCA world because of the need for leaders to function in turbulent times (Seligman, 2011a). Positive leadership assumes that people can continue to learn and develop mentally, employing a positive mindset important in expanding new possibilities (Cameron, 2015). Therefore, examining leadership development within a missionary team through a positive leadership lens illuminated elements of positive leadership that missionaries could or were currently using.

Vertical Leadership

Due to positive leadership's focus on developing a mindset, coupling positive leadership with the concept of vertical leadership development (VLD) is supported in the literature. VLD theorizes that adults can develop and expand their mindsets to better lead in complex situations (Palus et al., 2020). By contrast, horizontal leadership development focuses on the acquisition of skills and competencies necessary to lead (Petrie, 2014). Vertical leadership development measures leaders' mindsets through stages and states of action logics, with each stage giving leaders access to different mental resources (Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert, 2020). Leaders develop vertically through heat experiences, whereby challenging situations force leaders to explore new possibilities for a response (Petrie, 2015). This openness mindset aligns with positive leadership, as positive emotions expand the leader's mindset to seeing new solutions to problems (Fredrickson, 2004). VUCA environments are heat experiences, providing opportunities for leaders to develop vertically, through positive practices. Thus, investigating how missionaries experienced leadership development in a VUCA world illuminated existing behaviors that created impediments for leadership development in a VUCA context.

Coaching

Both positive leadership and vertical leadership practitioners employ coaching as a tool for developing leaders (Boyatzis et al., 2013; Palus et al., 2020). Coaching is a development practice using feedback, questioning, and guided reflection to help leaders grow (Blanchard et al., 2017). Coaching can aid in personal vertical leadership development plans, which has been shown to be effective in a VUCA world (Coopersmith, 2022). Positive psychology coaching informed this study as it implements positive psychology for effective leader development (Burke, 2018; Halliwell et al., 2022). The purpose of the study was to better understand the

missionary experience in developing leaders. A church-planting missionary's main task is to establish a church that acts as a functioning community with its own leadership. Thus, a key focus for missionaries is the development of leaders. Therefore, a better understanding of the missionary experience in leadership development provided current effective practices specifically for the complex, everchanging reality. Examining the missionary experience through positive leadership linked to the concepts in vertical leadership and influenced by positive coaching practices provided a lens for understanding how to improve leadership development in a VUCA world.

VUCA Origins

The term VUCA has military origins, currently emerging as a descriptor of the global economy. Saleh and Watson (2017) defined VUCA as the challenges "surrounding the business environment in terms of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (p. 711)." Volatility is the rapid and voluminous pace of change in a global economy that cannot depend on past experiences for problem-solving (Codreanu, 2016; Swarbrick & Stearman, 2012). Uncertainty has been described as the absence of past precedent for current problems, making the future largely uncertain. Meanwhile, global interactions have created complexity in understanding the problem or situation. Such complex uncertainty sparked studies of future-oriented leadership development such as unlearning that focused on openness and collective meaning making (Peschl, 2019). Finally, ambiguity is the result of an environment produced by volatility, uncertainty, complexity to the multiple ways of interpreting a situation (Codreanu, 2016). Each term in the VUCA acronym is important and should be analyzed (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). While volatility and complexity have been said to produce uncertainty and ambiguity, each challenge of VUCA warrants different responses (Peterson, 2021).

Impact of VUCA

VUCA has created challenges in organizational contexts and leadership across a myriad of industries, creating an urgency for new types of preparation. Global higher educational leaders have wrestled with managing institutions in the face of rapidly changing technology, complexity of national educational procedures, and the ambiguity through the abundance of information readily available (Waller et al., 2019). The VUCA environment has influenced managers in the energy industry toward more digital competencies, whether the managers were aware of VUCA or not (Nowacka & Rzemieniak, 2022). Rapidly changing production processes within global industries require new management styles able to cope with the VUCA context (Bach & Sulíková, 2021). A complex and ambiguous world requires leaders to discern between various leadership styles to make decisions and solve problems (Grint, 2022). Government responses in the face of COVID-19, an example of a VUCA world, have had their leadership styles critiqued demonstrating for many a lack of preparation for such a time (Lilleker & Stoeckle, 2021). The financial industry has been plagued with volatile markets and unpredictable turns, like the emergence of cryptocurrency where managing change has become key in their talent development sector (Neumann , 2019). Due to the impact of VUCA and the need for leaders to identify their context (Waller et al., 2019), organizations must grapple with developing leaders to work in this environment (Hadar et al., 2020). Thus, scholars have investigated and proposed various competencies leadership necessary for a VUCA world.

Competencies for VUCA

As the VUCA environment has become a common descriptor of our current world, many studies have resulted in how to work and lead in it. Dima et al. (2021) showed how the VUCA world during the COVID-19 pandemic increased job stress and burnout among social workers.

Peniwati (2020) called for agile leadership as the complexities VUCA challenged hierarchical structures, calling agile leadership a mindset shift to meeting the appropriate organizational needs. Likewise, Bywater and Lewis (2019) studied necessary traits for VUCA world leaders, presenting agility as crucial in framing your context, engaging with stakeholders, transforming problems into results, and self-development. Rimita et al. (2019) affirmed agility along with values-driven leadership, collaborating with multiple stakeholders, systems thinking and shared leadership as coping practices among Nigerian business leaders in a VUCA world. Rose et al. (2019) identified four competencies important in leading in a VUCA world including strategic thinking, communication, and technical skills, coaching, and mentoring. While the term VUCA has existed for some time, these recent studies show the infancy of understanding leader development in the VUCA world.

Of all the competencies mentioned, VUCA scholars referenced agility most often (Baran & Woznyj, 2021; Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Bywater & Lewis, 2019; De Meuse, 2019; Madsen, 2020; Peniwati, 2020; Peterson, 2021; Rimita et al., 2019). Agility in leadership refers to the ability to make quick, adaptive decisions through constant monitoring and testing of the current environment (Baran & Woznyj, 2021). Agile leaders are compared to athletes who are constantly surveying the playing field, determining various potential threats, and making quick moves to achieve their goals (Peterson, 2021). Considering the multiple threats that the VUCA environment presents, agility has been an attractive leadership competency especially in the technology industry (Bach & Sulíková, 2021). However, Madsen (2020) reviewed the history of the agile concept, noting that it was mostly based on practice and not theory. Regardless, making quick sense of the environment has organizations looking for ways to develop more agile leaders to manage in a VUCA context (Baran & Woznyj, 2021).

The VUCA world has also evoked educational leaders to call for social-emotional competencies for teachers to adequately face the current world (Hadar et al., 2020). Hadar et al. (2020) found that students training to be teachers lacked the social emotional competencies to confidently deal with the VUCA conditions. Agility includes the ability to rapidly scan information from various sources accurately to make the best decisions (De Meuse, 2019). Thus, leaders within a social context, like teachers, need enhanced capacitation in analyzing their social emotional context (Hadar et al., 2020). Baran and Woznyj (2021) proposed a 3-fold plan for leaders to manage effectively in a VUCA environment by (1) identifying the specific VUCA context, (2) defining obstacles to agility, and (3) implementing agile practices.

Considering the identification of a VUCA context requires grappling with the complexities of the socially constructed world of leaders, a brief review of the complexities of culture on leadership provided further understanding of why developing leaders for this context was imperative. Culture has impacted international organizations because of the complexities of how each society interacts with several major factors (Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede (1984) classified five major categories of culture to help cross-cultural workers navigate the complexities: power distance, individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity, and future orientation. Hofstede's model has been used to study and enhance cross-cultural engagement in areas such as teaching and learning (Alqarni, 2022), and leadership and management (House, Hanges, Javidan, et al., 2004), which is the focus of the following section.

Cross-Cultural Leadership Studies

Cultural values and implicit biases influence leadership styles, behaviors, and expectations. The seminal GLOBE study provided research among 62 different societies

worldwide that identified culturally specific leadership tendencies, inspiring numerous other studies on the influence of culture on leadership (House, Hanges, Javidan, et al., 2004). In a later study, House, Dorfman, Javidan, et al. (2014) examined 24 countries demonstrating how implicit leadership biases contributed to distinct leadership behaviors depending on the national culture. National culture variables such as power distance are predictors of corruption in leadership (Scholl & Schermuly, 2018). Cultural variables such as tightness and looseness, or the tendency toward openness to new ideas and relationships, shape societal perceptions of effective leadership, causing that society to endorse certain styles of leadership (Aktas et al., 2016). Stephan and Pathak (2016) further demonstrated how cultural implicit biases prompted the likelihood of entrepreneurship in certain societies as some societies were more prone to risk and individualism than others. Mittal and Elias (2016) demonstrated how culture impacted leaders' use of power in organizations, which could inform cross-cultural management practices. Cultural dimensions such as individualism verses collectivism contributed to friction between employees and organizations, impacting productivity and performance (Fitzsimmons & Stamper, 2014). These examples demonstrated that culture influences leadership behaviors and styles because of embedded norms and values within that society.

The GLOBE study helped identify cultural dimensions that influenced leadership behaviors and expectations. Castaño et al. (2015) studied specific desired leadership behaviors among 11 Latin American countries, finding that most Latin American countries identified charismatic/values-based and team-oriented leadership behaviors as most desirable. Bullough and de Lunque (2015) found that societies endorsing charismatic/values-based leadership would encourage female political leadership, making Latin American countries proponents of female leadership. However, Brown and McClellan (2017) demonstrated that what is valued and what is

practiced differ. They described female leadership within the Ecuadorian Andes mountains that portrayed a relational leadership style, different from the more domineering style of their male counterparts. Ecuadorian female leaders had a favorable response from their followers because of the personal concern they showed to their constituents (Brown & McClellan, 2017).

Various leadership styles have been investigated in different cultures. Mittal and Dorfman (2012) examined the servant leadership approach, finding that most cultural clusters supported various aspects of the approach. They admitted that there was a need for more examination of actual practices within these cultures to endorse their effectiveness, demonstrating the further need for practical, possibly qualitative, examination of this approach (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). Ramsey et al. (2017) studied transformational leadership (TL), finding that global leaders can adjust to cultural values utilizing TL to influence members. This study specifically researched Latin American culture, identifying the endorsement of TL as an adaptable cross-cultural approach (Ramsey et al., 2017). Examining a Chinese company, Qu et al. (2019) tested the effectiveness of authentic leadership (AL), finding that when cultural dimensions of high-power distance and humane orientation were present, followers endorsed the benevolent tenets of AL. A similar study of the leader-member exchange (LMX) approach showed that LMX also functioned in cultures that demonstrated high power distance (Lin et al., 2018).

Culture influences identity, making cross-cultural leadership and communication complex. Culture can be described as a system of beliefs, values, and norms that influence the behaviors or worldview of people within that culture (Schein, 2019). Nathan (2015) analyzed various culture-identity models, revealing that many viewed cultures as essential or nonessential. That is the essential model of culture is bounded to the national culture; the nonessential model

considers various intersecting factors such as "cultural identities, religion, race, ethnicity, gender or sexuality" (Nathan, 2015, p. 116). Regardless, it is evident that one's cultural identity is complex and cannot be generalized by one aspect of life.

The nonessentialist model reveals how extensively culture can influence leading in multicultural team contexts. Examining the existing literature on teams and culture, Feitosa et al. (2018) demonstrated how culture affected multicultural teams. Their examination identified that cultural values and tendencies influenced leadership styles, conflict resolution methods, and collaboration across multicultural team members (Feitosa et al., 2018). Paletz et al. (2018) found that multicultural teams were more likely to show more creativity and less conflict than homogenous teams, depending on the composition of the team. Cultural norms, such as individualism and collectivism, contributed to friction within organizations (Fitzsimmons & Stamper, 2014). Culture in team environments contributes to the VUCA experience in leader development.

Leaders of multicultural teams must consider a broader personal identity to navigate the various cultures present. Lee et al. (2018) studied cultural identity, finding those team members with a more global identity, "individuals with balanced culture-specific identities tend to demonstrate higher CQ [cultural intelligence] and are perceived as more leader-like in self-managed multicultural teams" (p. 191). Lisak and Erez (2015) identified three characteristics essential in leadership emergence within multicultural teams: global identity, cultural intelligence (CQ), and openness to cultural diversity. Lisak and Erez (2015) studied 317 MBA students working on multicultural teams, and those scoring the highest on the above characteristics were more likely to become leaders. Thus, a global identity is necessary for leaders of multicultural teams.

The reality of multicultural teams is that a leader must develop skills to lead effectively. Lisak et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of the global leader in effectively leading multicultural teams by modeling cultural inclusion and promoting "communication inclusion, which verifies that team members understand one another's diverse perspectives" (p. 667). These studies identified skills, characteristics, and behaviors necessary in leading multicultural teams; however, they did not discuss the leadership style that leaders implemented.

This brief review demonstrated the importance of understanding the influence of culture on leadership behaviors, leader identity, and leading in multicultural settings. In Latin America, leadership styles and behaviors have been studied identifying many countries endorsed more paternalistic and autocratic leadership styles (Darío Rodriguez & Ríos, 2009; House, Hanges, Javidan, et al., 2004; Romero, 2004; Vassolo et al., 2011). Brown and McClellan's (2017) study showed that certain sub contexts within Latin America may differ from the national norms. However, all these studies focused on culture's influence on leadership behaviors. Considering that leadership construction is a dynamic process involving both leader and follower behavior (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), just as culture influences leader behavior, it must also influence follower behavior. Thus, examination of culture's influence on follower behavior helped to further the understanding of culture and leadership.

Followership and Culture

Followership has been identified as an important piece in understanding the leadership development process (Jiang et al., 2021). There are two basic approaches to followership: role-based and constructionist (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The role-based approach considered how the follower's role influenced the leaders' behaviors (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The constructionist approach assumed that leadership is a socially constructed process of influencing behaviors that

create a leadership environment (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The constructionist approach affirmed cultural influence on leader development, as cultural values and norms are socially constructed (Schein, 2019). Therefore, it would be helpful in the examination of followers' behaviors to know how cultural dimensions influence follower behaviors.

Follower categories and behaviors have been identified to help focus research on followership. Carsten et al. (2010) identified three major follower types with 12 follower behaviors divided within each one: passive, active, and proactive. Cultural dimensions such as power distance and societal tightness/looseness impacted follower dissenting behavior, which could discourage proactive followership behaviors (Blair & Bligh, 2018). In other words, culture may determine follower's perceptions of their ability to participate and speak up in an organization. This influences leader behaviors that could cause abuse or stifle innovation. Furthermore, cultural dimensions that promoted more passive follower behaviors frustrated leaders trying to empower followers to participate (Da'as & Zibenberg, 2019). Guntner et al. (2020) demonstrated this phenomenon showing that through simultaneity theory, the leader's behavior adjusted as the follower's behavior responded, likewise, the leader's behavior influenced the follower's response.

The follower spectrum from passive, active, to proactive helps to understand each cultural dimensions' influence on the follower's perception of expected behaviors. Followers' beliefs about their expected behaviors impacted the leadership process because it influenced their interaction with the leaders, affecting leaders' responses to followers (Carsten et al., 2018). Because beliefs are formed by national culture (Schein, 2019), further study needs to identify how culture impacts perceptions of endorsed follower behavior.

Considering the context of teams, culture impacts the different stages of team effectiveness: forming, function, and finishing (Feitosa et al., 2018). Feitosa et al. (2018) found that empowering leadership behaviors tended to make teams more effective in North American contexts. However, if teams are embedded in a multicultural setting or cross-cultural setting where more passive follower behaviors are culturally endorsed, then empowering leadership behaviors may not work. Furthermore, cultural influences could impact how followers relate to the leader depending on the social distance allowed by the culture between followers and leaders, prohibiting the flow of communication and impacting the leader's feelings of support (Oc & Bashshur, 2013).

Leadership Development

The pursuit of developing leaders in organizations has spawned numerous theories and investigations of how leaders develop, effective development models, antecedents and conditions affecting development, and measurements in development. Furthermore, there is a wealth of theories and research on different styles of leadership and discussion of which is most effective within what type of environment. Accompanying these theories are studies indicating what competencies describe each leadership style and how to develop such competencies within managerial leaders or lay leaders within organizations. In a recent review of the state of leadership science, Day, Riggio, Tan, et al. (2021) called for a more holistic view of leader development that included theories on adult development, culture, role of the followers, and contexts. The following review includes an overview of various leadership theories or styles of leadership. The next section reviews adult development theories related to leadership and two areas in which leaders develop.

Review of Leadership Theories and Styles

Leadership theories abound, each theorizing on how a particular style of leader functions, what settings are effective for various styles of leaders, benefits of the style for organizations and followers, as well as necessary components of the leadership style. Many studies have uncovered the competencies of each style, and some propose how to develop such competencies. Many researchers discuss whether the styles require inherent traits or acquired skills were necessary for the adoption of the style. The following outlines existing styles of leadership.

Transformational leadership consists of the leaders' desire for organizational achievement through empowering and inspiring followers to realize their fullest potential (Smith et al., 2004). Concern for follower development is secondary to the primary concern of the organization. However, the transformational leader recognizes the potential of the organization when the followers are achieving at their fullest potentials. Role-modeling, inspiration, stimulating creativity and innovation, and providing a supporting atmosphere are all characteristics of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2019). The goal is to foster an environment whereby the organization achieves through individual achievement, led by a dynamic leader able to empower everyone.

Authentic leadership is living consistently with personal values and convictions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Having a positive moral perspective, authentic leadership focuses on leader integrity through self-awareness rather than follower development (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Northouse, 2019). The authentic leader is intrinsically motivated, thus, able to positively relate to followers making informed decisions with complete transparency (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Northouse, 2019).

Servant leadership is characterized by the leader's concern for the follower, empathetically attending to their needs (Northouse, 2019). The servant-leader desires to serve first then lead, empowering and nurturing their followers (van Dierendonck, 2011). The servant-leader's primary concern is follower development and is achieved through six major characteristics: humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction specific to the needs of the follower, and stewardship (van Dierendonck, 2011). Through time spent with the leader, followers grow, leading to organizational and societal impact (Northouse, 2019).

Adaptive leadership focuses on the context, and all the agents involved. It is event-driven instead of person-driven (Holmberg & Tyrstrup, 2010). Leaders can act as a catalyst for adaptive leadership infusing tension to drive creativity or facilitate conversations (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Adaptive leadership understands leadership as a complex system with many moving parts contributing to leadership. In this way, the follower's motivation to work is not driven by a reward system but rather an invitation to participate in problem-solving (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). It promotes various feedback loops digging deeper into the root problems (Holmberg & Tyrstrup, 2010). Leadership then fosters an environment that allows people to engage in the problems. Being event focused, adaptive leadership requires the leader to gain perspective, becoming aware of all the moving pieces, then enabling those pieces to interact to promote creative solutions (Northouse, 2019). The leader must learn how to be a learner (Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013). Again, this differs from the other leadership styles because it does not focus on follower motivation as the problem. AL assumes a context is complex, and it is the context itself that creates the space for leadership.

These major leadership styles have been investigated and endorsed within various organizations. The above descriptions highlighted how they work, the competencies necessary

within the style, and some of the outcomes of each style. Positive leadership is a style of leadership that overlaps with authentic and transformational leadership, while differing in key areas. The following section includes a description and review of positive leadership and its influence on the current study.

Positive Leadership

Positive leadership (PL) emerged from positive organizational scholarship (POS), providing another lens for viewing leadership development. PL and POS draw from the school of positive psychology that sought to explore preventative interventions versus prescriptive therapy for mental health, finding that focusing on subjective well-being and its practices would create happier people (Seligman et al., 2005). The field of positive psychology has influenced numerous studies exploring the effects of positive emotions on human and organizational development and performance (Fredrickson, 2001; Waters et al., 2021). However, positive psychology and other concepts emerging from the field have not been without criticism. Thus, a review of positive psychology and its criticisms provides the backdrop of positive leadership and the foundational research that influences PL.

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology emerged from a shift from focusing on healing what was damaged through negative life events to a preventative approach by focusing on that which is good and right with people. Seligman and Csikszentmihayli (2000) were early promoters of the field, studying what makes humans and communities flourish and thrive. The field evolved to explore the core positive values across human culture and society, spawning numerous studies on the effects of positive emotions, utilization of strengths, and virtues enacted in multiple

environments (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011; Clifton & Harter, 2003; Fredrickson, 2001; Gander et al., 2013; Seligman et al., 2005).

