Factors Affecting Effective Leadership - An Empirical Study in Vietnam Logistics Enterprises

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Abstracts

For each organization, leaders are the one who keep the soul, inspire and lead the organization to go up. Leadership is an art, not a duty or an office position. However, not all leaders understand this simple philosophy. Changing leadership and management in an integrated world to build a lasting business or keeping the traditional management to organization is a big question of the owner career. The objective of this study is to investigate the critical factors for effective leadership in small business. The research uses the qualitative method to validate the hypothesis. There are a series questions designed for interview in accordance with the research model. 15 directors of Vietnam Logistics Enterprises have been invited to participate to the interview. The interviews were taken in three rounds and separated of each interview to get the objective result. This research’s result provides 32 categories for 5 domains of this study. Also the result shows the supported result for all 3 of hypothesis of this study as: Traits have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership, Skills have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership and Situation moderate the relationship of Leadership Styles and Effective Leadership. The implication and limitation are also discussed in this research.

Keywords: Leadership, Effective Leadership, Situation Leadership, Vietnam Logistics Enterprises
1. Introduction

A subject that has been of great interest and fascination to mankind is Leadership. It is one of the most researched subjects in the behavioral sciences in which various researchers and different schools of thought have emerged with the aim of understanding what leadership is or what makes a successful leader.

The success of individual careers and the fate of organizations are determined by the effectiveness of leader’s behavior (Lussier and Achua, 2009). Leadership is considered crucial for success, and some researchers have argued that it is the most critical ingredient (Lussier and Achua, 2009). According to Hicks and Gullet (1975), a leader is anyone who directs and controls a group of people to achieve a set purpose. However, a social organization may have many leaders operating at the same time. They may be rivals but they share the various leadership functions of planning, directing, reviewing, and coordinating and so on. Circumstance may cause changes in leadership pattern thus leading to classification of leadership, based on how it is performed (Hicks and Gullet, 1975).

An important distinction is made by some between leadership and management. To manage means to direct, to bring about to accomplish, and to have responsibility for. The functions of management are planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. The successful manager is viewed as someone who achieves results by following the prescribed activities and by maintaining behaviors and products within prescribed limits. To lead, however, is to inspire, to influence, and to motivate. Effective leaders inspire others to pursue excellence, to extend themselves and to go beyond their perform job requirements by generating creative ideas. It has been said that managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing (Peter F. Drucker, 1955). This distinction is somewhat overstated, since effective leaders do a lot of managing and effective managers need to lead. But it serves to emphasize an important organizational outcome: the creation of an energetic and highly committed work force that is successfully adapting to the demands of a changing environment and competently producing a viable product or service.

According to logistics capability index by the World Bank assessment is done 2 years 1, Vietnam reached 3.00 in 2012 (compared to 2.96 in 2010) and the national ranking 53/155.

According to experts, there are many reasons for the slow development of its kind in Vietnam logistics, which, significantly to the "bottleneck" in traffic, ports, lack of transport connecting multiple methods. Back in 2006, there were only a few harbors were equipped with modern cargo handling equipment while most still use conventional devices with outdated technology. Average yield unloading synthesis in Vietnam is only about 50-60% average yield compared with the advanced port in the region. Cost of logistic services in our
country is quite high, about 25% of GDP, while in some countries it is only 9-15% of GDP. This fact makes it very difficult for domestic enterprises to compete with foreign firms.

Another cause of utmost importance affecting the development of the logistics industry is the lack of research and development of logistics and supply chain at every level (businesses, associations and state); lack of professional standards, assessment standards and criteria for measuring ... In addition, sentiment application of modern management principles, small production, lack of investment in information technology, narrow vision, compete mainly on price ... is the major barrier to the development develop human resources for the development of logistics industry.

