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**LEVERAGING HUMAN CAPITAL FOR ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS: A
MULTI-CASE ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL JAMAICAN COMPANIES.**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Sunderland for the
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Abstract

The advent of globalization has led to heightened levels of competition and an ever-increasing need to identify more effective sources of competitive advantage. Currently, the variables that determine global competitiveness are more focused on service, innovation, speed and customization. Additionally, with greater access to capital and a preponderance of readily available technology for businesses of all sizes and scope, firms have to dig much deeper to find a way to distinguish themselves from their competitors. This search has led organizations to look inwardly at their strengths, and to examine the firm's intangible resources such as Human Capital; which has the potential to offer a strategic advantage and can be exploited to capitalize on available opportunities.

Against this background, the purpose of this research is to explore the concept of Human Capital and how it can be leveraged for organizational competitiveness. The study employs qualitative methodology with a triangulated approach to data collection and data analysis to effectively explore how Human Capital has been strategically leveraged in a select set of top-performing companies in Jamaica that have remained competitively strong. Further, the study examines how human capital development is operationalized across each dimension of human capital to improve competitive advantage. The research is anchored on a strong theoretical foundation based on Human Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View of the Firm. Qualitative Data Analysis is applied using the NVIVO software to conduct a Thematic Factor Analysis as well as a Cross-case Analysis to identify main strategic initiatives and operational activities which can be used to develop an Integrated Human Capital Development (HCD) Framework and a model for Human Capital Development to drive organizational competitiveness.

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Chapter One - Introduction

Background/Historical Context

The advent of globalization has led to increased international competition and a compelling need for organizations to identify more effective sources of competitive advantage. The variables which now drive global competitiveness are more focused on service, innovation, speed and customized products (Ginting, 2020; Al-Tit et al., 2020; Ismail and Al-Ass'ad, 2020). The challenges modern businesses face in light of the intangibles of e-commerce, the Internet of Things and the interconnectivity of a globalized world, necessitate increased organizational intelligence and a shift in strategic purpose in response to changing competitive imperatives and market dynamics. Traditional areas of value like product quality are just not enough to constitute a strategy that will, on its own, allow organizations to thrive in an environment of rapid shifts (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019).

When examined through historical lenses, the move from the first (1st) Industrial Revolution in the mid-1700s to the emergence of the fourth (4th) Industrial Revolution in the millennia of the 2000s has been indicative of a pendulum swing; from the early era of Mechanization, Mass Production to IT Systems, Robotics and more recently to Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Technology, 3D Printing and Genetic Engineering (Prisecaru P., 2016; Schwab, 2017; Xu et al., 2018). According to Schwab and Davis, 2018, these technological advancements create significant value for customers and heighten competition. “The technology frontier is expanding quickly, with recent breakthroughs in self-learning, artificial intelligence and a rising amount of data...small and remote players can disrupt the status quo” (Schwab and Davis, 2018, p.3). The level and pace of the technological changes of the Fourth Industrial

Revolution have arguably created massive significant shifts in knowledge, power and ultimately, wealth.

It is therefore no surprise that the traditional view that plant and machinery are the most valuable assets, has long since been replaced with the now widely accepted view that people are undoubtedly an organization's greatest and most valuable asset, especially in today's 21st century knowledge economy. In fact, businesses today are forced to change the way they operate due to the significant impact of Disruptive Technology (a term coined by Bower and Christensen in 1995); which radically changes the way whole industries operate, causing well established products to be displaced almost overnight. Consequently, companies that are slow to change will undoubtedly lose market share, become competitively inferior and irrelevant, according to (Schuessler and Nagy, 2014). In fact, survival in an extremely uncertain environment is to a great extent dependent on an organization's ability to adapt and innovate (Sun et al., 2020). So, while the pace and disruptiveness of these technological changes are creating unprecedented opportunities, they also pose significant challenges. These emerging technologies have immense potential to be a source of growth, but their future is uncertain for companies that do not possess the skills and expertise needed to fully take advantage of these opportunities whilst mitigating the risks.

Consequently, firms need to dig much deeper in their search to find a way to innovate and thereby distinguish themselves from their competitors in the market in order to stay at the top of their industries. This search has led organizations to look inwardly at their strengths and to examine the resources available to the organizations which can be exploited, to take advantage of possible opportunities. These internal resources are both tangible to include traditional types such as land and equipment; but also include intangibles such as an organization's reputation,

brand and human capital. Quite noteworthy is the fact that more and more scholars and practitioners agree, that in order to adequately respond to the needs of a dynamic global environment; the key lies in the quality of the people resource of an organization as a significant source of competitive advantage (Sikora et al., 2014).