The heliotropic effect was the foundation of positive psychological thinking, which describes organisms' tendency to grow toward that which is positive like a plant drawn toward the sun (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Thus, the positive paradigm takes an affirmative bias, assuming that a focus on factors that enable thriving will produce happier, more engaged, and purposeful individuals and communities (Cameron, 2012). Consequently, researchers have discovered that conditions like positive work environments (Ramdas & Patrick, 2019), high-quality relationships (Adams et al., 2020; Stephens et al., 2013), supportive communication (Cameron, 2007; Howick et al., 2018; Jia et al., 2020), and a connection to vocation or meaningfulness in life are conditions that can create such flourishing for both individuals and communities (Wrzesniewski, 2003). Foundational to all these conditions are the positive emotions that they produce, leading to feelings of happiness, purpose, and connection. Furthermore, Fredrickson (2001) demonstrated how positive emotions were produced through the practice of positive virtues, such as gratitude, showing that individuals could intentionally develop subjective well-being. As these studies emerged, the practice of positive psychological principles within organizations began happening, exposing the potential for organizations to create these conditions to enhance the well-being of their members.

Positive organizational scholarship emerged as the study of these principles within organizations, recognizing that human beings spend the majority portion of their lives at work (Pfeffer, 2018). Researchers found that organizations could create these conditions by infusing positive practices to create thriving organizations. While performance and productivity were linked as outcomes for positive organizations (van Woerkom, 2021), the core of positive

organizational scholarship was to form organizations that foster more subjective well-being

through positive emotions to improve the well-being of all stakeholders (Meyer, 2015). These

studies naturally led to leadership, as leaders were principally responsible for the culture of their

organizations (Schein, 2019). Thus, positive leadership was a product of the evolution of positive

psychology and necessary for creating positive organizations.

Positive organizational scholarship (POS) and positive leadership (PL) focus on

behaviors, organizational practices, and structures to see how positivity influences each.

Different from studying the individual, POS examines the "positive aspect of the organizational

context" (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Quinn (2015) defined a positive organization as "a system in

which people flourish and exceed expectations" (p. 27). POS depended on organizations using

positive practices to analyze improvement in performance, a thriving work environment, and

patient or customer satisfaction (Cameron et al., 2011). Thus, positive organizations apply

positive practices to satisfy individuals and organizations' heliotropic nature toward growth,

improvement, and positivity (Cameron, 2015).

POS includes studies on how positivity affected both the individual and the organization.

The term "positive" describes the notion of exceeding expectations providing exceptional

outcomes for the individual and the organization (Cameron et al., 2011). On the individual level,

Rath and Harter (2010) discussed how human thriving or well-being flows from the positive

experiences in the areas of one's career, social life, financial state, physical state, and

community. POS focuses on the processes and practices at the organizational or communal level

that can increase individual well-being, resulting in organizational benefit (Cameron et al.,

2011). Other practices like fostering high-quality connections in the workplace can also improve

well-being and organizational performance (Stephens et al., 2013). However, leadership is required to form such thriving organizations.

Foundations of Positive Leadership

Positive leadership is founded on three core principles and enacted using four interwoven strategies. Cameron (2008) named the three principles as positively deviant performance, affirmative bias, and virtuousness. Positive deviant performance describes performance or behaviors that are extraordinary and exceed the normal expectation, such as demonstrating compassion, putting the stakeholders' well-being first, and gaining trust through emotional intelligence (Brière et al., 2021; Ramdas & Patrick, 2018). Affirmative bias has leaders looking for the potential in those around them through highlighting individual strengths rather than emphasizing the mastery over weaknesses, empowering them with autonomy (Suleman et al., 2021). For example, Littman-Ovadia and Steger (2010) studied Israeli Red Cross volunteers showing that when the volunteers used their strengths their performance and commitment levels increased due to feelings of meaningfulness in their work. Positive leadership builds on the best of the human condition, assuming that all human systems are drawn toward goodness (Dutton & Sonenshein, 2007). Thus, positive leaders start with these assumptions and create spaces in which those around them can thrive.

The four positive leadership strategies to foster thriving individuals are building positive work climates, positive relationships, positive communication, and positive meaning (Cameron, 2012; Stadtlander, 2021). Spreitzer et al. (2005) defined thriving at work as the intersection of vitality and learning. In other words, thriving happens when employees feel like their work is meaningful and can explore their growth. Quinn (2015) discussed how leaders could create a thriving work climate by focusing on existing strengths within the organization to improve it.

Thus, studies emerged to investigate leaders' use of these strategies to leverage positive emotions to increase employee well-being, which proved to influence organizational performance (Malinga et al., 2019; Schein, 2019; Vianello et al., 2010).

Positive Leaders Create Positive Culture

Schein (2019) described culture as beliefs, practices, and that are embedded within the organization either stated or tacit that influence operational environment. Leaders influence organizational culture and its outcomes, and positive leaders create cultures where people thrive (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014; Page et al., 2019). Positive leaders create a positive culture through practices like compassion, forgiveness (Worthington et al., 2010), gratitude (Di Fabio et al., 2017), and psychological safety (Edmondson, 2018), which have shown to increase subjective well-being, individual commitment, and motivation (Fredrickson, 2013; Sekera et al., 2011).

Positive Leaders Foster Positive Relationships

The positive climate where acts of compassion, gratitude, and trust are practiced throughout elevate the positive emotions in others that can lead to high-quality relationships (Burkus, 2017; Vianello et al., 2010). Specifically, positive energy networks use positive people to encourage and uplift those around them (Baker, 2019). Furthermore, positive social relationships affect both physical and mental well-being, creating positive energy (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008). Consequently, overtly negative social interactions or relationships can decrease motivation at work, while positive relational energy increases engagement (Gerbasi et al., 2015; Owens et al., 2016). Thus, positive leaders use empathy to create trust, encouragement, optimism, and even humor to create relationships and positive energy (Cooper & Sosik, 2012; Cross et al., 2003; Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014; Mirivel, 2021).

Positive Leaders Employ Positive Communication

Positive leaders communicate positively with others through regular encouragement, looking for the potential in others, which Dweck (2015) said created a growth mindset important in building resilience. The positive leader does this through honest communication (Axtell, 2019), not neglecting negative feedback; rather positive leaders communicate negative feedback while also including positive feedback (Cameron, 2013). Gottman and Levenson (1999) showed how among committed relationships those with a five to one positive to negative interaction ratio were more likely to stay together and be healthy, showing the impact of positive interactions on working relationships. Positive leaders highlight the potential for growth in times of failure, never demeaning the person but focusing on the behavior that needs to improve, which enables a reframing of failure as opportunity to improve (Adams, 2019).

Positive communication also includes listening well. Listening and responding well promotes supportive communication as the listener learns, finds common ground, and responds in ways that affirm understanding (Cameron et al., 2011). Good listening gives the other person full attention, validating the speaker's feelings, thoughts, and perspectives (Zenger & Folkman, 2016). Lastly, responsive listening, or showing behaviors that demonstrate understanding of the speaker, proved to be important among young married couples when dealing with frequent conflict (Pasupathi et al., 1999).

Positive leaders foster trusting connection through listening empathetically, knowing their followers' names (Mirivel, 2021), and taking time to greet others (Waldvogel, 2007). Greetings and name-knowing influence the interaction of leaders and followers, especially in the cross-cultural setting where the way in which one greets another carry significant trust and

respect factors (Nilsson et al., 2020). Thus, positive leaders use positive communication as a key leadership strategy.

Positive Leaders Promote Positive Meaning

Wrzesniewkski (2002) demonstrated that people desire meaningful work and actively look for work that is meaningful. Positive leaders keep the prosocial purpose of an organization in the minds of the followers, making clear connections between their work with the overall purpose (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). When people's work is aligned with their calling or vocation, then they are more intrinsically motivated (Roberts, 2014), committed, and effective even in times of difficulty (Merritt et al., 2019; Proyer et al., 2013). Additionally, aligning work and vocation cultivates individuals' living as their "best self" (Roberts et al., 2005, 2019). Positive leaders create environments where followers discover their best selves and align their work with a meaningful purpose by demonstrating how their work connects with the overall purpose, enabling the use of individual strengths, and "job crafting" whereby followers are free to reimagine their responsibilities to create more purpose (Niemiec & McGrath, 2019; Roberts et al., 2005; Wrzesniewski, 2014).

Positive Leadership in a VUCA Environment

Pivotal to the current study is the influence of positive leadership on developing resilience and grit, especially for a VUCA environment. The broaden and build theory of positive emotions demonstrates that positive emotions can enhance attention and broaden a person's mental resources to handle complex situations (Fredrickson, 2001). For example, the emotion of joy or contentment has been shown to have reframing qualities within stressful or complex environments (Fredrickson, 2013). Positive leaders can use optimism to view setbacks or negative experiences as opportunities to grow (Ouweneel et al., 2012; Wandeler et al., 2016).

Additionally, positive leaders use hope to set goals and create multiple pathways for overcoming obstacles, while having the humility to embrace social support of others (Lopez, 2015; Luthans & Jensen, 2002; Reichard et al., 2013; Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

Positive leaders are resilient and cultivate resiliency in others. Resilience is the capacity to respond well and constructively in times of crisis (Caza & Milton, 2012). Resilient leaders have the psychological capacity to resist discouraging and helpless thought patterns and shift to possibility thinking in times of adversity (Margolis & Stoltz, 2010). Hougaard et al. (2020) described resilience as practices in mindfulness where one is keenly aware of their thoughts and emotions in times of crisis and chooses to respond constructively. In times of crisis, resilient leaders do not fold under pressure, nor become paralyzed by emotion, but rather they respond optimistically about the future (Seligman, 2011a).

Since resilience is a capacity and not just a personality trait, leaders can learn and build resiliency. Peppercorn (2019) said leaders can use hard times to reflect on their strengths to propel them to personal and professional growth. Margolis and Stoltz (2010) promoted active thinking that seeks understanding of a problem and teamwork to solve it. Leaders must practice self-control and humility to lead resiliently by keeping the crisis in perspective to larger goals and values (Leberecht, 2021). Finally, resilient leaders create positive frameworks, capitalizing on positive emotions, creating meaning, connecting with others, and keeping your ideal self in mind (Dutton, 2020; Roberts, 2020). Practicing mindfulness builds resilience through paying attention to emotions, your physical health, and an outward focus on caring for others (Hougaard et al., 2020; Spreitzer, 2020). Therefore, positive leaders embrace resilience to face a VUCA environment.

Criticisms of Positive Psychology, Organizations, and Leaders

While positive leadership and its foundational scholarship have expanded and provided numerous empirical evidence supporting its tenets, there have been various criticism along the way. The positive psychological movement, extending beyond psychological care to organizations and leadership has received criticism of downplaying the power of negative emotions, the subjective nature of what is considered positive, and specifically the leader-centric approach that has been recently criticized (Held, 2004; Quintero & Long, 2019; Wright, 2014). Respectively, positive organizational scholarship and positive leadership aim at different outcomes than positive psychology as positive psychology is about treating the mental psyche; POS and PL use principals to achieve individual and organizational flourishing for the purpose of building thriving organizations and societies. Therefore, some of the criticisms discussed overlap to each area of study, while some are specific to the offshoots of positive psychology.

A primary criticism of the positive movement is to overly emphasize the power of positive emotions while ignoring the importance of negative emotions and events that shape human development (Held, 2004). Negative emotions play a significant role in human development often aiding coping with depressive events and warnings of potential dangers (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006). Furthermore, exaggerating positive emotions like happiness and optimism while ignoring or demonizing negative emotions could lead to toxic positivity. Toxic positivity is when one suppresses or minimizes negative emotions brought on by negative experiences that causes long-term psychological harm (Gross & Levenson, 1997; Quintero & Long, 2019). Pangestu et al. (2022) linked toxic positivity to negative self-image, social relationships, and mental health. Undoubtedly, suppressing negative emotions and toxic positivity or exaggerated optimism does not contribute to a thriving individual or organization.

However, positive leadership does not emphasize this sort of positivity. Positive leadership, especially within organizations, emphasizes a psychologically safe environment, where even negative emotions can be expressed (Page et al., 2019). Nor does positive leadership optimistically explains away negative event; rather it is the practice of positive leadership to name the negative events, provide space to experience the emotions surrounding the events, while uniting followers around a common vision for growth (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009; Edmondson, 2018). Furthermore, Lopez et al. (2003) discussed the emphasis on balance within the field through assessing and developing human strengths and life-giving environments rather than only investigating human weaknesses or environmental problems; thus, human strengths and positive environments warrant as much attention as human weaknesses to promote psychological well-being.

There are examples of how positive practices influenced negative situations, balancing the negative experience with positive emotions. Dutton et al. (2002) showed how compassionate institutional action such as a phone call or sharing paid time off in times of trauma helped improve connection among those suffering, even cultivated a compassionate organization. For example, Freeman et al. (2003) showed how Sandler O'Neill bounced back from the events of 9/11, having lost many of their co-workers, using positive leadership. They shared a purpose to honor their fallen colleagues and their families, while providing space for workers to mourn together, showing how compassion, empathy, positive communication, high-quality relationships, and meaningful purpose can create resiliency in times of crisis. Fredrickson et al. (2003) demonstrated how positive emotions were crucial to a resilient response to the 9/11 crisis.

Additionally, positive leadership uses positive communication and feedback without ignoring negative messages that need to be communicated (Cameron, 2012). However, positive

leaders communicate with empathy and compassion to create trust among followers (Hall et al., 2013; Kauffman, 2020). For example, Tetteh (2020) reported how communicating openly about the situation, thus not avoiding the negative circumstance, and responding to crisis compassionately recognizing the negative emotions people felt were effective during the Ebola crisis. Positive leaders create the environment for people to both hear negative feedback with the intent to grow and learn, eliminating fear of mistakes (Cameron, 2013; Edmondson, 2020). Additionally, a positive orientation urges people toward connection and self-compassion not isolation or humiliation in times of negative situations (Waters et al., 2021). For example, Sundheim (2020) urged during a crisis positive leaders lead with humanity, putting people not organizational outcomes first, expressing vulnerability, and connecting with others supportively. Thus, positive leadership as explained above should not lead to the toxic positivity that is detrimental to a thriving human condition.

Another criticism is the subjectivity of what defines positive and that each culture could have varied understanding of the term (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012; Caza & Carroll, 2011). Cameron (2015) discussed arguments that POS were overly optimistic, vague as virtue could be culturally defined, elitist as a study for the economically privileged primarily derived from Western philosophies (Waterman, 2013), and challenging to define. Cameron (2015) responded to the skepticism, stating that it would help POS grow in credibility. However, Cameron (2018) underscored the universality of positivity by explaining humanity's heliotropic tendencies, leaning towards virtue as a significant reason for POS's study. Furthermore, cross-cultural leadership research such as the GLOBE study demonstrated commonly shared virtues such as humanity, servant leadership, and prosocial behavior (House et al., 2002). Van Dick et al. (2018) responded to such criticisms showing how positive leadership principles were globally endorsed.

This universality underscored the potential for developing leaders in a VUCA environment, navigating the cultural complexities discussed above.

Developments in Positive Scholarship

Positive emotions and traits like compassion (Grant & Berg, 2012), strengths (Gander et al., 2013), character (Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010; Merritt et al., 2019; Proyer et al., 2013), hope (Snyder & Lopez, 2002), optimism (Carver & Scheier, 2014; Crane & Crane, 2007), and gratitude (Fehr et al., 2017; Fredrickson, 2004; Jans-Beken et al., 2020), demonstrated to positively influence employee well-being, work performance, and engagement. Researchers investigated the importance of high-quality relationships (Algoe, 2012; Burkus, 2017) and positive identity (Dutton et al., 2010) in well-being and meaningfulness at work. Such meaningfulness at work created more motivated and committed workers (Ward & King, 2017; Wrzesniewski, 2012). Furthermore, a host of practices proved crucial in developing these positive leadership characteristics such as job crafting (Bindl et al., 2019; Wrzesniewski, 2014; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), positive imaging (Roberts et al., 2005), curiosity (Kashdan et al., 2020), mindfulness (Dunoon & Langer, 2011; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000), and gratitude (Ritzenhöfer et al., 2019). Concepts like psychological safety (Edmondson, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020), authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2017), and emotional intelligence (Furtner et al., 2010; Goleman, 2004) emerged as important in creating positive organizational culture. Lastly, development practices followed as organizational leaders realized the positive effects on employees and performance. Coaching, mentoring, and modeling showed effectiveness in developing positive leadership and organizations (Blanchard et al., 2017; Boyatzis et al., 2013; Kegan & Lahey, 2016). Growth and human flourishing are key principles in positive leadership,

thus, pairing adult development theory with positive leadership provided a useful lens for leadership development.

Adult Development Theory

Human development does not end at a certain age. Adults continue to develop and grow their mindsets through various stages of mental complexity, involving both social emotional and cognitive development (Kegan, 1982; Torbert, 1987). These theories have been referred to as vertical development or an upward progression of mental developmental stages; in contrast to horizontal development, which describes the acquiring of more knowledge, skills, or competencies (Petrie, 2014). Sharp and Marchetti (2020) conceptualized horizontal and vertical development as a metaphorical dance floor where horizontal development describes the space on the floor where skills are used through a singular perspective; while vertical development expands the height of the room providing multiple perspectives for which to apply the knowledge and skills. In other words, individuals functioning at higher developmental stages can better engage complex problems, effectively discern what skill or knowledge is needed, and decide how best to act. The various stages of vertical development have been described in two main theories. However, in each theory the stages describe mindsets or lenses through which individuals send, receive, interpret, and act on information and develop through time and experience (Cook-Greuter & Miller, 1994; Palus et al., 2020).

Kegan's Five Orders of Adult Development

Kegan (1982) described five stages or orders in adult development: the impulsive, imperial, socialized, self-authoring, and self-transforming mind. Understanding development from a constructivist perspective, each order describes individuals' ability to make sense of their world through their interactions with self and others. With each progression comes the ability to

understand how one's perspective affects sense-making. Individuals progress to higher orders when they can hold together multiple perspectives to confidently respond to complex problems (Kegan, 1994). Kegan and Lahey (2009) stated that the development process included times of stability and times of change, meaning that adults can plateau at a given stage and remain there without further growth. Over time and through experience adults may develop a higher stage but not necessarily so. Petrie (2015) argued that "heat experiences" or worldview altering experiences coupled with intentional reflection were necessary to develop to higher stages.

Kegan and Lahey (2016) applied the latter three stages (i.e., socialized, self-authoring, and self-transforming mind) to organizations who desired to develop people as the foundation of organizational success. The socialized mind describes how individuals interpret and respond to information based on what is socially acceptable regardless of personal feelings. The socialized mind responds to information in ways that pleases the authority or culture (Kegan & Lahey, 2016). The self-authoring mind includes personal convictions and beliefs in the information interpretation process. In other words, the one with a self-authoring mind leads with conviction about their view of the way things ought to be, using information to reinforce that person's direction. The self-authoring mind allows a person to develop authority on a subject, unconcerned with social surroundings (Kegan & Lahey, 2016).

The final stage of mental complexity is the self-transforming mind. Kegan and Lahey (2016) described this mindset as one that can hold multiple views at the same time, considering what information is helpful, potential blind spots in individual perspectives, and the possibility of contradictions. This mindset is comfortable with uncertainty and can lead with a bigger picture perspective. These mindsets delineate the ways adults continue to develop but will not do so without intentional activity (Petrie, 2014).

Applied to organizations, Kegan and Lahey (2016) argued and demonstrated through case examples that through intentional and ongoing feedback practices, organizations can prompt personal development. The idea is that organizational goal achievement will be a consequence of individual personal development. Kegan and Lahey (2016) provided three converging organizational aspects that contribute to employee development: home, groove, and edge. Home describes a culture where everyone contributes to developing one another. Groove describes the practices that spur individual development through the identification of growth areas. Finally, edge refers to where the organization provides accountability for personal growth aspirations (Kegan & Lahey, 2016). In summary, the theory demonstrates that adults can continue to grow, and organizational practices and culture influence personal growth or stagnation.