According to statistics, the annual cargo throughput at the port of Haiphong record increase, exceeding forecasts, is one of the first regions in the country with 35 DN port terminal operators with a total length of quays more 10.5 km, accounting for a quarter of the country wharf length. System unloading equipment at ports in the front row at the world, such as cranes staging at Hai Phong Port QC with a lifting capacity of 50 tons or more, the system derrick cranes lifting capacity of 40 tons at the port and the types of modern forklift, unloading nearly 110 tons / day. But now, the port system in Haiphong is accumulating more serious problems, such as sediment fairways substandard design, ships out in difficulty, to convey or damage on the economy and loss maritime safety. The dredging deep-standard threaded ports (-7.2m), the ship will be in a thousand tons of easy, reducing the density of traffic and operation of the port.

The above issues require Haiphong have specific solutions in order to boost the leadership effectiveness for investors, managers and operators to overcome the shortcomings related to the development of ports maritime and logistics services to ensure the fullest capacity entire transport system in the service of the port. Thus, it is an urgent need to accelerate research in leadership.

The objective of the study is as follows:
1) Review the critical factors for effective leadership in an organization
2) Identify idiosyncrasies that are unique to logistic business in Vietnam
3) Construct a research model and associated hypotheses
4) Validate the hypotheses with qualitative method

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Leadership

The word “leadership” has been used in at least three different ways. Occasionally it refers to a position within an organization. “Leadership” has also been used to describe a personality characteristic. Neither of these definitions is very useful in studying organizational behavior, and a better definition is needed to understand why some individuals

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are more effective leaders than others. The third definition of leadership suggests a form of behavior by which one person influences others. In other words, leadership is the *incremental influence* which one individual exerts over another, above and beyond mechanical compliance with routine directives. Although leaders may use force or coercion to influence the behavior of followers, leaders by our definition use their ability to induce voluntary committee. By this definition, anyone in the organization can be a leader, whether or not that individual is formally identified as such. Indeed, informal leaders are extremely important to the effectiveness of most organizations.

Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes (Rost, 1993, p. 102). Influencing is the process of leader communicating ideas, gaining acceptance of the motivating followers to support and implement the ideas through change (Lussier and Achua, 2009). According to Rost (1993), leadership must include four essential elements. First of all, the relationship is based on *the influence* that is defined as using persuasion to have an impact on other people in a relationship. The influence relationship is multidirectional and non-coercive. The second essential element flowing from the definition of leadership is that the people involved in this relationship are leaders and followers. They intend real changes and develop mutual purposes to purchase the organization’s objectives. (Rost, 1993; Griffin, 2012; Yukl, 2010; Durbin, 2007; and Lusier and Achua, 2009).

Griffin (2012) defines leadership as a process that focuses on shaping or influencing people to obtain organizational goals. Hitt, Black & Porter (2009) define organizational leadership as an interpersonal process that involves attempting to influence other people to attain a goal. As so many different definitions of leadership forming from different perspectives, Yukl (2010) summarizes that leadership is commonly understood as a process of using influence and motivation to encourage participation in achieving group or organizational success. Leadership effectiveness, on the other hand, refers to ‘the extent to which the leadership brings about group or organizational success’ (Kotze & Venter 2011, p403). According to McColl-kennedy & Anderson (2002), leadership is a process, whereas leadership effectiveness is a result.

There are three fundamental components of leadership process including the leaders' personality or traits, the followers' perception of leaders and the situations that those interactions take place (Hitt, et al 2009). Leadership is a rational process between leaders and followers, and is molded by the situation (Fiedler & Chemers 1974).

### 2.2 Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership effectiveness has been a core topic in leadership research (Bass, 2008). Leadership, by definition, implies that a leader influences one or more followers (Yukl & Van
Fleet, 1992), and leader affect (i.e., moods and emotions) may be a key issue in understanding how leaders influence their followers and why leaders with equal skills and competences sometimes succeed and sometimes fail (George & Bettenhausen, 1990). The effects of leader affect on their followers are not fully uncovered yet, but critical to understand (Sy, et al., 2005). Humphrey (2002) has argued that a key leadership function is to manage the affect of followers, and that this is one of the main ways in which leaders influence performance. Thus, affect is a core issue within leadership, but unfortunately also one where our understanding is least developed. The most important criterion for leadership effectiveness is typically understood to be follower performance (Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008), and our goal in the current study is to contribute to the development of our understanding of the role of affect in leadership effectiveness by zooming in on what arguably is a key issue here: the nature of the task.

Leadership effectiveness has been defined as how well a leader functions (Cherulnik et al., 2001) effective when this leader benefits to the organization as well as the followers. Following this definition, examples of effective leadership are generating profit for the organization, motivating followers-being, and maintaining a good reputation of the organization.

2.3 Leadership in Logistic Business

Previous studies have shown that leader influences leadership effectiveness (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Gaddis, Connelly, & Mumford, 2004). However, the specific direction of this influence remains unclear. Both positive and negative affect have been shown to increase and decrease leadership effectiveness. We propose that this ambiguity is due to the fact that the effectiveness of leader affective displays is contingent on the kind of task that has to be performed by the followers. Our studies integrate different lines of research, with the aim to contribute valuable new insights on leader and leadership effectiveness to the existing literature. Another aim of the present studies is to test the relationship of style behaviour to effective leadership.

According to Perry (2001) and Beaver (2003), poor leadership practices in logistic businesses are the cause of many business failures. Gordon and Yukl (2004) advocated more research on leadership skills relevant to turbulent small business environments. Beaver (2003) examined records from 200 bankrupt of businesses, from which he concluded that the primary failure of the organizations was a lack of leadership knowledge and neglect by management. Leadership style is critical to the success of a small logistic business. Pellerin (2007) indicated the failure rate for small businesses is extremely high, and discovered the failure rate of small business after the third year is 62%; although, the Pellerin study did not address management incompetence. Ninety percent of small businesses fail in the first 10 years of existence.
(Scheers and Radipere, 2007). Scheers and Radipere (2007) said that small business failures were caused by poor leadership and management skills.

2.4 Research Model and Hypotheses

2.4.1 Research model

![Figure 2.2 Research Framework](image).

2.4.2 Hypotheses

H1: Traits has impact on Leadership Styles and both is the source of Effective Leadership
H2: Skills has impact on Leadership Styles and both is the source of Effective Leadership
H3 Situation moderate the relationship of Leadership Styles and Effective Leadership
H4: Leadership Styles has impact on Effective Leadership

3. Methodology

In the framework of this research, the author would like to apply the qualitative method for validate the relationship between effective leadership and its antecedents.

This qualitative study used semi-structured key informant interviews with managers in logistic business in Haiphong, Vietnam. This methodology was chosen because it allowed us to examine their self-described behaviours and practices, their experiences as leader, and their perceptions of leadership. Our approach was to identify managers who were enacting significant changes within their communities and beyond, with an understanding that creating effectiveness of leadership involves the ability to exert significant influence over others, which is central to leadership. We therefore identified participant based on their actions and impact, so that their leadership characteristics and behaviours would emerge from the data rather than being influenced by a definition of leadership that was based on these factors.

There are 5 main sections of question as describe in the table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traits leadership</td>
<td>I would like to hear your stories about what lead you to do the work you are doing, what are most important traits that help you to be good leader and drive your company to achieve the objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill leadership</td>
<td>What kind of skills do you think a leader like you needs to have to make your companies work well? And could you please tell me what is most important? Do you provide the follower step by step instructions and try to reduce his fear of making mistakes? Could you please give an example about this situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership style</td>
<td>When you give someone task do you often encourage questions and discuss details with them</td>
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Table 1: Interview Question