Torbert's Action Logics Model

Torbert (1987) delineated seven stages of development, specifically applied to leadership called action logics, in which leaders lead and function. These logics are called: opportunist, diplomatic, expert, achiever, redefining, transforming, and alchemical (Torbert, 2020). Each of the action logics describes the way a leader interacts with the surrounding environment, especially when responding to threats of power and safety (Rooke & Torbert, 2005). The action logics range from the opportunist to alchemist with each stage administering certain capacities of self-examination, understanding, motivations, and problem-solving skills (Torbert, 2004). Based on a constructivist development theory (McCauley et al., 2006), leaders advance their logics by moving from concern for self (opportunist) to considering how the self belongs to a group (diplomat), to gaining expertise (expert), then toward drive to achieve according to accepted or known pathways (achiever); leaders reach the redefining stage when they consider multiple perspectives to reframe complex problems. The transforming stage describes leaders that not

only can reframe problems but can also create effective personal or organizational change (Torbert, 2020). Finally, the alchemical logic defines leaders who are aware of all the social and economic angles in complex situations and can effectively function simultaneously at each level (Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert, 2004). Research has shown that few leaders function at the alchemist level, containing the ability to view the complex world outside of socially constructed categories (Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert, 1987).

These stages of mental complexity or action logic are useful in different contexts, and leaders at higher logics have access to the competencies from lower logics. In a case study of Warren Buffet, who functions at the alchemist logic, Torbert (2020) demonstrated how Buffet moved through the various logics when dealing with a complex situation in his business and personal life. As an alchemist, Buffet could respond effectively in various socioemotional settings depending on what was needed. Torbert (2020) theorized that this happens through "awareness of four territories of experience" (p. 13), which are: the outside world, our embodied actions, our thoughts and emotions, and postcognitive consciousness or the ability to intentionally manage the first three experiences to work in complex situations.

Development Toward Competencies or Mindsets: Horizontal and Vertical

The foundational principle shared by both models of adult vertical development is that vertical leadership development involves expanding mindsets. As a leader develops vertically, horizontal development continues. Knowledge, skills, and competencies continue to contribute to development, however, alone they will only serve specific contexts and not be prepared for a VUCA world where no previous plan or skill exists to solve new problems. Day, Riggio, Tan, et al. (2021) distinguished leadership training from leadership development, stating that each achieves different goals. Leadership training involves preparing leaders with knowledge, skills,

and attitudes to complete a job or enhance performance; while leadership development "seeks to enhance leaders' ability to address challenges that have no known or agreed-upon solutions" (Day, Bastardoz, Bisbey, et al., 2021, p. 43). Lacerenza et al. (2017) demonstrated in a meta-analysis that effective leadership training programs enhanced performance and organizational goal achievement. Thus, training in horizontal or skills-based leadership is a necessary component to leadership. However, leader development will equip the leader with the mindset to know when and how to use their skills, considering the complexity of the context.

Vertical Development in Leaders for a VUCA World

Adult development happens over time and through experiences of complexity, whereby individuals make sense of their experience through the resources and worldviews available (Cook-Greuter & Miller, 1994). Adults plateau in their mental complexity development when they are not faced with worldview altering experiences, such as a challenging conversation or event that rivals a previously held understanding (Erfan & Torbert, 2020; Kegan & Lahey, 2009, 2016). The recent COVID-19 pandemic has provided a worldview altering context where leaders had to make adaptive changes and decisions to solve problems with no precedent (Grint, 2022). Therefore, for leaders to develop vertically, there must be intentionality to continue to expand their mental complexity, to better prepare them for a VUCA world.

A few studies have discovered both leaders and organizations that have implemented practices and development plans to enhance vertical development. Coopersmith (2022) demonstrated how personal development plans, with proper accountability and reflection, promoted vertical leader growth. Jones et al. (2020) studied 15 organizations' leader development programs, finding that for vertical development to happen a mindset of individual change must be present. Additionally, they found that leader engagement in the process, space

for openness and vulnerability, experienced practitioners that understood the theory, clear alignment of business objectives with vertical growth goals, and freedom to fail were influencing factors for vertical development (Jones et al., 2020). Kegan and Lahey (2016) reported various organizations, called deliberately developing organizations, that practiced pushing people to the edge of comfortability influenced vertical growth.

Vertical development involves elevated levels of making sense of a VUCA world. Beyond job-related skills, leaders with elevated sense-making capacities can respond to problems while simultaneously considering various perspectives, not just their own (Palus et al., 2020). Petrie (2015) delineated three conditions for vertical development: heat experiences, colliding perspectives, and elevated sensemaking. Heat experiences describe challenges to presumed understandings of the world. Colliding perspectives describe the exposure of differing ways of understanding the world, through which a leader engages a problem. Finally, elevated sensemaking describes the leader's process of responding to the world through guided reflection considering the various perspectives (Petrie, 2015). Moving through this process allows leaders to grow to higher levels of sense-making, developing towards the ability to effectively lead in a VUCA world.

Coaching for Positive Leader Development

Positive leadership scholars have endorsed various practices to help leaders implement the concept (Cameron, 2013). Coaching has shown effective in leader development, specifically in positive leadership (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Boyatzis et al. (2013) distinguished coaching from mentoring in that coaching is a more time specific intervention to facilitate individual positive change. Boyatzis et al. (2013) combined the positive emotion of compassion with the coaching practice to achieve a person's best self. Furthermore, Boyatzis et al. (2013) combined positive

leader and organizational studies, demonstrating where strengths, optimism, and positive self-identity were crucial to developing people toward well-being. Coaching with compassion used a hopeful, positive view of behavioral change that did not focus on deficits nor relied on coercive power to achieve compliance (Boyatzis et al., 2013). The coaching practice has shown effective in developing self-compassion in leaders (Wasylyshyn & Masterpasqua, 2018) and inspired transformation into one's best self among medical personnel (Schwartz et al., 2021). Curiosity has shown to be effective in development within VUCA environments (Hortsmeyer, 2020). Kashdan and Silvia (2009) described curiosity as the drive for inquiry into knew knowledge and understanding, which produced higher well-being and performance (Kashdan et al., 2020). Thus, coaching for compassion invited curiosity to help leaders consider new possibilities despite obstacles within a VUCA environment (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Coaching is a broad tool with a relatively recent history; therefore, an overview of the coaching practice, theoretical frameworks, and definitions provide a better understanding of its usefulness for this study.

Review of Coaching Literature

Coaching in leadership and organizations has had short history in research literature, which emerged in the 1950s as organizational leaders received counsel from organizational psychologists (Sperry, 1993). However, the coaching practice has often outpaced its investigation as an effective approach to leadership development (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Coaching has been a tool used in many contexts to promote personal development (Erdös & Ramseyer, 2021). For example, coaching in sports has long been used as an effective means for helping players develop their skills and mental toughness to fit the larger team goals (Huang et al., 2021). However, recently, many studies both qualitative and quantitative have been

published, endorsing its use within leadership development at all organizational levels (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; De Haan, 2021a; Theeboom et al., 2014; Tsai & Barr, 2021).

Additionally, coaching researchers have built cases for coaching from numerous human development theoretical and conceptual foundations such as positive psychology (Burke, 2017), vertical leadership theory (Palus et al., 2020), transformative learning (Taylor & Laros, 2014), the 70-20-10 concept (Frazen, 2020; McCall et al., 1988); and intentional change theory (Boyatzis, 2008). Each of these concepts includes adults' capacity to learn from experience through reflection, conversation, and perspective-taking. For example, transformational learning and vertical leadership development posited that adults could grow through challenging experiences when they are able to critically reflect on previously held beliefs and assumptions, considering new perspectives from the experience (Petrie, 2014; Taylor & Laros, 2014). Intentional change theory has adults consider where their ideal and real selves misalign and align, fostering conversations about strengths and growth areas to close the gaps (Boyatzis, 2012). Each of these theories has employed coaching to implement the development process, whether it is a mindset, skill, or behavior being developed. With various theories and models for implementing growth and change each using coaching practices, it is unsurprising that it has become a multibillion-dollar industry (ICF, 2020).

As coaching continues to grow as an industry within a VUCA environment, experts in the field have forecasted future challenges and developments. Schermuly et al. (2021) conducted a Delphi study, where consensus is gathered among experts within a field to illuminate trends and future direction to inform decision-making (Rowe & Wright, 1999). The coaching experts agreed that coaching would be increasingly digital, new topics would emerge for requiring ongoing preparation, and coaching associations, while currently productive, would be challenged by a

rapid-changing environment, and that coaching would likely be infused within organizational development resources challenging the associations usefulness (Schermurly et al., 2021). Furthermore, experts agreed that coaching would be more digital, but did not desire this shift; also, the experts agreed that regulating coaching through institutional training and standards would help the field responsibly grow. Ultimately, the experts do not see this as a field that will decrease in usage but as a flexible tool in a VUCA world (Schermerly et al., 2021).

Coaching in a VUCA world has many challenges, especially considering the complexity of culture. Boyatzis et al. (2022) outlined various challenges for researching coaching in the future, naming coaching within various cultures as a major challenge needing exploration. Recent studies have explored cross-cultural coaching showing efficacy in helping align personal values with professional values (Patel & van Nieuwerburgh, 2022) and for developing self-efficacy in cross-cultural contexts (de Araujo, 2021). These significant studies demonstrated that differing cultural values become important variables within the coaching process, thus adding to the complexity of the coaching intervention for developing leaders. van Nieuwerburgh (2017) discussed the need for coaches to be sensitive to the role of culture within the coaching relationship, as differing cultural assumptions and biases can affect the coaching outcome. St. Claire-Ostwald (2007) advised cross-cultural coaches to carefully consider their cultural assumptions so that ethnocentric interpretations do not negatively influence the coaching intervention. Thus, developing leaders in a VUCA world must consider culture as a variable within the coaching relationship.

Definitions of Coaching

Various definitions exist for coaching, each having its own nuances. Some researchers define coaching as a goal-oriented, one-on-one intervention process whereby the coach, coachee,

and the coachee's organization collaborate to develop alignment with personal developmental goals and organizational goals (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Halliwell et al., 2022). Others refer to executive coaching defining the exchange between the coach and the organization's leader (coachee) to create an intentional plan to aid in developing leadership behaviors and personal growth to better respond to organizational change (Bozer & Jones, 2018). Van Zyl and Rothmann (2022) defined coaching from the positive psychology field where personal or professional growth toward optimal human potential was the goal, excluding the influence of organizational goals. Similarly, van Nieuwerburgh and Biswas-Diener (2021) called coaching a "managed conversational process" that well-being and through goal achievement (p. 315). Halliwell et al. (2022) emphasized the presence of a triadic relationship of coach, coachee, and organizational context as a distinguishing factor between leadership coaching and other coaching, like interventions such as mentoring and life coaching. Thus, leadership coaching differed from positive coaching as it requires influence of the organization's goals in the coaching collaboration and is concerned with leadership on all levels not just executives (Halliwell et al., 2022). Yarborough (2018) discussed the importance of leadership coaching on all levels, arguing young people receiving leadership coaching contributed to their growth. For the present study, leadership coaching, according to Halliwell et al. (2022), encapsulates the focus as the organization's goals influence the interaction of the coachee and coach's developmental plan, and not merely focused on the executive leaders.

Coaching has been associated with mentoring, however, there are important distinctions between the practice and goals of coaching and mentoring. Coaching is more goal-focused, providing the coachee with feedback and space for reflection, with the coach not necessarily needing to be the expert in the coachee's subject matter (Halliwell et al., 2022; Yarborough,

2018). Coaching includes accountability, helping the coachee adjust behaviors that impede leadership development (Boyatzis, 2008). Coaching can help move the leader to a more developed leader identity as the leader progresses toward new goals (Priest et al., 2018). While mentoring refers to a longer-term relationship that includes more advice giving, ongoing encouragement in the professional journey, and assumes the mentor has an expertise in the content area (Coers et al., 2021). Mentors are often older than mentees, having more experience to share and for which to guide the mentee in their leadership development (Priest et al., 2018). Komives et al. (2006) created a model explaining different stages of leader identity development. Leader identity development has six stages beginning with an individual's awareness of leadership, to exploring leading in a group, identifying self as a leader, recognizing the need to share leadership in a group, generating new leaders, and finally creating a system where the group integrates leadership to achieve the group goals (Komives et al., 2006). Priest et al. (2018) demonstrated through various cases that coaching was more effective in the leader identification stage, as coaches provide the reflexive space for leaders to make sense of their experiences. As discussed above, vertical leadership development requires leaders to expand their mindsets through considering new perspectives, which the coach can help illuminate for the coachee (Petrie, 2014).

The Coaching Process

The coaching process has several essential elements. Van Zyl and Rothmann (2022) identified eight elements within positive coaching: (1) creating the coach and coachee relationship, (2) discovering strengths and providing feedback, (3) development of an ideal vision, (4) goal setting, strategizing, and strength-centered plan of action, (5) learning transfer, (6) progress tracking and evaluating, (7) empowering, and (8) ending the coaching relationship.

Coaching is developmental and not directive in nature, focusing on growth, skill development, and goal identification (Yarborough, 2018). A trusting relationship between the coach and coachee is foundational, fostering the safe space for the coachee to reflect on experiences and growth areas (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Priest et al., 2018; van Nieuwerburgh et al., 2021). Creating an ideal self and reflecting on the actual self within the context of the coachee environment is also an essential element (Boyaztis et al., 2013; Halliwell et al., 2022). Boyatzis et al. (2013) argued that in the gap between the ideal and realized self, the coach and coachee can identify strengths and weaknesses, sparking motivation for intentional change. Feedback is a major component of the coaching process, making positive feedback practices and leadership style effective as coachees' assess their progress and plan (Bywater et al., 2019). In summary, coaching happens when a coach and coachee form a relationship, decide upon goals either personal, professional, or organizational, and create a plan for which the coach will provide a space for reflection and constructive feedback to help the coachee track and achieve their goals (Boyaztis et al., 2013; Halliwell et al., 2022; Tsai & Barr, 2021).

Coaching Outcomes

The coaching outcomes are centered on personal development towards alignment with the organizational and professional goals. Coaching is used in the workplace to help develop skills and competencies, greater self-awareness, set and attain goals, maximize strengths, alleviating the limiting effects of negative emotions, develop and sustain leadership behaviors (Halliwell et al., 2022; Priest et al., 2018; van Nieuwerburgh et al., 2021). In positive organizational studies, when individuals thrive or flourish at work, the organization benefits from enhanced performance (Quinn, 2015). Zuñiga-Collazos et al. (2019) found that managerial coaching positively influenced organizational performance, supporting coaching as a

developmental technique that can enhance both personal and organizational growth. Taylor et al. (2019) found coached leaders sustained behavioral change through enhanced self-determinism. Essentially, coaching outcomes should align with the goals set between the coach, coachee, and the organizational goals; and therefore, the specific outcomes like resiliency, agility, emotional intelligence, and leadership behavior change would be embedded within the individualized coaching plan (Halliwell et al., 2022). Ultimately, criteria for successful coaching included establishing a trusting relationship between the coach and coachee and the ability to formulate an agreed upon goal for the intervention (De Haan, 2021a).

Effectiveness of Coaching

Coaching has been found effective in personal, professional, and consequently organizational growth, especially in challenging times. van Nieuwerburgh et al. (2021) qualitatively investigated the experience of six participants within financial services companies that suddenly shifted work from in-office to at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. van Nieuwerburgh et al. (2021) found that with the rapid environment change, sudden physical isolation from coworkers, and the stressors of working from home while managing the negative impact of the pandemic in all areas of life, participants that received positive coaching for performance and personal well-being experienced value in the safe reflection environment, increased awareness, alleviation of negative emotions, energy to overcome new obstacles, and renewed confidence. Though the sample size was small in this study, the identification of important outcomes and the effectiveness of structured, supportive conversation demonstrated the usefulness of coaching in stressful environments (van Nieuwerburgh et al., 2021). Bywater et al. (2019) contributed to these findings showing how coaching behaviors among leaders helped individuals achieve their goals in a VUCA environment through consistent supportive feedback.

Additionally, coaching aids leaders in VUCA environments through increased confidence, communication skills, resilience, and self-efficacy (Wilson & Lawton-Smith, 2016). Grant (2014) found that executives receiving coaching during times of organizational change experienced enhanced resiliency, decreased depression, and increased self-efficacy leading to goal achievement. Thus, coaching has been shown as an effective practice for personal and professional growth, even in times of VUCA contexts.

Coaching has been shown to lead to behavioral change, enhanced emotional intelligence and responding to change, leading to increased performance (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). Halliwell et al. (2021), in a mixed methods study, demonstrated that through the coaching processes of active listening and critical reflection, the coached participants increased their emotional awareness enabling them to clarify complex situations and helped them focus on creating solutions. In positive leadership, behaviors include authenticity of the leader, awareness of the emotions of self and others, and optimistic orientation in times of change (Cameron, 2013). Interestingly, Halliwell et al. (2021) found coaching enhanced leadership effectiveness in four positive leadership behavior categories: task-, authentic-, relations-, and change-oriented. Boak and Crabbe (2019) reported that coaching within small and medium business sectors improved team collaboration, openness, and vulnerability, leading to innovative solutions, which are also important in creating a positive climate (Edmondson, 2018). Zarecky (2014) found that strengths-focused coaching helped military personnel when transitioning from the military environment to the civil environment. In summary, there is a strong body of evidence of coaching's effectiveness for leadership development.

Criticisms of Coaching

While coaching continues to stive for evidence-based usage, criticism exists for its assumed acceptance. One criticism is that coaching is broadly used and there is not an agreed upon list of outcomes within coaching (Grover & Furnham, 2016). With numerous outcome possibilities, coaching can be difficult to assess and is highly dependent on context to determine what outcomes are desired. However, a major tenet of coaching is the ability for the coach and coachee to discover and create desired outcomes for the intervention, whether personal, professional, or organizational (Halliwell et al., 2022). Therefore, coaching is a flexible tool for development, even without standardized assessable outcomes, coaching effectiveness can be assessed through what Tsai and Barr (2021) called enablers and inhibitors of coaching.

Tsai and Barr (2021) reviewed 42 coaching articles identifying several common enablers and inhibitors of effective coaching. The three enablers included personal, organizational, and coach factors. Personal enablers described the personal attributes developed in effective coaching, including self-awareness, critical thinking, and confidence to act on new awareness. Additionally, enhanced communication skills and commitment within the organization were evidence of effective coaching. Secondly, organization enablers were when organizational leaders themselves engaged in coaching and created a coaching organizational culture. Inhibitors for coaching in organizations involved the leader's awareness of coaching and their perception of return on investment. Finally, the coach selection enabled effective coaching when there is a positive coach-coachee relationship, the coach has an appropriate educational or experiential background, and can select best coaching methods (Tsai & Barr, 2021). While outcomes may vary making standardized assessments difficult, components of effective coaching can be measured to give maximum potential for successful implementation.

Other criticisms arise as the exploration of negative outcomes of coaching or null research results for coaching's effectiveness. De Haan (2021b) summarized 160 quantitative coaching studies to make a case for the effectiveness of coaching. In a follow up study, De Haan (2021a) explored possible negative effects of coaching naming both potential negative psychological and financial costs as motivations behind the study. De Haan (2021a) found a few qualitative studies that described negative outcomes for coaching participants; however, the studies indicated that negative perceptions of the coach and coachee relationship contributed to the negative outcome. As discussed above, the coach and coachee relationship was considered essential to enabling a desirable outcome for coaching (Tsai & Barr, 2021).

Additionally, De Haan (2021a) reported some quantitative studies found no significant correlation between coached or uncoached participants within different organizations, concluding that negative outcomes such as time and financial resources could be lost through the coaching intervention. Graßmann and Schermuly (2018) found that when neuroticism was perceived present within the coach and coachee relationship, participants had a negative experience with coaching. Other studies showed that certain conditions contributed to negative outcomes, such as not having the proper support structure in place or when coaching is done excessively rendering it counterproductive (Buljac-Samardzic & Van Woerkom, 2015; Wageman, 2001). These criticisms contribute to honing the craft of coaching, calling for more research to assess conditions and frequency necessary to produce desired outcomes. However, De Haan (2021b) concluded that the overwhelming evidence endorsing coaching makes a strong case for its usage, while the few negative studies would only work to strengthen the coaching field.