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apart from explaining the ‘why’ part of task execution?
Do you think the appropriate behaviour would be combination of two way communication and supportive behaviour? So the leader’s major role is supporting and encouraging. Are the collaborative aspects of the task emphasized?
Do you think that the appropriate leader behaviour should be encouraging autonomy, avoiding micro-management, listening, providing resources and encouraging risk taking to make leadership effective?
As a good leader, your leadership style changes according to the followers’ knowledge and skills in a given task. Do you think it is a good idea?
Do you think one leader should be able to place less or more emphasis on the task, depending on what is needed to get the job done successfully?
There are many ways to define effectiveness, and many different yardsticks to measure it by.
How do you define effective leadership in terms of your work? Describe as best you can anything that has helped you become successful, by your own definition.

Situation leadership

Effective leadership

In-person interviews lasted approximately an hour. Almost all of the interviews were conducted by two of a team of three interviewers, which was helpful to process the non-verbal aspects of the interview to aid in interpretation. Each interviewer took careful notes in addition to tape-recording the interview to ensure accuracy. The interviews were discussed immediately following to ensure that there was consistently and clarity between the interviewers' interpretations. We began each interview with a statement of the purpose of the study and asked for permission from the participants to share their stories. All of the participants gave us permission to share their stories. At the conclusion of the interview, we thanked the participants and provided them with an opportunity to give us feedback and recall any final thoughts. The interviews resulted in transcribed documents averaging about 20 single-spaced pages. An independent transcriptionist was retained to type the interviews. All of the transcribed interviews were reviewed and compared against interview notes to ensure accuracy and consistency. We asked 9 open-ended questions focusing on career history and developmental experiences, past mentoring relationships, and some direct questions about leadership. Appendix A contains the 6 questions related to leadership asked in the interviews.

4. Result Analysis

4.1 Respondent Profiles

As mentioned in chapter three, there are 15 directors who are working in a small businesses were invited to participate in interview. The researchers selected them after setting several criteria for participation and only after completing a lengthy search to confirm that their experience met all criteria. There are 3 rounds interview were setup to collect the final result; the first round of interview was conducted with 10 directors to get the general result. The interviews were recorded and wrote by hand by authors. The second round was finished if the hand writing was send back to interviewee to confirm that it is corrected as their idea. The third round of interview happen after revised result was send to another 5 director to
make the interviews. The final result should be the most common idea of all 15 directors in this study.

4.2 Result and Finding

As suggested by Hill et al. (2005), the primary researcher prepared a presentation to discuss preliminary findings. He recommends presenting the cross-analysis of results through frequency of occurrence in the sample. In this study of 15 participants, categories that occurred for just one participant are labelled Rare. Categories that occurred for two to seven participants are labelled Variant. Categories that occurred for eight to thirteen participants are labelled Typical. If a category had occurred for fourteen or more participants, it would be labelled General.

<table>
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<th>Table 2: Summary of Result</th>
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4.3 Hypothesis testing

For further testing the hypothesise in the chapter 2 to validate the research question and model developed we also as the participant to find if they agree with out hypothesis or not, the result were shown in table 3.

**Traits have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership (H1)**

From the result of hypothesis, as the result in the table 3 shows that there are 15/15 participant agree that the statement of hypothesis 1 that “Traits have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership”. To demonstrate this hypothesis supporting, Take the interview of participant for example

“....there are several other ideas about leadership and leadership style, where different skills come into play. But no matter what is approach, if we show these traits before, we will be better equipped to lead a successful team....”

“...Creating a legal relationship with employees to make it less likely that personal problems and resentment can creep in and ruin the party. When the team know that I empathize with their concerns, they will be more likely to work with me and share in my vision, not foster negative feelings...”