Summary

This review highlighted the major complexities culture has on leadership development that is compounded by the other VUCA factors: volatility, uncertainty, and ambiguity. The impact of VUCA on various organizations and leadership has stretched wide, with current reflections on the need for leader readiness in the face of the uncertain, like a global pandemic. Additionally, followership theory presented another variable that influenced leadership development. Various competencies, skills, and mindsets were discussed as important for learning to lead in a VUCA world. While knowledge and particular competencies like agility have shown necessary for VUCA leaders, a pathway for developing new leaders must emerge for ongoing organizational success. Furthermore, positive leadership and vertical leadership development provided a compelling conceptual lens for which to examine leadership development, especially as coaching is employed in the process.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, Delphi method study was to investigate the leadership development perceptions among existing LAM missionaries in the regions of Latin America (Colombia, Cuba, Mexico City, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador) to provide suggestions for improving effective leadership development within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. The LAM church-planting organization needs a leadership development program to help its missionaries train new leaders in a VUCA context. Understanding the LAM missionaries' perceptions and experiences provided insight into best practices and strategies for developing leaders. Thus, the problem was that LAM needed to understand their missionaries' realities further to equip them better to train new church leaders for a VUCA environment effectively.

In the following chapter, I explain how I gathered this information. The first section includes a description of the qualitative research method of the Delphi technique, explaining its history and process. The following section includes the purpose and rationale for the method as an appropriate and effective option for answering the research question. In the final section, I outlined the data analysis process and discussed assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Research Question

According to LAM missionaries' experience, what type of leader development program does the LAM organization need to implement to effectively train their missionaries to develop church leaders in a VUCA environment?

Research Design and Method

A qualitative approach was a good fit for addressing the problem of effective leadership in a VUCA environment (Alkhaldi et al., 2017). A broad definition of qualitative research is

illuminating socially embedded interpretations of experiences and worldviews through an intimate data collection and analysis process (Brown-Saracino, 2021). Yin (2018) suggested that qualitative research investigates how a phenomenon is experienced within a specific context instead of quantitative studies, measuring a phenomenon's frequency or comparative relationship with another variable. For example, this study sought to understand how missionaries develop leaders in a VUCA context, discovering the challenges inherent in this specific context. Thus, the purpose was not to study leadership development across infinite contexts or situations. Nor was the purpose to study causal factors or compare variables requiring a controlled data group; instead, the purpose was to evaluate the experience of leadership development in a particular context, making a qualitative research design the best option (Merriam, 1998).

Qualitative research assumes a philosophical perspective whereby knowledge or meaning is socially constructed. Merriam (2009) urged researchers to contemplate through which epistemological lens they interpret meaning when selecting a research approach, listing four possible perspectives. Researchers using positivist or postpositivist orientation understand knowledge from an objective perspective. Stability, control, and generalizability are important to positivist researchers, making quantifiable or experimental research designs more appropriate (Merriam, 2009). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) delineated constructivist, critical, and postmodernist orientations, all with various purposes, realities, and methods for making meaning. Both critical and constructivist perspectives share the understanding that multiple meanings are possible depending on the context. However, constructivists focus on the existing parties' involvement in making meaning; in other words, meaning is socially constructed. Critical orientation considers the larger cultural, social, and political contexts as influencers of meaning-making. Finally, postmodernist orientation deconstructs realities, questioning the very

existence of a located source for knowledge (Merriam, 2009). The experience of missionaries developing leaders and those trainees' subsequent response to the missionaries interact to influence effective leadership development. The Delphi method is of a constructivist orientation, where an expert panel socially constructs meaning through shared experience and consensus building (Avella, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2021; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Therefore, this study employed the Delphi method to research the perspective and experience of a panel of experts to gain consensus on effective leader development in a VUCA context.

The Delphi Method: Structure, Variations, and Characteristics

The Delphi method or technique, named for the Delphi Oracle that helped people solve everyday problems in the ancient Greek world, is a method of gaining insight into a phenomenon through expert experience (Marchais-Roubelat & Roubelat, 2011). Insight carries weight through a consensus or dissensus surrounding a topic (Rowe & Wright, 2011). As a qualitative method, the Delphi technique uses the analysis of the experts' perceptions and experience, applying multiple rounds of inquiry to contribute to further knowledge on a subject (Marchais-Roubelat & Roubelat, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2021). This data-gathering technique traditionally uses four rounds of inquiry where the researcher provides controlled feedback to the panel of experts to move toward consensus (Hsu & Sanford, 2007). Attaining consensus from an expert panel can provide a further understanding of a context, evaluate programs, and illuminate challenges and other inquiries robustly (Vax et al., 2021). Furthermore, the technique has been used across numerous fields to help discern best practices in organizational readiness (Vax et al., 2021), nursing (Keeney et al., 2011), business (Sadeqi-Arani & Ghahfarokhi, 2022), and leadership in organizational development (Turgeon, 2019), educational (Barry et al., 2021), and religious settings (Venter & Hermans, 2020). Thus, the technique has been shown as an effective data-

gathering method for qualitative inquiry that uses open-ended questions to obtain the participants' insights, effectively capturing their experience (Hsu & Sanford, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2021; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

The Delphi method fits within a qualitative orientation as it provides a rich description of the missionaries' experience and perception in a VUCA context. In place of other qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, focus groups, or participant observation, the Delphi method presents a series of questions where the participants responded in written form. Written responses allowed more time for the participants to consider the question and reflect on their experiences. While there was a deadline to complete the responses, the participants had more time than a single interview to consider the questions, making the responses more thought out and robust. Additionally, the participants had the opportunity to read statements that reflected the responses of others through the subsequent rounds. While direct discussion or conversation was not had, the participants considered the statements and interacted with the statements. Not only did they rate their level of consent with the representative statements, but they had the chance to revise their responses. Additionally, there was a possibility that each panel member responded to statements that did not represent their experience. However, once reading the statements that came from other panel members, they could comment on those additional insights. This type of interaction produced multiple layers of qualitative data with each round.

Structure

Scholars typically describe the Delphi method in two structures: conventional and modified. The conventional structure involves four rounds in which participants receive a questionnaire to provide their expertise on the topic (Avella, 2016). In the first round, the researcher poses a question related to the topic of study to the panel to gather initial responses to

start the consensus-making process. The three following rounds ensue as the researcher provides controlled feedback of the compiled data for the participants to respond, consenting or dissenting to the group's responses. With each round, the objective is to gain a consensus on the given responses whereby the researcher compiles feedback for the participants to affirm (von der Gracht, 2012). In the literature, many researchers agree that 70% of panel agreement warrants a consensus (Avella, 2016). However, some have used 60% or 75% to determine consensus (Vax et al., 2021). With each round, the objective is to move closer to consensus through further revision, comments, and review. In this study, I considered 75% the benchmark for consensus.

The modified Delphi study has demonstrated the technique's effectiveness and drawn criticism. The ability to adapt the method to various contexts based on situational needs eliminates rigidity to best achieve its objectives in gathering data and finding consensus. The modified technique depends on the research facilitator to compile the relevant questions based on a literature review of the topic, initial interviews with or external to the expert panel, or surveys external to the panel (Avella, 2016). The modified version has been used explicitly in program evaluation and development (Barry et al., 2021), implementation (Vax et al., 2021), or experimentation of new approaches to areas such as leadership (Traynor et al., 2019). The modification happens in the first round only, where the researcher provides a lens or materials for which the experts will provide knowledge. Some researchers use a modified Delphi technique to expedite the consensus process, helping with participant fatigue (Vax et al., 2021). Thus, I used a modified Delphi structure, providing the panel with the questionnaire in Appendix A that examined their perception and experience of developing leaders in a VUCA context through the conceptual framework lens, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual Lens for Panel Response
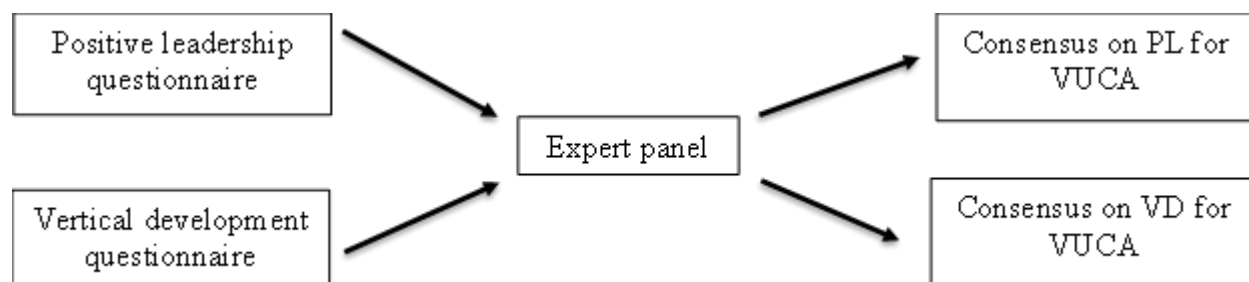
Characteristics of the Delphi Method

Anonymity, iteration, controlled feedback, and panel response are major characteristics of the Delphi method (von der Gracht, 2012). In the Delphi method, the participants remain anonymous even during the consensus building. The anonymous nature of the study provides a safe environment for sharing opinions without scrutiny, coercion, or group thinking (Avella, 2016). While the researcher knows each participant, confidentiality is essential in preserving the validity of the responses. The researcher must give each voice the same weight to eliminate potential conflicts of interest within the study (von der Gracht, 2012). In this study, I accounted for anonymity by assigning pseudonyms to the participants, saving the information to a private access Microsoft Excel sheet.

Iteration is the multiple-round process of inquiry, data collection, and consensus-making. The multiple rounds allow the experts to thoroughly review and revise stated opinions as each considers the responses of the other panelists. The panelists can anonymously work together in discussion with the facilitator's feedback to consent or dissent about the inquiry. These various rounds of refinement move the group toward consensus (von der Gracht, 2012).

The research facilitator's role is to pose the questions and compile the responses, monitoring for areas of divergence or convergence (Avella, 2016). The facilitator returns

feedback in whatever form necessary to communicate with the panel the data for further analysis, using a Likert-type scale whereby the panel responds to a series of statements representative of the collected data (Venter & Hermans, 2020). Each round will continue to compile and report the data until consensus is achieved (von der Gracht, 2012).

The researcher aggregates the panelists' responses to the various rounds of inquiry to determine consensus. After each round, the panelist can provide a rationale for their opinions, even after considering the opinions of others. The ongoing affirmations and revisions strengthen the responses as panelists can deviate from previous positions once they consider the topic from the aggregated statements. Vax et al. (2021) compared the process to a funnel starting wide and broad at the top, and with each round of response, the group narrows toward convergence at the base.

Rationale for the Delphi Method

The Delphi method was useful for this study to improve a leadership development process by benefiting from the perspective of multiple people, gathering a better understanding to suggest improvements, and forecasting to respond to upcoming challenges. Additionally, scholars use the Delphi technique to solve problems or evaluate programs in uncertain situations using experts within the context (Graham et al., 2003). The study of leadership is notoriously elusive to define, having birthed several theories, models, and practices (Northouse, 2019). Fletcher and Marchildon (2014) argued that researchers using the Delphi method within specific contexts and expert collective experience makes it effective for such elusive concepts as leadership. For example, Forde et al. (2021) demonstrated how researchers could use the Delphi method to improve leadership within Scottish secondary schools.

The anonymity characteristic makes this method important in studying leadership in cross-cultural settings. Geist (2009) argued that the Delphi method allows for more efficient qualitative data gathering among various stakeholders without face-to-face interaction. Considering that participants came from various cultural contexts and preferred languages, the Delphi method provided an economical and efficient process for understanding and proposing a leadership training program that could function cross-culturally (Traynor et al., 2019). Additionally, the method buffered the potential for cross-cultural power distance bias, which could influence a participant's response in this study, helping preserve the integrity of responses (Avella, 2016; Elkington & Breen, 2019; Hofstede, 2011; Marchais-Roubelat & Roubelat, 2011). Related to leadership development, Elkington and Breen (2019) conducted a Delphi study specifically investigating how to develop leaders through the perceptions of global leaders, calling for further use of the method to aid in developing a program. Thus, the Delphi method was an effective tool for this study because researchers use it in program development and implementation, leadership inquiry, and collecting wisdom through anonymous and economical means.

Population

Christian missionaries serving in a VUCA context served as the population for this study. Christian missionaries are individuals who leave their home culture to initiate change in a foreign culture through the Christian message, specifically by creating new churches or service organizations (Johnstone, 2011). An estimated 435,000 Christian foreign missionaries are working worldwide, including Protestant and Catholic branches (Zurlo et al., 2022). Steffen (2013) reported that nearly half of Christian missionaries come from the global South, countries like Brazil, India, and Korea.

These global missionaries work within a VUCA context due to the complexities and ambiguities of cross-cultural work compounded by uncertainty, rapid technological change, and the recent pandemic. Van Wynen and Niemandt (2020) argued that Christians and specifically missionaries have always lived in a VUCA environment as uncertainty is part of the human experience; however, certain moments in history make it more apparent. Thus, the population of Christian missionaries working in a VUCA world is large and diverse.

Sample

The expert panel selection is a crucial part of the Delphi method. A researcher creates the criteria based on the considerations of expertise in the given field of study (Avella, 2016). A researcher outlines the criteria for what constitutes expertise. Thus, the researcher must qualify what makes the participant an expert so that the participants can speak intelligibly about the phenomenon through their experience or knowledge (Hsu & Sanford, 2007). For example, a group of fourth-grade students in a specific school setting could be considered experts when the researcher seeks to understand their experience through their consensus.

I selected the expert panel from missionaries who have worked for LAM or currently work for them in VUCA contexts. A strength of the Delphi method lies in the heterogeneity of the panel to safely provide a diverse perspective on the topic (Forde et al., 2021). Therefore, participants represented various nationalities, cultures, and gender, which better informed the LAM organization as they worked in these various contexts; however, I limited the sample to missionaries working in Latin American countries within one Christian denomination.

Additionally, those currently working as missionaries must have worked in church planting for 5 years. Five years is about the halfway point of a LAM missionary's commitment, as the typical duration in one location averages between 7 and 10 years. At the 5-year mark, the

missionaries would have had enough time to think about developing leaders and acquiring a solid

group of followers from which they would select new leaders. The LAM organizational

leadership acted as "gatekeepers," providing accessibility to potential missionary participants

(Erlandson et al., 1993). The missionary must not have worked with the researcher to avoid

possible conflicts of interest that may skew the data (Geist, 2009; Merriam, 2009). The criteria to

have been considered an expert participant are summarized below.

Criteria for Expert Panel Selection

- Missionaries that have worked or are currently working with LAM.

- Missionaries that have or are currently working in a VUCA environment.

- Missionaries must have at least five years of experience and have attempted to develop
  leaders.

- Missionaries must have worked in church planting, not benevolence or relief distribution.

Sampling Method

Purposeful sampling and snowballing are standard participant selection processes for

Delphi studies (Mitchell et al., 2021). With the help of the LAM organizational database of

missionaries and guidance from the regional directors of these missionaries, I compiled a list of

participants that met the expert criteria. I selected from the list starting from the longest tenured

missionary to the least until 30 participants were reached. I gave preference to the missionaries

with longer experience as having more time working in leadership development. I maintained the

list of missionaries in the case that some of those selected were not willing to participate, then I

continued recruiting from those remaining. Anderson (2017) noted that "data access procedures

can provide further evidence of rigor (p. 4). Thus, having the LAM organizational leaders and

the researcher involved in the participant selection provided multiple layers of insight. I

contacted participants via email and social media messaging like WhatsApp and Facebook messenger. Once the participant responded that they would participate, I emailed them a description of the study detailing the statement of consent shown in Appendix D. Embedded within the email was the link to the round 1 questionnaire. The participants who clicked on the link indicated their consent to participate. Panelists included participants speaking two languages and various cultural contexts, providing a robust and diverse perspective.

Study Sample Size

There are no standardized criteria for determining sample size in a Delphi method, but participants in the study can range from 10 to 100 people (Keeney et al., 2011). I invited 30 participants, with an expected 30% participation in all rounds (Menke et al., 2018), resulting in an estimated panel of nine. A panel of nine is sufficient, as criteria for saturation in qualitative research do not require a large sample size, and qualitative Delphi studies included sample sizes between seven and 12 participants (Elkington & Breen, 2019; Herrod, 2018; Saunders et al., 2018). Although, the expert nature of the participants in the study should discourage attrition due to interest and relevance to the participants' work. However, those participants that only participated in the first round, I reported the findings from the single round as exploration data that could serve as a starting point for further research. Elkington and Breen (2019) reported findings for a Delphi study from the first round only as a contribution for future research. If only some of the panel completed subsequent rounds, I noted that in the findings.

Materials and Instruments

A strength of the Delphi method is its cost-effective data-gathering tools and its ability to gather expert group consensus without the cost of face-to-face interviews (Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017). Researchers have conducted Delphi studies using multiple survey tools, from pen and

paper, mail-in questionnaires, and the advent of internet file sharing and email (Geist, 2009; Vax et al., 2021). This study employed Qualtrics and email to collect data and provide feedback. Since the participants and I were in various nations and time zones, this was a cost-effective and convenient data collection method. Qualtrics allowed for questionnaires to be sent and responded to anonymously, compiled the data in an organized and confidential manner, and allowed for data collection when physical presence is impossible, like during the COVID-19 quarantine (Torrentira, 2020). Thus, I sent the participants via email the Qualtrics questionnaire consisting of 15 questions surrounding the conceptual framework, which I field tested for clarity by having members of the LAM organization with extensive Latin American cultural experience review each question. In addition to the questions, I provided a brief explanation of the definition of VUCA.

The questionnaire was influenced by a few researchers studying positive leadership, vertical leadership, and coaching. Cameron (2012) developed a positive leadership scale for self-assessment, informing the questionnaire. Huang et al. (2021) developed a questionnaire from the positive leadership scale to examine positive coaching leadership, which also influenced the questionnaire. Additionally, vertical leadership development wase examined using vetted interview questions by Jones et al. (2020) that corresponded with Petrie's (2015) and Kegan and Lahey's (2016) concepts of developing vertical leaders. Elkington et al. (2017) used a qualitative Delphi technique with a single open-ended question regarding effective leadership development, which also informed the questionnaire. Scholars have suggested that positive leadership and vertical leadership development were effective styles and development practices for a VUCA environment (Adams et al., 2020; Coopersmith, 2022). Thus, I used the questionnaire in

Appendix A to seek the perception of leadership development through the intersection of positive leadership style and vertical development.

Researchers using a qualitative Delphi method have used face-to-face in-person or electronic interviews to collect data (Samson, 2021). However, the strength of the Delphi method is that face-to-face interviews are only sometimes necessary in collecting consensus data. Through open-ended questionnaires, researchers have effectively used qualitative Delphi studies to gather data efficiently (De Moel-Mandel et al., 2020; Haralson et al., 2020; Herrod, 2018). De Moel-Mandel et al. (2020) effectively studied 24 medical and health professionals using an open-ended questionnaire developed from a literature review for the first round of data collection. Interviewing 24 participants would take a substantial amount of time. However, using the open-ended questionnaire allowed more participants without the time demands of interviews, and effectively handled the 30 invited panelists that participated. However, many Delphi studies show that about 30% of the initial sample completes all iterations (Herrod, 2018; Menke et al., 2018).

Additionally important to this study, I collected the data in both English and Spanish. Having an open-ended questionnaire that allowed the participants to provide written responses made the translation process more efficient. Haralson et al. (2020) used an open-ended questionnaire for round 1 of a Delphi study among Latinx Americans to gather consensus on developing a parenting program. The questionnaire was in English and Spanish, allowing participants to respond in their preferred language. Thus, I used the open-ended questionnaire approach instead of face-to-face interviews as an efficient and effective way to gather data.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The study included three rounds using a modified Delphi study that was entirely qualitative. In the first round, I presented Appendix A to the panel with various open-ended questions surrounding the conceptual framework and aligning with the primary research question. Due to the culturally and linguistically diverse panel, each questionnaire and subsequent communication was translated from English to Spanish and Spanish to English, using Google Translate embedded within the Qualtrics program for initial translations. Haralson et al. (2020) used a survey tool that had a translation program embedded in the software equivalent to Google Translate, having two bilingual researchers review the translations independently. Therefore, as a proficient Spanish-speaker, I revised the initial Google Translate translation to ensure proper data representation. I made notes of any translation changes from the Google translation that better represented the ideas of the panelist, giving a reason why I chose the word change.

Using an open-ended question that solicits a narrative response provides the researcher with the use of qualitative data analysis methods such as thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2018). Once the panelists returned their first-round responses, I (1) sorted the data by prescribing descriptive labels, (2) coded to group and analyze the statements, and (3) generated a list of statements representative of the panel responses (Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017; Strauss, 1987).

Specifically, I analyzed the data using both deductive and inductive analysis to organize and make meaning of the data. Bingham and Witkowsky (2022) discussed using both deductive to organize the researcher's focus and inductive to allow other findings to emerge, contributing to a rigorous analytical study. I assigned the descriptive labels or themes deductively, using the research question and conceptual framework to provide an organizational structure for the data.

For example, "communication" was a theme directly related to a tenet of positive leadership. Responses that included how missionaries communicate with potential leaders fell under this code.

Once I determined the initial themes, I read over the data to familiarize myself with the responses. Using the reflective journal, I tracked questions and made connections between the themes and the data and relevant quotes demonstrating the connections, following Samson (2021). Once the data were categorized into the predetermined themes, I inductively considered themes that emerged from the data relevant to the study but external to the conceptual framework. In this step, the data determined additional themes that provided helpful findings that I did not initially consider. Then I categorized the data in all the identified themes and constructed the findings as lists of statements to present to the panel in the second round. As mentioned, I presented the findings in both English and Spanish. Thus, I submitted the statements to a LAM colleague that is fluent in Spanish for any clarifying feedback.

In the second round, I presented the list of statements to the panel in a Likert-type scale for critical feedback. The participants initially responded to the statements by rating their level of endorsement: *strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree*. The panelists expressed their consent to the statements using the Likert-type scale. They could also modify their position based on the statements listed, explaining their rationale in a comment box provided by each statement. Finally, I collected the panelists' responses via the Qualtrics survey and determined the level of consensus using quantitative analytics embedded within the Qualtrics software. Then I reviewed any additional data from the comment boxes that allowed the panelist to explain their position. The collected responses from the comment box provided additional data that continued to clarify the finding to better inform the creation of a leader

development program. Following De Moel-Mandel et al. (2020), I consulted the conceptual framework literature to ensure new data fell within the deductively determined categories. Additionally, I used inductive analysis of the comments to see if any new themes arose from the comments. Likewise, I categorized the new comments under the previous themes to consider any additional findings or statement revisions. Then I created revised statements to present in round 3 for further consideration and noted the percentage of consensus after the first round (Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017).

I used the 5-point Likert-type scale that included a neutral midpoint to allow the participant to respond according to their experience with the topic and gave a space for further explanation. Simms et al. (2019) found no significant difference in a four- or five-point scale, finding only significant differences in larger scales, stating that should the research desire neutrality, it would strictly be preferential. Qualitative Delphi techniques use Likert-type scales to collect data showing perceptions from the experts' experience surrounding the topic, with subsequent rounds affording the participants to review and revise their responses in the consensus-building phase (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014). Additionally, the second iteration served as a "member checking" tool to verify the correct translation, as the panel responded to the Likert-type questionnaire for further insight (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In round 3, I sent the modified statements for further critique from the panel. In this round, the panelist responded to each statement with levels of agreement or endorsement: *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree*. The panel had another opportunity to explain and describe their position in the comment box. The multiple iterations of the Delphi method provided multiple layers of data and allowed the participants to refine the findings over time and reflection. Fletcher and Marchildon (2014) emphasized the Delphi method's usefulness

for generating robust data, informed responses, and the experts' participation in the creation of the leader development program. Each of these rounds had a response deadline to guide the panel (Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017).

While the range of what percentage is considered a consensus decision varies in the literature from 70 to 80% (Avella, 2016), I considered 75% consensus of either moderately or strongly endorsed statements as a finding (De Moel-Mandel et al., 2020; Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017). Additionally, von der Gracht (2012) suggested the analysis of dissent as a potential finding, contributing to knowledge on the topic; therefore, I would present dissenting statements as compelling findings if there were any.

Delphi Iterations

1. Distributed a questionnaire that aligned with the research question to participants with one week to complete.

2. Collected and analyzed the data, aggregated responses, and returned feedback to the expert to review all responses, allowing any changes to previously held positions.

3. Collected revisions and presented results to the expert panel to confirm consensus.

Ethical Considerations

The main characteristics of the Delphi method are inquiry, anonymity, and feedback. Researchers use these characteristics to illuminate insights into a phenomenon, making the method worthwhile for preserving the integrity of responses as cross-cultural power distance could influence a participant's response in this study (Avella, 2016; Elkington & Breen, 2019; Hofstede, 2011; Marchais-Roubelat & Roubelat, 2011). The method was created in response to the limitations of face-to-face focus groups, where confidentiality is difficult to control outside the group (Geist, 2009). The flexibility of its implementation and anonymous data collection also

allows the researcher to hear multidisciplinary voices from various levels of influence without coercion or bias creeping in (Avella, 2016; von der Gracht, 2012). However, the researcher must exercise confidentiality measures because the method presents participants' responses to other participants, which is different from a traditional survey. Clarke and Braun (2018) suggested coding each person's name with numbers to ensure data confidentiality. However, a key variable to this study was certain demographic information, such as gender, age, and nationality, as each represented a specific perspective. Therefore, I used gender-neutral terminology and pseudonyms when presenting findings and feedback (Forde et al., 2021).

I submitted a research review request for an expedited review to the Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board, shown in Appendix E. The study was of minimal risk for various reasons. First, I explored the perceptions and experiences of experts working in leadership to improve upon or create a leader development program, not asking them to critique an existing program. Furthermore, the panelists in the study were not considered a vulnerable population, as they could make informed decisions to participate in the study. Also, I used the Delphi method to draw consensus to contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject matter, which the participants stood to benefit from as collective wisdom could inform their leadership development program. Furthermore, the Delphi method is based on anonymity throughout the process. I knew the identity of the participants, but the participants did not know the other participants in the study, mitigating potential for social harm due to dissenting opinions.

The participants could have perceived a risk to answer honestly throughout the study, feeling that any criticisms could negatively impact their jobs. I included within the consent form an explanation that the participant's involvement with the study would have no impact on their job status, but rather would benefit the LAM organization. Furthermore, any data collected

would not include their identities; rather, I assigned the participants a number to represent their responses. I saved their coded pseudonyms in a password protect file on my computer.

Trustworthiness

The qualitative use of the Delphi method adheres to the standards of qualitative research rigor. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that qualitative research should be judged by its credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) provided several strategies for ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability.

Credibility and Dependability

Triangulation is a strategy for increasing credibility (Terrell, 2016). The Delphi method uses multiple rounds and anonymous, constructed feedback from the panel, validating common experiences. An additional strategy ensuring the trustworthiness of the study is "member check" or "respondent validation" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Embedded in the Delphi method is the participant's ability to revise or restate their responses according to how the researcher has presented them. Furthermore, the multiple-round system provided multiple opportunities for member checking. Additionally, I had prolonged engagement with the responses to ensure accurate translation between Spanish to English and English to Spanish while keeping a reflexive journal to identify the logic behind the analysis throughout (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

Finally, qualitative research confirmability requires a keen awareness of the researcher's role in interpreting the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher in a Delphi study is the only person who knows the individuals' identities. Due to this, I guarded the participants' confidentiality by attaining a letter of consent. Furthermore, Terrell (2016) argued that the

researcher must be aware of the sociocultural perspective used in data analysis. Thus, I recognized that my experience as a White North American man with a graduate-level education and former missionary to Latin America contributed to the data analysis.

Additionally, I was the primary source of data interpretation and analysis, providing statements for the experts to discuss. Avella (2016) highlighted several influential stages in which the researcher is involved, including panel selection criteria, feedback gathering, and control over the conversation. Therefore, a clear presentation to the participants was necessary, explaining the criteria for expert selection and processes for gathering data. Again, the reflexive journal provided an audit trail to the thought processes for aggregating the data. I used the journal to review my initial reactions to the data. I also used the journal to answer the questions myself, not to be used in the study, but to consider my biases when analyzing the panel's responses.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability refers to recognizing that the data could represent other qualitative experiences in similar contexts (Terrell, 2016). In this study, for example, the perceptions of leadership development in a VUCA context within a Latin American culture could be shared by missionaries in a VUCA context in an African culture. Therefore, I could identify other representative experiences in other cultural contexts to provide a more robust description of missionary perceptions on leadership development.

Assumptions

As previously stated, I assumed a constructivist epistemology whereby knowledge is socially constructed through interactions of human beings and their contexts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Another assumption is that the expert participants were willing and able to respond using

digital methods and provide clear communication. Additionally, I assumed the participants could adequately provide responses and engage in the critical feedback process. The study assumed that the expert panel would have a genuine interest in the topic due to its relevance in their work that would motivate participation throughout the process (Avella, 2016). Finally, I assumed that the participants would provide thorough responses truthfully representing their experience and not what they think should happen.

Limitations

Several limitations existed within the method. Potential for research bias within the panel selection and feedback construction could have influenced the data. A small sample size could have limited the rich and diverse experience of the panel. Elkington and Breen (2019) conducted a Delphi study with 13 participants, reporting that greater diversity would benefit the understanding of global leadership. Furthermore, participant fatigue throughout the multiple rounds could have caused attrition or disingenuous participation, rushing through answers (Avella, 2016). A limitation of the Delphi method was the data are confined to the written responses of the panelist without follow up questions that an interview provides. However, the method's cost-effectiveness, flexibility, and elimination of distance barriers among the panelists provided a greater opportunity for panel participation (Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017). Furthermore, the ability to draw participants from large distances enhanced the diversity of participants, adding to a robust understanding.

Delimitations

The expert panel was a delimitation. I selected the expert panel from one Christian denomination with specific leadership structure norms. Therefore, the study was limited to those missionaries' perspectives and assumptions about leadership structure. Additionally, researchers

have used the Delphi method to resolve problematic consensus gathering as experienced by focus groups that produce tendencies of groupthink, shaming, and domineering social status and personality types (Avella, 2016; Geist, 2009). Therefore, I chose the Delphi method to provide a greater opportunity for diverse panel of participants from various nations and to enable shame-free participation due to cross-cultural barriers. Using the questionnaires and multiple iterations of feedback allowed me to explore perspectives from a broader perspective that was not limited by distance.

Summary

The Delphi method is a viable and effective method for qualitatively researching the concept of leadership (Forde et al., 2021). Leadership concepts are challenging to define as contexts, human involvement, and various situations influence its understanding (Northouse, 2019). Like in ancient Greece, it has long been a practice to seek collective understanding and knowledge on responding to life circumstances (Marchais-Roubelat & Roubelat, 2011). Therefore, the Delphi method drew from collective expertise through understanding the perceptions of a diverse panel of missionaries on developing leaders in a VUCA context to help LAM consider a leadership development training program. The Delphi method was effective for this study because I drew collective wisdom from a diverse panel to gain consensus on leadership development while avoiding hindrances of distant and cultural-power dynamics.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative, Delphi method study was to investigate the leadership development perceptions among existing LAM missionaries in the regions of Latin America in which LAM (Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico City, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador) to provide suggestions for improving effective leadership development within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. The LAM church-planting organization needs a leadership development program to help its missionaries train new leaders in a VUCA context, without such could deter its goal achievement (Niemandt, 2019; Van Wynen & Niemandt, 2020). Challenges in leadership development within a VUCA context require new development techniques that allow leaders to adapt to the changing world (Abidi & Joshi, 2018). Additionally, Day, Bastardoz, Bisbey, et al. (2021) called for more holistic leadership development processes that incorporated the interactive influences of followers, culture, and adult learning theories. Thus, understanding the LAM missionaries' perceptions and experiences provided insight into best practices and strategies for developing leaders, especially considering the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework that influenced this study included positive leadership, vertical leadership development, followership, cross-cultural studies, and coaching. The Delphi method employed is a wisdom collection method that draws from the experience of a group of experts within a particular context (Marchais-Roubelat & Roubelat, 2011). Therefore, this study investigated leadership development within a VUCA environment through the lens of the conceptual framework, collecting wisdom from the selected expert panel to help construct a leadership development program for the LAM organization. Through a series of open-ended

questions, the expert panel responded with their experience surrounding the questions that aligned with the conceptual framework.

Following the Delphi method, the expert panel responded to the 15-question survey. Then after analyzing the data, several aggregated statements passed through the panel in two additional rounds to work towards a consensus (Hsu & Sanford, 2007). The goal of the Delphi method is to collect consensus among the panel through the various rounds to promote best practices of the phenomenon studied (Mitchell et al., 2021; Rowe & Wright, 2011). Therefore, the results reported follow the structure of the three round Delphi method process. The first section is a description of the expert panel selection process, including pertinent demographic information of the panel. The second section includes a narrative report of the first-round open-ended questionnaire data. The following section includes a narrative of the analyzation and aggregation process, which resulted in 55 representative statements separated into five thematic categories to provide the expert panel for the second-round consensus building iteration. The next section shows the results of the second round. The final sections include the final round of consensus building and a summary of the results.

The Expert Panel

The criteria for inclusion in the expert panel consisted of missionaries that had worked or were currently working with LAM within a VUCA environment, had at least 5 years of experience, had attempted to develop leaders, and specifically worked in church-planting. To identify panelists, I emailed LAM staff members requesting them to provide me with a list of missionaries that met the criteria. The LAM staff returned a total of 55 perspective panelists that they felt met the criteria. I compiled the list in an Excel worksheet and emailed each of the panelists an invitation to participate in the study. The email included a description of the study,

its purpose, the time required to participate, and the panel criteria. Each panelist received the email in their preferred language, either English or Spanish. I requested from the prospected panelist an initial response to the invitation stating that they met the criteria and were willing to participate in the study. Thirty of the 55 missionaries initially agreed to participate in the expert panel and were sent the consent form that the Institutional Review Board of Abilene Christian University preapproved, then followed the questionnaire. Twenty panelists completed the first-round questionnaire.

Background of the Expert Panelists

The expert panel consisted of the 20 missionaries that met the above criteria and had completed the first-round questionnaire. Eighteen (90%) of the panelists were male, and two (10%) were female. Eleven (55%) of the panelist were from Latin American countries including Colombia, Venezuela, El Salvador, Bolivia, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Haiti with Spanish as their preferred language. Nine (45%) of the panelist were from the United States with English as their preferred language. The expert panel represented working experience in the following nine Latin American countries with some having worked in multiple: Peru (2), Colombia (8), Brazil (6), Guatemala (1), Honduras (1), Mexico (1), Chile (1), Bolivia (2), and Ecuador (1).

The Three Round Process

I used Google Translate to initially translate the questionnaire shown in Appendix A. I then reviewed the translation, editing when necessary to preserve meaning and proper grammar. A LAM staff member who was fluent in Spanish with decades of Latin American cultural experience field tested the questionnaire to verify the translation and clarity of each question. Following minor suggestions in word changes for clarity, the questionnaire was ready to send.

Using Qualtrics for email distribution, 30 panelists received the consent form provided in their preferred language. Once the panelist consented to the study, they were immediately taken to the 15-open ended question survey as shown in Appendix A. The expert panelists had two weeks to complete the first-round questionnaire. At the end of 2 weeks, 20 panelists (67%) completed the questionnaire, which was a higher percentage than the 30% attrition seen in other Delphi studies (Herrod, 2018; Menke et al., 2018). Thus, the expert panel provided a total of 300 written responses to their experience with developing leaders in a VUCA context and use of the major tenets within the concepts of positive leadership, vertical leadership development, and coaching.

Round 1 Analysis

I compiled all the responses in a Microsoft Excel sheet where each panelist response aligned with one another. I read each panelist's response to the same question before moving on to the next question. This helped me stay focused on responses to one question at a time, paying attention to similar responses or connecting themes. After an initial read through of each panelist's response, I read through them again highlighting significant statements, common words, or converging experiences. I also highlighted ideas or phrases that were distinct. I read through the data multiple times to become intimately familiar with the responses.

Following Saldaña (2011), I began the thematic analysis process. First, I deductively categorized the responses based on the tenets of the conceptual framework. Each question in the questionnaire aligned with one aspect of the conceptual framework, providing initial structure to the data analysis. Table 1 shows which questions align with each concept investigated.

Table 1

Conceptual Framework Categories

Conceptual themes	Survey Questions
VUCA	1–2
Followership	2
Positive Leadership	3–11
Positive Communication	8–9
Positive Climate	3–4
Positive Relationships	4, 6, 8, 10
Positive Meanings	5, 7, 11
Vertical Lead Development	12–15

The process of the Delphi method is to aggregate the collected data into representative statements to which the panel can respond (Avella, 2016). Thus, theming the data helped move the analysis process toward this end as themes are longer statements that summarize the meanings of the data rather than short one-word codes (Saldaña, 2011). Therefore, I returned to the data, especially reviewing the highlighted sections of the responses to detect emerging themes and subthemes. Each representative statement was a subtheme to the larger overarching themes, as the subthemes provided more specific detail that supported the overarching theme.

Theme 1: The VUCA Environment Impacted and Challenged Leadership Development. The first overarching theme emerging from the data was the affirmation of the various challenges of a VUCA context within leadership development. For example, one subtheme supporting this overarching theme was that in a VUCA context potential leaders had less time and financial resources to commit to their development within the new church. This

statement represented numerous expert panel responses citing the lack of time and commitment potential leaders have due to the volatile economic state of their countries. One panelist stated, "I often poured time and energy in developing a leader of great potential only to see them move out of the area due to the volatile, unstable economy."

There were nine subthemes that emerged supporting the theme that VUCA impacted and challenged leadership development among the missionaries. The nine subthemes reflected each of the tenets of a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment (VUCA). Volatile economic systems limited the amount of time potential leaders had to engage in development with the missionaries. One panelist specifically mentioned the difficulty of time for leader development in a volatile economy stating

> la falta de tiempo debido a las grandes cargas laborales que tienen, o la necesidad de tener dos o más trabajos a la vez para poder cubrir todas sus necesidades económicas. (The lack of time due to the large workloads they have, or the need to have two or more jobs at the same time to be able to cover all their economic needs.).

The panel cited uncertainty surrounding the potential leaders' motivations and commitment as challenges to development. The panel described complexity and ambiguity surrounding culture. One panelist stated, "in cross-cultural contexts there is also the ever-present challenge of communicating cross-culturally and developing indigenous leaders without Americanizing their leadership style." Cultural tendencies in Latin American created complexity and ambiguity. For example, in Latin culture many people are conditioned to follow and not lead. Additionally, cultural socioeconomic and educational status influenced the perception of who can lead. Developing leaders when there were ambiguous expectations and definitions of leadership between the developer and the follower emerged as challenges for developing leaders

in a VUCA context. One panelist described his experience with the ambiguity of developing

leaders cross culturally when asked about impediments in followers becoming leaders.

> A misunderstanding of what leadership is. When I cross cultures, I make a lot of
>
> assumptions about what the other culture understands when I say the word leader. I often
>
> make the mistake of thinking that we're on the same page. Leadership has meant
>
> something very different in the history of Peru than in the U.S. So, as a foreign
>
> missionary, I often confused the Peruvians when I began to develop leaders, which has
>
> made the jump from follower to leader even more difficult.

Thus, the subthemes provided specific experiences to affirm the main theme that the VUCA

context had impacted and challenged leadership development among the panel.

Theme 2: Leadership Development Happens in a Positive and Safe Environment.

There were eight representative statements that referenced the importance of a positive and safe

environment for developing leaders. Specifically, virtues such as honesty and trust emerged as

descriptors of a positive and safe environment. The panel highlighted empathy, vulnerability, and

openness as practices describing a safe environment necessary for developing leaders.