**Skills have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership (H2)**

From the result of hypothesis, as the result in the table 3 shows that there are 15/15 participant agree that the statement of hypothesis 2 that “Skills have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership”. To demonstrate this hypothesis supporting, Take the interview of participant for example
Leadership skills are seen as an important factor in the management field. A good manager can also be a good leader and vice versa. Leaders like the captain of the ship, a good captain will lead the whole wave train passed safely to the terminal…”

“Maintaining confidence, respect for others and always patient. Always use the best abilities and your skills for any job, you will receive the admiration and respect of others because of your honesty…”

“Leadership does not come with the title of Director, Manager or Team Leader. It is a continuous learning process. Ask questions, observe carefully and reassess the use of your resources on a regular basis. Using the strength, talent and acumen of yours…”

Situation moderate the relationship of Leadership Styles and Effective Leadership

From the result of hypothesis, as the result in the table 3 shows that there are 15/15 participant agree that the statement of hypothesis 3 that “Situation moderate the relationship of Leadership Styles and Effective Leadership”. To demonstrate this hypothesis supporting, Take the interview of participant for example.

“…Continuously change management style to suit the development of skills, experience and confidence of staff. If not, employees can not be developed.

Ready to use different management styles for the same person as he can be confident and have the ability to perform a job. A new assignment for him will again require a different management style.

Always done with the goal of management is to help your employees develop skills and increase independence more.

Situational leadership has become a common approach and become effective leadership skills by it up to the difference between the employee. Learn how to approach this, your work will be smoother because your employees will learn to govern themselves...

Leadership Styles has impact on Effective Leadership

From the result of hypothesis, as the result in the table 4.4 shows that there are 15/15 participant agree that the statement of hypothesis 4 that “Leadership Styles has impact on Effective Leadership”. To demonstrate this hypothesis supporting, Take the interview of participant for example.

Leadership is the ability to persuade and influence on others to accomplish desired goals. In other words, the natural leader of the humanity and aimed to "people" to connect them into a team and motivate them toward desired goals. There are two types of leaders and informal leaders of the unofficial leaders. Formal leader is a leader with real power. The real leader has the right to be the leader and administrator role in an organization, be given powers and functions behaviour on others to carry out a planned work. The unofficial leader known as the natural leader who is endowed with style so attractive to others. But they have no formal
authority to dictate, but their words have value, others listen and perform. These natural leaders are often admired by others as an exemplary witness of the organization and implementation of the lives of individuals and society.

Table 3: Hypothesis Result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Describe</th>
<th>Frequency (N)</th>
<th>Participant responds</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Traits have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Supported</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Effective Leadership Skills have impact on Leadership Styles and both</td>
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<td>are the source of Effective Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Supported</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Situation moderate the relationship of Leadership Styles and Effective</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Leadership Styles have impact on Effective Leadership</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Supported</td>
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<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Supported</td>
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5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Research summary

The objective of this study is to investigate the critical factors for effective leadership in small business. The research uses the qualitative method to validate the hypothesis. There are a series questions have designed for interview which accordant with the research model. 15 directors of small businesses have been invited to participate to the interview. The interviews were taken in three rounds and separated of each interview to get the objective result. This research’s result provides 32 categories for 5 domain of this study. Also the result shows the supported result for all 3 of hypothesis of this study.

5.2 Conclusion

From the result of hypothesis, as the result in the table 4.4 shows that there are 15/15 participants agree that the statement of hypothesis 1 that “Traits have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership”. As Hitt et al. (2009) stated that there are three fundamental components of leadership process including the leaders’ personality or trait, the followers’ perception of leaders and the situations that those interactions take place.

From the result of hypothesis, as the result in the table 4.4 shows that there are 15/15 participants agree that the statement of hypothesis 2 that “Skills have impact on Leadership Styles and both are the source of Effective Leadership”. This result is consistent with the research of Outcalt et al. (2000) when they concluded that the leadership skill may lead to leadership effectiveness in different situations.