Additionally, the positive and safe environment needed could be cultivated within smaller groups

that would influence the entire church community. One example of a statement that represented

many responses among the panel is the following: a safe space to share and reflect on failures

and mistakes helps leaders learn and grow, giving the opportunities to practice leading without

fear or shame. One panelist described one practice that helped create such an environment

saying,

> cada dos meses solemos tener un tiempo de esparcimiento en algún parque, lago u otro
>
> lugar donde podamos compartir momentos en familia, amigos y por supuesto con la

hermandad, a lo cual también invitamos personas, para que nos conozcan fuera de un

ámbito de la iglesia. Creo que es el mejor lugar donde creamos apoyo y empatía. (Every

two months we usually have leisure time in a park, lake, or other place where we can

share moments with family, friends and of course with the brotherhood, to which we also

invite people, so that they know us outside an area of the church. I think it's the best place

where we create support and empathy.).

One of the panelists gave an example as to why it was important to create a positive and

safe environment for leadership development. The panelist described a time when a potential

leader was left in charge of a responsibility at the church. One of the other members in the

church gave negative feedback, stating that the new leader did not complete the job as well as the

old leader. This discouraged the new leader to continue trying and contributed to an environment

where people feared stepping out of their comfort zone to lead. Other panelists endorsed the

practice of sharing mistakes and errors openly, beginning with the existing leaders, to help

normalize failure as an opportunity for growth.

Another subtheme emerging from the data related to a positive environment for

leadership development was the presence of gratitude, respect, and encouragement. The panelists

described how showing gratitude through either public or private communication in formal or

informal ways contributed to a positive environment that motivated people to participate. Some

panelists referenced the cultural importance in countries like Brazil to receive public forms of

gratitude and encouragement in motivating them to continue to develop. Examples of practices

contributing to respect within the environment were listening to others, greeting one another,

smiling, and expressing concern for one another's well-being.

Communicating the value of each person and the importance of their development and gifts within the church emerged as a subtheme of creating a positive environment. Additionally, showing how each person's gifting aligned with the church's goals contributed to positive feelings toward engagement in the church. One panelist discussed the negative side of gift misalignment responding,

I've personally seen resentment begin to grow because someone is continuing to fail in what they've been asked to do. In my experience, usually, the issue is because the assigned tasks don't match up with who the person is. In other words, the team has asked a leader to do something that can be extremely difficult or draining for them.

Thus, gift alignment is important for motivating leaders to develop. Also, the panelists discussed how encouraging individual development would improve the health of the entire community. One panelist stated,

cuando el líder crece, la iglesia crece. Y cuando el misionero toma retos y desafíos, la iglesia también es desafiada. Creo que la iglesia crece junto con uno y viceversa (When the leader grows, the church grows. And when the missionary takes on challenges and obstacles, the church is also challenged. I believe the church grows along with one and vice versa.).

Thus, communicating these concepts was crucial in creating a supportive environment for development.

Theme 3: The Developer's Mindset and Behaviors Influence the Development Process. There were 14 representative statements that emerged referencing the mindset and behaviors that influenced the one developing the new leaders. Regarding mindsets, leader developers must view failure as growth opportunities. One panelist affirmed this stating, "bueno,

cada error y fracaso es una oportunidad para crecer y aprender (well, each error and mistake is an

opportunity to grow and learn.)" The mindsets lead to behaviors that promote the positive

climate necessary for leader development, like openness within communities about personal

development goals and when one falls short of those goals. For example, one panelist told of a

time when a leader in their church admitted to the community of an ongoing moral struggle he

was having, expressing the need for support. The panelist reflected that this act of vulnerability

demonstrated an excellent example of leadership, normalizing failure so that others do not fear

asking for support in the future. Other panelists described experiences when failure was not

viewed as opportunity and shame dominated the experience, leading to discouragement among

potential leaders.

Another mindset referenced a strength-mindset whereby developers look for the potential

in others, believing that each person has strengths to contribute. Panelists responded that

developers must communicate that each member in the community has a strength and that their

strengths are valuable to the church. One panelist responded that this was their practice within

the church culture, stating

> por medio de ayudar a los miembros a reconocer que Dios los ha dotado de capacidades y
>
> talentos que son útiles para el desarrollo de la misión de la Iglesia. (Through helping the
>
> members recognize that God has given them each abilities and talents that are useful for
>
> the development of the mission of the church.).

Additionally, developers spend time with potential leaders to observe and help them discover

their individual strengths and limitations. Panelists provided experiences when they recognized

the gifts of potential leaders through observing them in both formal and informal church

activities. Some panelists suggested that an effective way to communicate with potential leaders

was through one-on-one conversations to discuss their strengths, helping them discover ways to use them in the church.

Another subtheme related to the developer's mindset and behavior was demonstrating the willingness to continue personal development and learning. The reasoning emerged from the data was that new leaders seeing their developers continuing to grow would serve as an example and motivation for the new leaders. Modeling, coaching, and mentoring were practices that emerged as effective in helping new leaders develop.

Leader developers must enact a humble mindset whereby they release control of responsibilities, providing opportunities for new leaders to experiment even if they fail. Several panelists reported experiences where the missionaries would often assume all the leadership tasks because they were the experts. However, over time when the missionaries were ready to pass on the responsibilities, there was no one willing to step into those roles. Panelists also referenced the need for missionaries to involve new leaders in tasks earlier in the development process to show trust. Several panelists discussed the challenge of the local culture's perception that the missionary is the leader; thus, there is no need for other leaders to develop. Additionally, some panelists described times where the missionary believed this perception and guarded the leadership tasks to themselves. Some panelists referred to humility as a safeguard to trying to overcontrol the leadership development process, not giving space for leaders to learn organically or from outside influences like other teachers or consultants. For example, one panelist described a hindrence to new leaders developing stating some leaders as "quieren tener el control de todo y hacer todo, no permitiendo el desarrollo de nuevos líderes. ([Some leaders] want to have control of everything and do everything, not allowing the development of new leaders)." Thus, the

mindsets and behaviors of the developer can influence the development process for the better or worse.

Theme 4: Trusting, Positive Relationships Between the Developer and New Leader are Crucial for Effective Development. Trusting relationships emerged as an ongoing thread throughout the data. Trusting and positive relationships were stated to contribute to a positive environment, strengths identification, leader selection, and communicating feedback. Additionally, panelists listed trusting relationships as important for keeping new leaders motivated to develop. Trusting relationships contributed to the ability to give honest feedback without discouraging the leaders. Trust between the developer and the new leader promoted the new leader to experiment with new responsibilities and the relationship grew as the developer encouraged the leader in the assigned tasks.

Panelists suggested trusting relationships allowed the developer to speak honestly, helping the new leader to be vulnerable and share ways to improve. One panelist emphasized this trust when developing leaders stating, "teaching the leaders to always be trusted individuals helped church members feel like they could open up and share deep issues." Panelists supported spending time with each other in both formal and informal activities to develop trust. Panelists acknowledged recreational activities and sharing meals together as important in developing the positive relationships necessary to help develop new leaders. Developers being open about their development created trusting environments where the new leader felt safe to share their process. One panelist and leader developer describe their experience being vulnerable stating,

> cuando nos reunimos a evaluar los progresos o retrocesos soy la primera en comentar y
> aceptar los segundos siempre encontrando una solución y una mejora de lo que hice o no
> hice, esto permite que los demás hablen con confianza y no se vayan a sentir

decepcionados (When we meet to evaluate the progress or setbacks, I am the first to comment and accept the rest always finding a solution and an improvement of what I did or did not do, this allows others to speak with confidence and not feel disappointed.). Intentional formal practices such as small group, story sharing times among emerging leaders created a culture of trust contributing to leadership development.

Theme 5: The Leader Development Process Requires a Plan, Practice, Reflection, and Positive Feedback. A common thread throughout the data was that intentionality and planning were needed to ensure leadership development happened, and many panelists expressed their failures in implementing a plan. As one panelist responded, "we do a good job organically, but we miss individuals because we don't have a full-fledged program to catch every potential leader." Several referenced the complexities of managing other aspects of the new church plant that distracted them from a focused leadership development plan. Several suggested that on a missionary team, there should be designated people assigned to leadership development. Many panelists provided suggestions throughout for leadership development, concluding with a confession that they had not done well at implementing a plan. When asked what needed to be done to start making changes for developing leaders, one panelist emphatically responded, "we need a man with a plan."

A few subthemes emerged emphasizing the connection of personal strengths with the overall goal of the church. The panelists suggested that when potential leaders understand their strengths and how they connect with the church's goals, the leaders had more clarity and motivation to participate. Additionally, the panel agreed that there were several ways to help develop leaders. Practical experience was a subtheme appearing throughout the responses. Many panelists discussed that new leaders must practice leading early in their development in various

settings, both small groups and larger community settings. Along with practice, panelists included acquiring new knowledge and skills through teaching, using case studies, and hearing from other influential voices external to the church. One panelist suggested that new leaders would benefit from hearing from others that did not think the same way as their church to enhance their ability to discern. Additionally, the panel agreed that developing leaders should participate in a variety of ministry experiences to explore personal strengths and better understand the different areas through experience. One panelist suggested an apprenticeship program where the leaders in training committed to a yearlong apprenticeship, working alongside the guidance of the missionary, and completing various services and ministries within the church. In sum, the panel provided numerous suggestions that promoted experiential learning and knowledge building through study.

Connected with the previous subtheme, reflection and feedback emerged as significant practices for the leadership development process. The panel expressed the need for developing leaders to take time to reflect on their experience. Some panelist described this reflection process as a formal evaluation, happening periodically throughout the year. For example, one panelist described their process, stating

> cada tres meses volvemos a reunirnos para ver cómo se van llevando los planes que se trazaron, o para ayudar a quienes puedan estar tendiendo falencias en sus ministerios. (Every three months we meet again to see how the plans that were drawn up are being carried out, or to help those who may be falling short in their ministries.).

Others noted that the reflection process happened on a fluid, weekly basis throughout organic conversations or in intentional mentoring times.

Additionally, having intentional times of feedback emerged as essential for the development process. As referenced in theme #4, a trusting relationship between the developer and trainee was a major theme in the development process. The panel emphasized that relationships were the foundation of the feedback process. Included in the data on feedback were practices such as active listening, encouragement throughout, allowing time for the new leader to reflect and respond to the feedback, and that feedback could happen in formal or informal ways. One panelist detailed their process as the following:

Most of the time I ask the person what they thought they did well and what they would have liked to change or do differently the next time. I then reinforce the good things they have shared about themselves while adding any other positive feedback. If the person has not recognized a key area that needs improvement, I will talk about it and give a suggestion of how it could be better. Usually, I try to focus more on the positive and come with only 1 or 2 really important things to improve.

According to the data, feedback worked best when the atmosphere was accepting, encouraging, positive, and when failures were communicated as growth areas. Many panelists admitted that they did not have intentional feedback processes, while others explained formal processes. Regardless, the consensus was that providing constructive feedback was essential.

Summary of Round 1

Through a thematic analysis process, the five themes and various subthemes above emerged from the first-round panelists' responses. 20 experts participated in the panel and provided robust descriptions of their experience and subsequent wisdom within the leadership development process. The panel responded to 15 open-ended questions influenced by the conceptual framework. Through the lens of the conceptual framework, the panel responded with

their experience and wisdom. After many readings, I categorized the data, and then aggregated it into 55 representative statements shown in Appendix B for the panel to respond to in the second round, seeking consensus from the panel. The following section displays the results of the consensus surrounding the statements from which the themes were created.

Round 2

The unique characteristic of the Delphi method is to bring a diverse group of people together anonymously in conversation surrounding leadership development and avoiding the tendencies to group think or negative power distance influences (Avella, 2016; Elkington & Breen, 2019; Hofstede, 2011; Marchais-Roubelat & Roubelat, 2011). To prepare for the second round, I translated into Spanish Appendix B, initially using the translation software embedded in Microsoft Word. After reviewing the initial translations, making some edits for appropriate grammar and semantic meanings, a LAM staff member reviewed and verified the Appendix B translation. Finally, I created a 5-point Likert-type scale survey in Qualtrics. The panel had the option to *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree*, *strongly agree* with each statement. Also, the panel had the opportunity to provide additional comments explaining their level of agreement. Via Qualtrics, the panel received the survey to their email and had one week to complete the survey. At the end of the week, 17 panelists took the second-round survey, which was an 85% completion rate. This completion percentage exceeded the expected 30% (Herrod, 2018; Menke et al., 2018).

The goal was to achieve consensus among the statements, consider any new data in the additional comments, then make necessary revisions to those statements that did not achieve consensus to submit in the third round. At least, 75% consensus was the goal for each statement. Due to the 5-point Likert-type scale, I considered two points or greater distance between

responses did not meet consensus. For example, if one panelist strongly agreed and another neither agreed nor disagreed, that represented a 2-point distance and consensus was not achieved. On the other hand, if a panelist strongly agreed and another panelist selected agreed, there was a single point distance, thus consensus was achieved.

Results for Round 2

Of the 55 aggregated statements 54 achieved consensus at 75% or greater. One statement did not achieve consensus, which I revised for round 3. While the panel agreed with representative statements which summarized the data from round 1, many panelists submitted additional comments with their submission. Some panelists added comments to further support and explain their agreement with the statement, providing examples of when they experienced the expressed statement. For example, one panelist affirmed the statement "creating a mindset of a common purpose helps connect personal development with the church's mission," stating "cuando todos halamos para el mismo lado, la fuerza se concentra en un solo lugar (when we all pull together on the same side, the strength concentrates in one place)."

Some stated that while they agreed with the statement, the statement may not represent every experience in leadership development. For example, one aggregated statement read, "clearly communicating how individual development contributes and connects with the church's mission motivates people to engage in development." Some panelists agreed that this was a motivation, however that this would not be sufficient motivation to sustain leadership and that motivation to lead would also come from other areas. Appendix C shows the report of one of the statements. The additional comments served as data to further inform the major themes described in the round 1 data.

A compelling finding of the second round that among a diverse panel, there were many shared experiences and opinions. The statements represented the experience and wisdom of many missionaries in various contexts and cultures; however, most of the panel agreed and related to the responses of the other panelists. This consensus in round 2 confirmed the themes that emerged from the data.

The statement that did not achieve consensus was revised and passed along to the final round for the panel to consider. I reviewed the comments added to this statement as well as the responses in the original survey to consider the revision. Once revised, I translated the statement and prepared it for the third-round survey.

Round 3

While consensus was met on almost all the aggregated statements in round 2, the final round provided a completion of the modified Delphi method. After revising the one statement that did not reach consensus, I sent out another 5-point Likert-type scale to the 17 panelists that completed round 2. The original statement was the following: Developing leaders is complex due to the missionaries' time and energy commitments to other aspects of the church. The revised statement is as follows: One complexity in developing leaders is that missionaries have numerous commitments within the church that require their attention; thus, inviting potential leaders to participate alongside the missionary in those commitments and delegating responsibilities are important to ongoing leadership development. As with the round 2 survey, the panelist had the opportunity to respond with their level of agreement and add any comments with their response. The panel had a deadline of 1 week to complete the final survey.

All 17 panelists responded to the survey, which produced a better-than-expected retention rate for the entire study with 85% of the panelists completing all three rounds. The final round

achieved consensus with 87% agreement. As with the round 2 surveys, the additional comments that the panelist provided added support for the themes described in round 1.

Summary of the Study Results

The data reported represented the experience and wisdom of an expert panel. Panelists responded with suggestions through reflecting on their experience of leadership development practices that were effective or ineffective. Their reflection served as suggestions based on their experience, calling to replicate things that did work or trying new things through their failed attempts. The goal of this study was to collect wisdom and experience to create a leadership development program for the LAM missionaries considering a VUCA context.

The five major themes that emerged provided support for many of the concepts described in the literature review. The first theme was that the VUCA environment impacted and challenged leadership development. The panelists discussed how VUCA effects religious organizations like church planting as well as the leader development process, which is notable considering much is discussed in literature around VUCA about the type of leadership needed; however, attention is needed to the effects of VUCA on the development process. The second theme emerging from the data was that leadership development happens in a positive and safe environment. The experience of the panel affirmed much of the literature on positive leadership as psychologically safe environments in organizations enhanced engagement among employees (Edmondson, 2018).

The third theme was that the developer's mindset and behaviors influence the development process. This theme echoes the conceptual framework literature on the important role a leader's mindset, example, and behaviors plays in developing an organization (Dunoon & Langer, 2011; Dweck, 2015; Ramdas & Patrick, 2019). The fourth theme stated that trusting,

positive relationships between the developer and new leader were crucial for effective development. Creating positive relationships is a foundational tenet in the positive leadership concept (Cameron et al., 2011). Additionally, it was found that trust within a coaching relationship enhanced the effectiveness of the coaching practice (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Priest et al., 2018; van Nieuwerburgh et al., 2021). Thus, the experience of the panel affirmed what has been discussed in the positive leadership and coaching literature.

Finally, the fifth theme was that the leader development process required a plan, practice, reflection, and positive feedback. These themes are present throughout the conceptual framework as important practices in leadership development. For example, in vertical leadership development, Petrie (2015) discussed heat experiences as experiences that challenged the previously held view of a person as helpful for developing mental complexities. Furthermore, the reflection and feedback practices aided in the development process through these new experiences. The expert panel discussed how development happened within this process of experiential learning, reflection, and practice, which corresponds with vertical leadership development, coaching, and positive leadership development processes. Through the five major themes and subsequent subthemes, the following chapter includes a discussion of the findings, suggestions for best practices in leadership development from the findings and literature, and opportunities for future study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative, Delphi method study was to investigate the leadership development perceptions and experiences among existing LAM missionaries in the regions of Latin America (Bolivia, Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico City, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador) to provide suggestions for improving effective leadership development within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. Missionaries work in VUCA environments, where they often enter rapidly changing and unstable sociopolitical societies. Cross-cultural norms and varying definitions and understanding of leadership influence the complexity and ambiguity missionaries face in leadership development.

As missionaries seek to plant churches, many reported that due to volatile economies, there was an uncertainty around how much time and longevity new leaders must give for development. A culture's influence on the way people learn, perceive leadership, and follower tendencies also complicates the leadership development process (Blair & Bligh, 2018; Brown & McClellan, 2017; Castaño et al., 2015). Thus, for a cross-cultural church-planting organization hoping to develop local leaders to continue the new church beyond the missionaries' presence, a robust leadership development program must consider these variables. The LAM church-planting organization currently lacks a leadership development program that can help their missionaries train new leaders in a VUCA context effectively. Therefore, investigating LAM missionaries' perceptions and experiences provided insight and wisdom into best practices and strategies for developing leaders, especially through the lens of the conceptual framework.

The qualitative Delphi method allowed for a variety of panelists representing numerous cultures, two languages, and various national contexts to provide their experience and wisdom surrounding leadership development. Additionally, the Delphi method allowed the panelists to

interact with each other, eliminating the potential for group think, shaming, and power distance to influence their responses. Gaining consensus among such a diverse panel made a strong case for the theories and practices explored in the conceptual framework for developing leaders.

One limitation of the study was that all responses were written, limiting the use of follow-up questions for further understanding. Consequently, the researcher bias was a limitation as I interpreted the written responses without the ability to ask for clarification. However, the aggregated representative statements allowed the panelists to respond to my interpretations of the collective data through the Likert-type scale and an additional comments section. A small panel size limited the diversity of responses, although other Delphi studies have used a few as 13 panelists (Elkington & Breen, 2019). A qualitative Delphi method includes a multi-round process, making potential participant attrition a limiting factor where there was an expected 30% retention rate (Herrod, 2018; Menke et al., 2018). This panel retained at a much higher rate than the expectation, at 85%, indicating that the panelists felt convicted of the importance of the study.

There were five main themes emerging from the data. First, the VUCA environment impacted and challenged leadership development within the missionaries' experience. Secondly, leadership development happens in a positive and safe environment. The third theme was that the leadership developer's mindset and behaviors influence the development process. The fourth theme was that trusting, positive relationships between the developer and the new leader were crucial for effective development. Finally, the leader development process required a plan, practice, reflection, and positive feedback.

The remainder of the chapter includes a discussion of the findings considering the literature surrounding the conceptual framework. Additionally, I discuss the limitations of the

study, highlighting potential barriers to transferability, credibility, and trustworthiness important in qualitative research designs. The following sections include discussions of the implications of the findings and recommendations for practical application and future research. The final section contains a summary of this research from its purpose and problem addressed to the findings and recommendations.

Discussion

The research question explored was according to LAM missionaries' experience, what type of leader development program does the LAM organization need to implement to effectively train their missionaries to develop church leaders in a VUCA environment? The expert panel provided collective wisdom to respond to this research question summarized in the above five themes, much of which I expected considering the conceptual framework. The VUCA environment has impacted organizational leadership and development of leaders in various arenas (Bach & Sulíková, 2021; Hadar et al., 2020; Neumann , 2019; Nowacka & Rzemieniak, 2022; Waller et al., 2019). Thus, the panelists' responses affirmed the need to explore leadership development within a VUCA environment within a church-planting context. Many panelists discussed how difficult developing leaders were when many of their church members lacked the time and economical resources to devote to their development. Many ideas flowed from the panelist as to how to respond to the issue; but regardless, the findings affirmed that the rapidly changing, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous nature of the world challenged church-planters in developing leaders.

In the VUCA literature, there are a few challenges discussed as barriers to leadership that the panelists also discussed. One of the main competencies stated in VUCA literature is the need for agile leadership (Bywater & Lewis, 2019; Peniwati, 2020; Rimita et al., 2019). Peniwati

(2020) noted that VUCA challenged hierarchical leadership structures because of their inflexible and slow decision-making processes. Furthermore, Baran and Woznyj (2021) discussed agile leadership as the ability to make quick, adaptive decisions through constant monitoring and testing of the environment.

The challenge many of the panelists cited was that making changes and quick decisions was difficult due to inherited religious traditions and cultural leadership structures. For example, one panelist stated that "the entrenched models of leadership are so widespread that we often experience people listening to what we say and then reflecting back the same cultural model of hierarchical leadership that they have always experienced, as if our words don´t compute." Thus, the agility recommended for VUCA leaders may be practical wisdom for certain contexts but challenging to develop due to existing cultural norms within other contexts. Madsen (2020) pointed out that much of the agile concept in VUCA literature was mostly based on practice and not theory. This study's findings contributed to the need to explore competencies necessary for leadership in VUCA environments creating more robust theories that include cultural leadership theories (Hofstede, 2011; House, Hanges, Javidan, et al., 2004) and Latin cultural leadership contexts that could be barriers to the agile concept (Castaño et al., 2015; Ramsey et al., 2017). Regardless, the missionary experience reflected that of other organizational contexts that are wrestling with the impacts of VUCA.

The second theme found in the data was that leadership development happened best in a positive and safe environment. The panelists cited many examples of when new leaders responded well to positive communication practices like respect, gratitude, and encouragement. A major tenet in positive leadership studies is the importance of having a positive culture in which people operate, which influences individual well-being and growth (Dutton & Spreitzer,

2014; Page et al., 2019). Positive practices such as gratitude and encouragement produce positive

emotions in others, increasing their commitment, motivation, and well-being (Di Fabio et al.,

2017; Fredrickson, 2013).

The panel also discussed how in some cases members refrained from leading due to

negative comments and comparisons from existing church members. Edmondson (2018)

discussed a psychologically safe organizational environment was necessary for individual

development, which excludes the practices of unfair comparisons and shame. Conversely,

honesty, a culture of openness, and a mindset that mistakes or failures were growth opportunities

were indicative to a psychologically safe environment (Adams, 2019; Axtell, 2019; Edmondson,

2018).

Additionally, panelists discussed the challenges of cultural perceptions of who can lead

and who cannot, namely those that are well educated and come from higher socioeconomic

statuses, reflecting a mindset shift that must happen to encourage leadership. In vertical

leadership development, the emphasis is on the ability to develop mental complexities through

challenging existing worldviews or perceptions, which was necessary when leading in complex,

ambiguous environments (Kegan & Lahey, 2016; Petrie, 2015). When new leaders experienced

positive emotions from the positive climate through encouragement and gratitude, they were

more motivated to continue versus the negative feedback that resulted in resistance to continue.

Fredrickson (2001) showed how experiencing positive emotions broadened a person's mental

resources, enhancing attention to learn and grow. Thus, it was unsurprising that the panel

endorsed the need for a safe and positive environment for leadership development.

The third theme described the importance of the developer's mindset and behaviors as

influential in the development process. Positive leadership scholars have discussed a leader's

role as pivotal in creating an environment where others can grow and thrive (Brière et al., 2021; Cameron, 2013; Suleman et al., 2021). A positive leader has a growth mindset, seeing failure as growth opportunities (Dweck, 2015). Subsequently, growth mindset behaviors of openness about failures and honest reflection aid in creating a positive climate for development (Cameron, 2013; Edmondson, 2020). The panelists discussed many examples when leaders did not display a growth mindset through trying to appear as the expert or discouraged vulnerability. Kegan and Lahey (2016) posited that in order to create a developing organization, the leader must engage in personal development as well. In positive leadership, Luthans and Jenson (2002) described humility as knowing one's strengths and limitations and not exaggerating either the strength or limitation. Thus, leaders appearing to be experts discouraged new leaders from attempting to develop, thinking that they could never be like the existing leader. Furthermore, leader developers that are not open about failures do not positively communicate that all people are growing and learning (Adams, 2019). The developers' modeling of ongoing learning motivates the new leader to engage in development.

Positive leaders see the potential in every person, recognizing that each has a strength that can be developed (Suleman et al., 2021). The findings suggested that developers needed to look for the potential in all people, and help those people develop those strengths. Gander et al. (2013) described the beneficial influence of developing strengths in positive organizations. The panelist discussed virtues like humility, which appreciated the strengths of others and allowed space for them to use those strengths (Owens et al., 2012). One-on-one conversations through mentoring and coaching practices were stated to aid the strength development process. Therefore, the ways in which the developer intentionally interacts with the new leader through listening, observing, and naming the strengths of the others would encourage leader

development. Trust was a major component of effective coaching for development (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Priest et al., 2018). Research showed that when people use their strengths, their performance and commitment levels increase with an elevated feeling of purpose in their work (Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010). Many of the panelists listed lack of commitment as an obstacle to leader development. Furthermore, the developers must enact trusting behaviors to allow developing leaders to attempt to use their strengths, then use encouraging feedback after the strength is used (Suleman et al., 2021; Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2022).

Trusting, positive relationships between the developer and new leader emerged as crucial for effective development. It is no surprise that the panel emphasized creating positive relationships. Positive relationships or high-quality relationships are major tenets of positive leadership (Cameron, 2012; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008). Additionally, trusting relationships in coaching and mentoring practice were fundamental to their effectiveness (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Priest et al., 2018). The panel responded with numerous suggestions on how to create those trusting relationships through recreation and meals to story sharing in small group settings. Positive scholarship affirmed how positive relational interactions and energy increased engagement and motivation (Gerbasi et al., 2015; Owens et al., 2016). In vertical leadership development, vulnerability through sharing weaknesses or growth areas is important in creating a personal development plan. Trusting those you share with fosters the necessary environment for development, as people encourage others to grow (Baker, 2019). The panel gave examples of how new leaders were more apt to respond positively to feedback when empathy, compassion, and trust were present in the relationship, consistent with the literature (Cooper & Sosik, 2012; Dutton & Sprietzer, 2014; Mirivel, 2021).

The final theme was that the leader development process required a plan, practice, reflection, and positive feedback. Many panelists reported that the questions provided in Appendix A were helpful to point out the need for an intentional plan for developing leaders. Coopersmith (2022) demonstrated how a personal development plan aided the vertical development process within a VUCA environment. The coaching practice requires a coach and coachee to determine personal development goals, discuss pathways to achieve those goals, and the feedback structure for accountability (Halliwell et al., 2022; Priest et al., 2018; van Nieuwerburgh et al., 2021). Positive leadership literature emphasizes leaders' intentional practices, policies, and programs to form positive cultures, develop strengths, and communicate a meaningful purpose (Boyaztis et al., 2012; Cameron, 2013; Halliwell et al., 2022; Tsai & Barr, 2021). Thus, the panel's response demonstrated the need to form intentional plans for leadership development, it will not just happen accidentally.

As new leaders pass through the leadership development plan, a process of reflection and positive feedback must exist. Positive coaching uses active listening and curiosity to help coachees reflect on that experience, comparing it with previously held beliefs or experiences. Petrie (2015) discussed this type of experiential reflection and processing promoted vertical leadership development as individuals wrestled with previously held beliefs (Petrie, 2014; Taylor & Laros, 2014). Additionally, leaders use positive communication through focusing on behavior changes while not shaming nor devaluing the individual (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Thus, feedback is positive by engaging positive emotions through gratitude, respect, and encouragement helping the receiver to be more open to discovering solutions (Boyatzis et al., 2013; Fredrickson, 2012). The panel's responses reflected many of the tenets of positive feedback. Some suggested giving formal feedback sessions, others used more informal, ongoing feedback, while others

acknowledged they did not have a feedback process but endorsed the practice. Thus, the findings intentionally promoted planning times for practice, reflection, and positive feedback.

Limitations

Embedded in a qualitative, Delphi method is the limitation of the centrality of the researcher's role (Avella, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). From panel selection, interpretation of the data, and to aggregating the statements for panel feedback, the researcher has control over the conversation. Additionally, a strength and limitation to the Delphi method is that panelists discuss anonymously in written form, without back and forth, ongoing conversation as a focus group would (Geist, 2009). While the written, anonymous format mitigated the potential for power distance to create biases in responses, the limitation of panelists' ability to communicate effectively in written form was present. Also, the Delphi method differs from interviews in that the researcher cannot ask for further clarification or follow up questions to a panelist response. Thus, much of the credibility depends on the researcher clearly presenting the data back to the panel, allowing for additional comments in subsequent rounds. However, the principal threat to trustworthiness is the centrality of the researcher's role. Thus, the following measures describe how trustworthiness of the study was maintained.

First, bias can arise in the panel selection process, limiting the diversity of perspectives in the data. I, therefore, used purposeful sampling to generate a list of experts that met the criteria. I also used snowballing to invite LAM staff to suggest another panelist unknown to me. This mitigated the limitation of selecting the panel myself, potentially confining the panel to people I believed would give me the response I may have assumed.

Another limitation was the interpretation process. First, the questionnaire was in both Spanish and English. Therefore, interpretation and translation issues can arise when working

with multiple languages and cultures. Thus, I used multiple sources beyond myself for translation verification such as Google Translate and a seasoned LAM staff member with extensive experience in Latin American cultures and language. Another way of verifying translation was the iterations. Once I sent the representative statements in both English and Spanish to the panel, each person had the opportunity to respond to the statements with questions or additional comments. Therefore, if there were questions about clarity of the translations, the panelists had the opportunity to suggest revisions.

The researcher is the principal interpreter of the data, so I spent significant time reading and rereading the data to track themes and common ideas. Spending time with the data creates a closeness mitigating initial biases from the researcher (Saldana, 2011). Another limitation was the researcher's role in aggregating the data into representative statements for the panel to respond to with their level of agreement. As the author of the statements, I used words and phrases that commonly arose from the data as much as possible. These words emerged from the coding process, where I highlighted and tracked the common ideas throughout the data. I kept a journal, highlighting my thoughts and how certain quotes and ideas connected with the conceptual framework. The second and third iteration served as type of "member checking" or "respondent validation" as each panelist could respond to their level of agreement and provide additional comments (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This mitigated the limitation of research bias, giving a voice to the panel to make corrections or additions.

Finally, transferability of the data may have been limited due to the specific contexts in which the expert panel worked. The Latin American context and culture have tendencies that may not be transferable to other cultures (Castaño et al., 2015; Romero, 2004). Additionally, the panel represented only one Christian denomination with leadership structural norms, creating a

potential threat to transferability to other Christian organizations. However, I mitigated the limitation through the modified Delphi technique, forming the questionnaire around broader leadership, adult development, and culture theories and concepts. Exploring leadership development within a VUCA context aided transferability, as the concept of VUCA is not culture specific.

Implications

From the findings, there are several implications for the context of LAM missionaries. Many of the findings aligned with various tenets of the conceptual framework. One significant implication is that missionaries indeed function in a VUCA environment; thus, leadership development programs must consider the variables present for church planters. Additionally, the panelists endorsed various positive leadership principles and practices, extending positive leadership research into cross-cultural contexts. Evident in the findings was that leader developers must have a plan that fits the context and considers development as crucial to a thriving organization. Many responses emphasized skills acquisition as the evidence of leadership development, differing from vertical development which involves increased levels of sensemaking (Kegan, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Finally, the findings endorsed coaching principles and practices that could provide a possible response to development in a VUCA context. The following section is a discussion of these implications.

The VUCA context has been studied and reported as impacting organizations and leadership in various arenas such as education, business, the military, and politics (Aleem et al., 2021; Harkavy & Hodges, 2022; Kucukozyigi, 2020; Powers et al., 2022; Rose et al., 2019). The findings revealed that a VUCA environment indeed challenges and impacts missionaries working cross-culturally to plant churches. Thus, following many other scholars (Gottfredson, 2021;

Peniwati, 2020), missionaries, and church-planting organizations must consider VUCA as a variable when creating leadership development programs. Many panelists acknowledged these challenges and wrestled with how best to develop leaders when there was constant competition for time due to economic challenges, other social commitments, and misunderstandings due to cultural complexities surrounding leadership. The panel's experience revealed that understanding the components of VUCA could aid in the type of leadership development program a church-planting organization develops.

One of the criticisms of the positive leadership scholarship is the subjective nature of the concepts and definitions of positivity, especially considering other various cultural contexts (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012; Caza & Carroll, 2011; Waterman, 2013). However, this study investigated leadership through the lens of positive leadership among numerous Latin American cultures and nations, finding that many of the positive leadership tenets were endorsed as wisdom in developing others. For example, the panel discussed and endorsed psychological safety, gratitude, encouragement, empathy, trusting relationships, and positive communication practices in developing leaders. Thus, the findings extend support for positive leadership outside a merely Western philosophy but endorsed as wisdom from a Latin American cultural context. This echoes what van Dick et al. (2018) found where positive leadership principles had been globally endorsed.

Another implication present in the findings is that leadership development must have a plan that is intentionally followed, and the plan would be adaptable to the specific contexts. Schein (2019) discussed that without programs, processes, and practices embedded within an organization, development would not happen. Many panelists described the struggle of developing leaders, while maintaining that few had a set plan they followed. Many panelists

called for more attention and focus on the leadership development process. Missionaries are often bombarded with numerous responsibilities other than developing leaders, which the panel reported often distracted their attention from a leader development plan. While the panel endorsed many practices for effective leadership development, none of them would work without intentionality and accountability.

Considering an intentional plan, many panelists discussed skills acquisition as evidence to a developing leader rather than mindset shifts and sensemaking abilities, which are components of vertical leadership development (Kegan & Lahey, 2016; Petrie, 2015). According to many panelists, leadership development included helping leaders learn how to gain knowledge and experience in areas of skills, specifically in teaching, preaching, and organizing skills. Vertical leadership scholars refer to these skills as "horizontal development" (Sharp & Marchetti, 2020). Vertical leadership development happens when leaders can reflect and learn from their experiences that challenge their current worldview. Additionally, vertical development happens when a leader can discern and make decisions when ambiguity is present within a situation, which a VUCA environment provides (Kegan & Lahey, 2016). Therefore, the implication is that church-planting missionaries seem to lack the awareness of how to develop leaders vertically. Many discussed the need to challenge assumed beliefs for development to happen, but little was discussed on how to do so. Considering many of the panelists reported that cultural norms of who can lead were barriers to developing leaders, vertical leadership development is crucial in challenging these previously held beliefs to overcome these barriers. Thus, the findings revealed the need for further training for missionaries to develop leaders vertically.

Finally, coaching emerged as an implication for the church-planting context. Many panelists referenced coaching principles and practices as effective in developing leaders. While

the panel rarely used the word coaching, it did discuss practices such as active listening, building trusting relationships, helping people discover strengths, and providing feedback, which are all found in effective coaching (van Zyl & Rothmann, 2022). Many confuse the concept of mentoring and coaching. Mentoring happens over a long period of time, requiring the mentor to be an expert in the field that shares advice, experience, and encouragement to the mentee (Halliwell et al., 2022). However, coaching does not require an expert party that is directive, but rather, an attentive coach that uses the stated practices to help develop the coachee to discover their goals, work toward them, and provide feedback on obstacles (Yarborough, 2018). Considering the panel endorsed many of the coaching practices, church-planters struggling with finding time to spend with developing leaders in a VUCA context could consider coaching as an effective practice (van Nieuwerburgh et al., 2021; Wilson & Lawton-Smith, 2016).

Recommendations

In light of this study's findings and the conceptual framework literature, the following sections include recommendations for the LAM organization for creating a leadership development program. Also included in the sections are recommendations for future research based on the implications of the findings. The purpose of this qualitative, Delphi method study was to investigate leadership development in a VUCA context among missionaries within the LAM organization. Through the lens of positive leadership, adult learning theories, vertical leadership development, coaching, cross-cultural studies, the expert panel provided their experiences and perceptions to build consensus on best practices for developing leaders. The following section includes a description of some practical recommendations for developing leaders with a VUCA context for the LAM organization and others in similar contexts.

Recommendations for Practical Application

Church-planting organizations such as LAM that send missionaries to work in a VUCA context need to develop a leader training program that includes the principles and practices of positive leadership, an understanding of vertical leadership development in conjunction with skills development, and coaching practices. As implied in the findings, this training program would emphasize the need to have specific plan for developing leaders that included intentionally. The research revealed that positive leadership principles and practices were effective for training leaders. Positive leadership practices are predicated on the fact that everyone has potential for good and growth (Dutton & Sonenshein, 2007). Thus, there are tested practices available to missionaries that can cultivate thriving individuals that are more engaged, motivated, and happier in their experience participating in an organization (Cameron, 2012).

Positive leaders have an affirmative bias whereby they look for the potential in everyone (Cameron, 2012). I recommend that LAM and organizations like it include this mindset in a leader development training program as a foundational principle because it shapes the leader developers' thoughts and actions drawing out and shaping the good in everyone and enhances the developer's awareness of looking for the strengths of others and helping connect those strengths to the overall purpose, promoting positive meaning (Wrzesniewski, 2002). Missionaries and leader developers can use strength-spotting to identify and develop new leaders (Lopez, 2015). The research discussed that spending time with others helped identify their strengths and that helping new leaders develop their strengths was important. Thus, a training program should include a process for strengths spotting for missionaries to consider for their work. For example, missionaries should observe their potential leader looking for extraordinary actions. They then must name their strength, express gratitude for their using it, then help the new leader see how

that strength is useful to the purpose of the church (Stavros & Wooten, 2011). Finally, invite them to consider other ways they can use their strength (Biswar-Diener et al., 2011).

LAM should include in their leader development program additional positive practices surrounding the four main tenets of positive leadership. Practices that create a positive climate where potential leaders feel safe to make mistakes and the ability to learn from those failures help new leaders have the courage to practice leading (Edmondson, 2018; Kegan & Lahey, 2016). When a positive climate is present, positive emotions elevate, leading to high-quality relationships (Vianello et al., 2010). Leader developers must look for ways to create trusting relationships outside of only ministry events, which many panelists proposed meals and recreation times as effective for building trust. An effective leader developer plan would include suggestions for relationship building appropriate for the cultural contexts, helping developers understand the essentiality of those relationships in the development process.

A leader development training program must also include training in positive communication. The findings revealed a strong endorsement of communicating with respect, encouragement, and gratitude. Additionally, panelists referenced active listening, empathy, and compassion as important in communicating with others. Positive communication happens when there are more positive comments than negative ones, influencing the strength of relationships (Gottman & Levenson, 1999). The panel also endorsed feedback as important in developing leaders. Positive communication preserves the dignity of others (Kauffman, 2020); thus, when giving feedback even when it is negative feedback by encouraging, staying problem focused, and showing support of how to improve can help potential leaders stay committed, motivated, and encouraged to continue to grow and improve (Adams, 2019; Cameron, 2012, 2013; Kauffman, 2020).