From the result of hypothesis, as the result in the table 4.4 shows that there are 15/15 participants agree that the statement of hypothesis 3 that “Situations moderate the relationship of Leadership Styles and Effective Leadership”. This result demonstrates others studies on leader affect specifically showed that leader display of positive affect result in higher
followers ratings of leadership effectiveness (Bono and Llifes, 2006; Gaddis et al., 2004). Likewise, negative leader affective displays have been shown to decrease both followers (Lewis, 2000) and followers’ performance (Johnson, 2009).

From the result of hypothesis, as the result in the table 4.4 shows that there are 15/15 participant agree that the statement of hypothesis 4 that “Leadership Styles have impact on Effective Leadership”. Since Leadership is an official position is given by superiors and be recognized at the lower levels. According to two professors John French and Bertram Raven in ”The Bases of Social Power” (1960), defined as people with rights under the inducement to work and behave in accordance with the organization’s plan. Leader is aiming to "work" rather than "people". Leaders are people assigned the coordination and cooperation for enforcement.

5.3 Research Implications

5.3.1 Academic Implications

From the results of this research, there are some academic implications to be discussed. Firstly, this research adds seven traits of leadership and 6 skills to be the good leadership of Vietnamese small businesses. As discussed in the literature review these results were not in agreement with the expectations of trait theory because the leaders ought to have the same tasks assigned. In recent years, with the neglect of those discrediting trait theories, leadership theory and researches have changed to other framework and approaches. Though this may sound unfortunate, however, it may be said that universal leadership trait does not exist; some evidences suggest that different traits may lead to leadership effectiveness in different situations (Outcalt et al., 2000). Secondly, this research shows the 4 styles of leadership and 12 categories. This result also contributes to the realm of leadership behaviour with a study on Vietnamese small business style. As Griffin (2012) defined, leadership style is the way that focuses on shaping or influencing people to obtain organizational goals. Finally, the result shows the hypothesis supporting of this study that add the theories about of leadership in Vietnamese literatures since the Human resource management as well as organization behaviour topic still limited (Anh, Vinh, Trang, 2012).

5.3.2 Managerial Implication

This research result will be the good material for leaders in Vietnam to apply to their daily work. Management is a ministry, but it is also the task. When people are promoted to a management position, it means that they will begin to be exposed to a new environment: the environment of relationships to promote the fulfilment of the goal. This study gives managers the knowledge, skills and intellectual depth with multi-dimensional perspective of the relationship among variables. This research also provides methods to understand people, to handle all situations, negotiations and human support during the job done as well as in
everyday life. For each organization, the leader who keeps the soul, inspire and lead the organization to go up. Leadership is an art, not a duty or an office chair. But simple philosophy that leaders are not always understood. Changing leadership and management in an integrated world to build a lasting business or keeping the traditional management to your organization is a big question for any business. This research expects to change perceptions of leadership and management in order to enhance the ability to develop a strategy for the organization, administration and ability to motivate employees to contribute to the improvement of the efficiency of the company’s operations.

5.4 Research Limitation and Future Suggestion

Limitations to this study include restricted boundaries to external and internal validity. The lack of external validity is the inability to generalize the findings of this study to other groups, populations, or individuals because the results represent only the words and experiences of the study’s participants. Because it is never a goal of qualitative methods to state objective truths within a phenomenon, or to generalize the results (Hoyt & Bhati, 2007), the findings of this study are limited in application to the participants studied. Therefore, future studies, as discussed below, are needed to confirm or disconfirm the initial findings of this study. Another limitation to this study involves the concept of internal validity. The stability and reliability of the results of this study could have been increased had the participants been involved in verifying the data analysis for accuracy of their intentions. Participant verification was not used in this study’s research process. Involving participants in the data analysis process could strengthen future qualitative research of the.

In addition, another limitation of this study involves potential interviewer bias. Although strong measures were taken to avoid clouding the data collection and analysis, it is likely that some aspects of the personalities of the researchers may influence the research process. One aspect to consider is the interview protocol, perhaps the interviewer’s biases prevented the participants from responding to the best questions on the research topic. All of these limitations are aspects for consideration and caution in future research.

References