One implication of the research is that the VUCA environment affects leaders and leader development. Positive leadership has been shown to create and promote resilience within leaders and organizations (Seligman, 2011a). Missionaries desiring to develop others can use positive leadership to enhance their resilience in challenging times that the VUCA world presents. For example, resilient leaders have been shown to have the psychological capacity to look for possibilities in times of crisis and adversity (Margolis & Stoltz, 2010). Furthermore, using positive leadership practices, missionaries can cultivate the atmosphere necessary to develop resilient leaders also. One of the major findings from the research was that humility and the need to trust and depend on the strengths of others in the church was imperative for helping leaders develop. Positive leaders in times of stress and crisis cannot do everything themselves. They must display humility, knowing when to exercise their strengths, then call on the strengths of others, trusting them with the tasks at hand (Leberecht, 2021; Peppercorn, 2019). Thus, the principles and practices of positive leadership can inform leader developers to better train new leaders.

A leadership development training program should also include concepts and practices of vertical leadership development. Many panelists discussed the challenges VUCA world provided for engaging others in leadership development. One major challenge was cultural perceptions surrounding who can lead. This reality describes a mindset, a cognitive category that must be challenged to urge followers to consider leading. Additionally, leading is often about decision-making in light of a context that in a VUCA world is complicated. Thus, the skills needed to lead in this environment are more than skills in teaching, organizing, or preaching; they are mindsets that can discern, making tough decisions for what is best in various situations. Kegan and Lahey (2016) described the differences of these stages as ones who follow what others tell them to do

based on already established understandings of the world. Thus, leaders that develop vertically make sense of the current world, consider new perspectives, then discern the best path forward. Vertical leadership development practices involve putting people in "heat experiences" (Petrie, 2015) to intentionally challenge their previously held understandings of the world. Then the leader in training enters a time of reflection with a trusted coach or mentor to make sense of the new experience in conjunction with other resources. The findings emphasized the need for intentional planning for development to happen. Thus, I recommend incorporating intentional, worldview challenging practices for potential leaders, then providing the space for them to reflect on a new perspective. One panelist referenced a hesitancy for many to leave their comfort zone, developing vertically is uncomfortable; thus, vertical development would work best practiced within the positive climate discussed earlier.

Finally, a leadership development program for a VUCA context should include coaching as an effective development practice. LAM and other organizations can train their missionaries how to coach new leaders. Coaching promotes action and responsibility on the part of the coachee. Thus, the missionaries can let go of the need to be the expert in every area and focus on helping each new leader set goals and develop according to their strengths. Coaching can be less time consuming, following a clear structure for an intervention. Additionally, the training should include positive coaching where missionaries are trained to help potential new leaders think about possibilities and dreams. Through questions drawing out hopeful futures for new leaders, missionaries can help new leaders create individualized plans for their development, in any area. As many panelists confessed, they as the missionaries often felt it was their job to keep the church operating, attending to present tasks rather than future organizational leadership. Training missionaries to be coaches of new leaders invites others to also think about how they can

improve, thus improving the organization as well. These are a few recommendations resulting from the research.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following are some recommendations for future research. First, testing out how the implementation of the leadership training program effectively trained new leaders would provide outcome research supporting the use of the program. Many of the themes that the panel endorsed generated wisdom from practice or failed attempts at developing leaders. Many suggested that having an intentional plan would better develop leaders, but none had empirically tracked their development process in conjunction with a specific training plan. Thus, future research could explore how, for example, positive communication directly contributed to better leadership development. Another area for future examinations would be the process of coaching. In cultures with high power distance, like Latin America, that tend toward hierarchical leadership structures (House, Dorfman, Javidan, et al., 2014), coaching may not be well received culturally. Thus, future investigation could explore how cultural norms affect the coaching practices between leader developers and new leaders.

Considering that this research came from a specific cultural and religious context, it would be interesting to investigate leadership development within other cultural and religious norms and compare the findings. A study like this could further contribute to the transferability of positive leadership scholarship. Positive leadership also does not specify what leadership structure is required. For example, one could practice positive leadership within a shared leadership model or a hierarchical model. Future investigation could explore which model may be more conducive to positive leadership for developing others.

Considering vertical leadership development, future research could explore evidence of how new leaders expanded their mental complexities. Exploring different assessments for evaluating how to determine whether a new leader has developed vertically would help contribute to effective training practices. Reflection was a key finding in the development process. Future research could explore effective reflection models, practices, and settings. Does the setting or method for reflection influence the effectiveness of the practice? Continuing to evaluate best practices in developing leaders through various theoretical and conceptual frameworks within specific contexts will help contribute to better leader development training programs.

Summary

The problem at the center of this research was the lack of understanding of developing leaders for and within a volatile, complex, uncertain, and ambiguous environment (VUCA). The purpose of this qualitative Delphi study was to provide insight for missionary training organizations to develop an effective leadership training program for a VUCA world. Specifically, the Latin American Mission (pseudonym) organization lacks a leader development program and will benefit from the research to help create a new program.

The concept of positive leadership influenced this study. Positive psychology laid the foundation for positive leadership theory, positing that human thriving comes from cultivating positive emotions (Seligman et al., 2005). Positive practices, mindsets, and communication produce positive emotions, which have been shown to enhance human subjective well-being (Cameron et al., 2011). Thus, positive leaders can help others thrive even in difficult circumstances. Vertical leadership development also influenced this study, which posits that adults can continue to develop through expanding mindsets not just skills to aid in leading in a

VUCA world (Jones et al., 2020). Additionally, the practice of coaching and its relevant literature, along with cross-cultural leadership and followership with the intent to respond to calls for more robust leadership development theories and concepts influenced this study (Day, Riggio, Tan, et al., 2021).

The main research question was what type of leader development program does the LAM organization need to implement to effectively train their missionaries to develop church leaders in a VUCA environment? Using a qualitative Delphi method, consensus around leadership development emerged from an expert panel of missionaries within the LAM organization. The findings included discussions of the challenges missionaries faced when working and developing leaders in a VUCA world, implying that a leadership training program should include effective methods for a VUCA environment. According to the findings, those methods and principles could flow from the tenets of positive leadership, which endorses positive practices such as gratitude, psychological safety, positive feedback, and building trusting relationships to create subjective well-being among new leaders (Cameron et al., 2011). Subjective well-being in positive scholarship has seen outcomes of enhance commitment, performance, and resilience within organizations. These implications correspond well to the challenges a VUCA environment presents.

The results also revealed that when challenges arise people must develop new mindsets and practices that are adaptable and flexible to a rapidly changing, complex world. Culture influences leadership structural norms, creating barriers to leader development, necessitating practices that present new perspectives and experiences. Vertical leadership development concepts were positively endorsed, but not fully understood was how to develop vertically through intentional practices. The coaching process was a finding that could aid the vertical

leadership development process, providing space for new leaders to be honest, create goals, discover gifts, and reflect on colliding perspectives.

The study was unique because leadership development was examined within multiple cultures and in two different languages. The findings endorsed the conceptual framework, providing support for the practices of positive leadership, vertical leadership development, and coaching within a non-Western cultural context. Furthermore, the study contributed to the literature of VUCA leadership, exposing the ways VUCA has impacted leadership development within a Latin American church planting context. The result was a few recommendations for the LAM organization and others like it for the creation of a leadership development training program to help existing leaders better understand how to train new leaders for a VUCA environment.

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Appendix A: Effective Leadership Development Questionnaire

Research Question

According to LAM missionaries' experience, what type of leader development program does the LAM organization need to implement to effectively train their missionaries to develop church leaders in a VUCA environment?

Questionnaire

1. What are the most significant challenges you face when developing leaders within the church, especially considering a VUCA context and a post-COVID-19 reality?

2. In your opinion, what are the most significant impediments to followers becoming leaders? Can you give an example?

3. What practices have you found useful in creating a supportive and empathetic atmosphere? Tell a story of how you have seen those practices work.

4. In what ways are mistakes and failures discussed within the church?

5. How does your church connect individual growth and development to the success of the mission of the church?

6. How do you identify potential church leaders to development? What are the criteria you use?

7. In what ways do you and your church members provide feedback for areas of personal or organizational improvement within the church?

8. What methods have you found useful to help people recognize their strengths and limitations?

9. In what ways do you encourage people to see and shape their personal development path?

10. In what ways have you used or seen encouragement, gratitude, or respect displayed among your member, specifically between you and your potential leaders?

11. In what ways have you connected the church's purpose and mission with the strengths and development of the potential leaders?

12. What is the one thing you believe would make the biggest difference in your church's ability to develop leaders more deeply and more effectively?

13. What would you and your church need to start doing in order for this to occur?

14. What are you or your church doing instead of those things that are inhibiting change from occurring?

15. From your point of view, what is driving those inhibiting behaviors and actions? Are there specific underlying beliefs, commitments, or values that cause those inhibiting behaviors to occur within your church?

Appendix B: 55 Aggregated Statements for Round 2 Survey

1. Developing leaders is challenging due to rapidly changing economic situations that limit the time and financial resources for potential leaders to engage in development.

2. Developing leaders is difficult because of the uncertainty of a potential leader's commitment to the church.

3. Developing leaders is challenging because of the uncertainty of a potential leader's motivation.

4. Developing leaders is challenging in a Latin culture because most people are conditioned to following and not leading.

5. Developing leaders is challenging in the Latin culture because socioeconomic and educational status often determines the perception of who can lead.

6. Developing leaders is complex due to the missionaries' time and energy commitments to other aspects of the church.

7. Developing leaders is challenging when the potential leader has unsupportive family, work, or peer environment.

8. Developing leaders is challenging when there are unclear or ambiguous expectations and definitions of leadership between the developer and the follower.

9. Developing leaders is challenging because there is often a misalignment with leadership structures introduced by the missionaries and the cultural norms.

10. Developing leaders requires a supportive and empathic environment where trust, openness, and honesty are the norm.

11. Supportive and emphatic environments are formed in small, relational groups.

12. Missionaries must model empathy and vulnerability to create a supportive environment in which leaders can develop.

13. A safe space to share and reflect on failures and mistakes helps leaders learn and grow, giving opportunities to practice leading without fear or shame.

14. Clearly communicating how individual development contributes and connects with the church's mission motivates people to engage in development.

15. Creating a mindset of a common purpose helps connect personal development with the church's mission.

16. Personal development happens in a community where each member influences the growth of the other.

17. Connecting personal development to the church's mission means identifying how one's gifts contribute to the mission.

18. Personal development and the church's mission are separate concepts that do not connect.

19. Identifying leaders happens through observing behaviors and spending time with potential leaders.

20. Potential leaders are committed, active members that love the church.

21. Potential leaders are recognized by others in the church.

22. Potential leaders have positive feelings toward serving the church.

23. A desire to learn and willingness to serve are important criteria for potential.

24. Giving feedback to developing leaders requires trusting relationships.

25. Feedback must be communicated as growth areas and not meant for humiliation or degradation.

26. Those receiving feedback need time to reflect and respond to it.

27. Those providing feedback need to follow up and encourage those receiving it to create new solutions together.

28. An atmosphere of acceptance, encouragement, and positivity is necessary when providing feedback.

29. Leadership development in the church requires feedback processes, either formal or informal.

30. Recognizing strengths and limitations requires spending time with people.

31. To develop strengths in others, the developers must observe and name the strengths.

32. Discovery of strengths and limitations requires members to practice and participate in many areas of the church ministry.

33. Learning about ourselves through reflection on experiences and new knowledge helps one discover strengths and limitations.

34. Creating a mindset through communicating that all have strengths that are valuable to the church encourages discovery of strengths and limitations.

35. Building trusting relationships is necessary to encourage a person to engage in the development process.

36. Active listening, asking reflective questions, and providing space for reflection encourages the members to take ownership of their development.

37. Leaders must model and demonstrate their personal development.

38. Helping people set personal development goals and casting a vision of their potential future self inspires ongoing development.

39. Ongoing mentoring and encouragement are crucial in keeping people motivated toward personal growth.

40. Public expressions of gratitude, respect, and encouragement foster positive environments for people to grow.

41. Leaders must model gratitude, respect, and encouragement for others to imitate.

42. Leaders need to develop a specific plan to enact gratitude, respect, and encouragement happens among the church.

43. Different cultures have different preferred ways to express gratitude; leaders must explore what is most effective.

44. Clearly communicating a unified mission and keeping in front of the church is important in helping people recognize how their gifts connect with the mission.

45. Recognizing each person's gift and its role in the mission helps motivate people to participate.

46. Effective leader development requires a designated person to focus on developing leaders.

47. An effective development plan uses experience, Biblical training, interaction with other Christian leaders outside the congregation, and case studies.

48. Effective leader development requires an intentional plan that can be simple and adaptable to respond to rapid changes.

49. Effective leader development requires the developer to trust and support the potential leader with assigned tasks.

50. Effective leader development invites potential leaders to participate in leadership tasks earlier in their formation process, giving opportunities to experiment in different areas of ministry.

51. Effective leader development is having potential leaders' study in a Bible institute or seminary.

52. Effective leader development means trainers spend more time with the potential leaders not only in ministry activities but also in other areas of life.

53. Effective leader development places the potential leaders in a supportive community that includes other leaders in training and mentors, providing a safe space to learn from their experiences.

54. To effectively train new leaders, the trainers must focus on seeing the potential of the new leaders and be motivated to help them discover that potential.

55. Trainers must let go of control to give opportunities for new leaders to experiment, giving the chance to learn from failure or success.

Appendix C: Data Sample

Q18 - 18. Personal development and the church's mission are separate concepts that do

not connect.
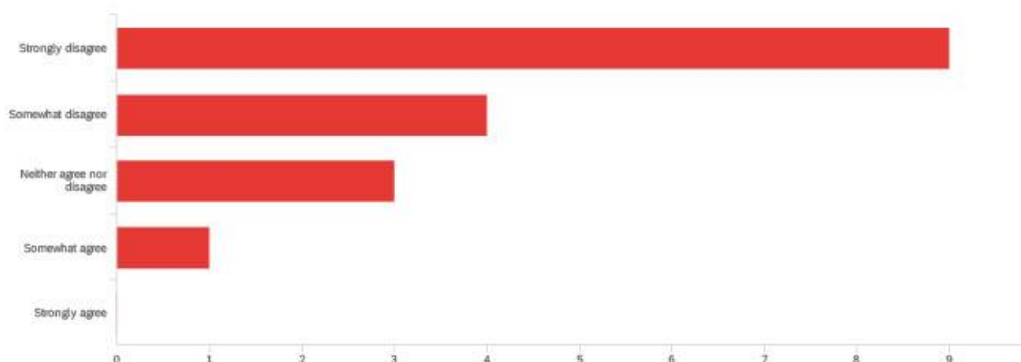
Additional Comments:

Al menos que el desarrollo personal tenga que ver en el área espiritual, (una maestría, un doctorado) si se conectan, si fuera algo secular, habría que analizar

creo que si conectan apesar esto no excluye a los que no tienen un conocimiento intelectual, se debe estimular a los futros lideres estudiar carreras que contribuyan en su caminar con Cristo, (medico. maestros.)

There is a connection. It doesn't have to be a direct one. Investing in the development of individuals in the church will affect the outcome of the mission.

I think that the connection between the church´s mission and each person´s growth as a disciple is key to be able to work as a church body in a healthy way.

#	Field		Choice Count
1	Strongly disagree	52.94%	9
2	Somewhat disagree	23.53%	4
3	Neither agree nor disagree	17.65%	3
4	Somewhat agree	5.88%	1
5	Strongly agree	0.00%	0
			17

Showing rows 1 - 6 of 6

Appendix D: Informed Consent and Recruitment Materials

> **Introduction:** Effective Leader Development within a Church-planting Organization for a Changing and Chaotic World

You may be able to take part in a research study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you as a potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask the researcher any questions that you may have about the study. You can ask about research activities and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop your participation at any time and for any reason without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION: The purpose of this research is to provide insight for missionary training organizations to develop an effective leadership training program for rapidly changing, complex, uncertain, and confusing contents. Specifically, the researcher desires to gain information from your experience in developing leaders within the church-planting process. The goal is to compile collective wisdom and agreement on best practices in leadership development to create an informed and useful leader development training program. Your expertise will help provide pertinent information for building a new training program.

If selected for participation, you will be asked to participate in the following procedures. Provide written responses to a 15-question survey within one week after you receive it. Your response will be kept anonymous to the other participants. After all participant responses are collected, you will receive another survey with statements drawn from the responses and respond on a scale your level of agreement. You can also provide comments as to your response. After all panelists respond, you will receive a final list of the statements and respond one more time with your level of agreement. The total duration of the study will take just a few hours of the course of four weeks.

RISKS & BENEFITS: There are minimal risks, either social or professional, with your participation in this study. However, all studies have a risk of breach of confidentiality.
There are potential benefits to participating in this study. Such benefits may include the collected wisdom and ideas from colleagues that could aid your work in developing leaders within your churches. The researchers cannot guarantee that you will experience any personal benefits from participating in this study.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY: Any information you provide will be confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the ACU Institutional Review Board. Your confidentiality will be protected by assigning a pseudonym to your survey responses, storing your personal information within a private access Microsoft Excel, and no face-to-face interaction with the researcher or other participants will take place.
The survey tool is called Qualtrics, and the researcher will be the only person to have access to your information. The primary risk with this study is breach of confidentiality in Qualtrics.

However, we have taken steps to minimize this risk. We will not be collecting any personal identification data during the survey beyond your name, email, nationality, and country of service. However, Qualtrics may collect information from your computer. You may read their privacy statements here: https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/

CONTACTS: If you have questions about the research study, the lead researcher is Jeremy Davis and may be contacted at (xxx)xxx-xxxx, xxxxx@acu.edu, and/or xxxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxxxx, xx xxxxx. If you are unable to reach the lead researcher, or wish to speak to someone other than the lead researcher, you may contact Dr. Jim Adams, xxxxxx@acu.edu, (xxx)xxx-xxxx. If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Executive Director of Research, Qi Hang, at xxxxxx@acu.edu.

Consent Signature Section

For electronic consent to complete an online survey: Please click the button below if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Click only after you have read all of the information provided and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. If you wish to have a copy of this consent form, you may print it now. You do not waive any legal rights by consenting to this study.

Email recruitment text

Good afternoon,

My name is Jeremy Davis, and I work with Great Cities Missions. You were referred to me by some of our GCM staff. I am conducting a study related to my dissertation investigating leadership development. Below are the details of the study.
You have been selected to participate in a research study as a panelist to provide your expertise and experience with developing leaders in a church-planting missionary context, specifically in a chaotic and changing world. In this study, you will complete a 15-question survey to share your experience and expertise on the topic. You will have one week to complete the 15-question survey and should take around 1-2 hours, you will have the ability to save your progress and do not have to complete all the questions at one time.

After you respond, you will interact with other panelists by responding to a list of statements that represent ideas from the collected responses of the panelist. This second round survey will take no more than one hour. Your interaction with other panelists will be through written responses only, not face-to-face interaction. Your identity will remain anonymous, allowing you to respond openly and honestly to the compiled statements. You will respond using a 5-point scale rating your level of agreement with each statement. This should take no more than one hour.

After this second round, I will compile the responses and determine the level of consensus from the panel. Then I will send one more 5-point scale survey for you to respond to the revised list of statements. This should take no more than 30 minutes. The goal of the research is to create a leadership training program for missionary training organizations from the collected wisdom of the panelists. I would be honored to have you participate and help provide greater understanding to help current and future missionaries prepare new leaders for our rapidly changing and complex world. If you are interested and willing to participate in this study or unable to do so at this time, please respond to this email.

Thank you!
Cell/Whatsapp: +1 (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: xxxxxx@acu.edu

Whatsapp messenger invitation
Dear, [recruit name],
Would you please consider participating in a study by completing a survey to provide your experience with developing leaders? If yes, can I send you a formal invitation to your email?

Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter

IRB #: IRB-2023-15
Title: Effective Leader Development within a Church-planting Organization for a Changing and Chaotic World
Creation Date: 1-23-2023
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Jeremy Davis
Review Board: ACU IRB
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved

Key Study Contacts