Importantly, over the last few decades, there have been a number of studies that point to the increasing connection between the development of human capital and a firm's ability to achieve and maintain competitive advantage (Noe et al., 2015; Boxall, 2003; Barney, 2002; Youndt et al., 2004; Choudhury and Mishra 2010; Diaz-Fernandez et. Al., 2017; Ginting, 2020). Additionally, several of the more recently done studies show that specific attributes of human capital like learning and development, know-how skills and expertise are key influencers on the firm's competitive performance in this technological age (Keshavarz et al., 2018; Latilla et al., 2018; Awamleh and Ertugan, 2021; Soltania and Zareie, 2020; Ginting, 2020; Lu et al., 2021). Arguably, this is because the power of an organization's people-resource lies in its ability to convert inputs into output by adding creativity, ingenuity and entrepreneurship. Therefore, in order to achieve sustained competitive advantage, organizations will need to acquire and effectively use areas of distinctive resources that are difficult for competitors to imitate (Wheelen et al., 2018; Awamleh, 2019).

Based on the aforementioned issues, the researcher questions whether the same conventional approach to people management can take organizations successfully through the fourth (4th) Industrial Revolution. Is there a need for new skills, competencies and expertise that can innovate and exploit the latest technology to create and improve value? Should organizations employ more knowledge-based strategies to build the intellectual capacity of human capital and enhance the dynamic capabilities of the organization to drive innovation and competitiveness?

Statement of a Problem

Having raised these questions, the researcher contends that there is an undeniable quest for competitive advantage through people, which has fueled the demand for knowledgeable workers and for organizations to develop a culture of learning. Early theorists like Wernerfelt, (1984) almost prophetically pointed to the strategic nexus between organizational capability and resource capability; which lies latent as the intellectual capital of the people resource of a firm (Ting et al., 2020). Strategic success is therefore linked to the development of the human capital within the firm. This is predicated on the resource-based view of the firm, as a critical component in the company's business strategy; and is contingent on finding a balance between the exploitation of existing resources and the development of new resource (Wheelen et al., 2018).

Within the Jamaican context, there has been a noticeable trend towards the development of human capital and a focus on building a knowledge economy at both the macro and micro level. In an article in the Gleaner Newspaper on October 10, 2018, titled "*PM wants Greater Human Capital Development*" (2018), Prime Minister Andrew Holness emphasized the Jamaican government's commitment to Human Capital Development (HCD), further indicating the country's push to be among the first cohort measured on World Bank's Human Capital Development Index. Jamaica's commitment to human capital development is clearly articulated in the country's Vision 2030 Plan. "Vision 2030 Jamaica is a strategic road map to guide the country to achieve its goals of sustainable development and prosperity by 2030" (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2010, para. 1). The plan has four main goals, and the empowerment of our human capital is one of those four goals. The government has also gone through a period of rationalization to repurpose Jamaica's National Training Agency (HEART/Trust NSTA) as

Jamaica's human capital development agency; with the mandate to develop a highly skilled and certified labour force to meet the needs of the local and global market place (JIS Newsletter, 2019).

In fact, the Jamaican Stock Exchange, which was named '*the best performing Stock Exchange in the world*' for two (2) consecutive years (Regan, 2019). Interestingly, the Jamaica Stock Exchange credits much of its success to the use of multiple knowledge-based strategies which include the establishment of an E-campus in 2010; as a key strategic move to build the knowledge stock of Jamaican companies and facilitate lifelong learning (JSE Website, 2020). Quite noticeable also, is the fact that, among the best performing private sector companies in Jamaica, is a trend towards a knowledge-centric, people-focused business strategy to improve competitiveness. Another case from industry, is Jamaica's top-performing Bank, National Commercial Bank (NCB) which placed knowledge management and organizational learning at the 'heart' of its strategic focus.

NCB's commitment towards people-focused strategies is embedded in its culture of learning. Interestingly, NCB was the first company in Jamaica to have a Corporate University; and currently, it is the only Jamaican company with a Corporate University that is fully accredited by the University Council of Jamaica, the island's official accreditation body for higher education. Moreover, the bank publishes a comprehensive annual Learning Report as a complementor to its Financial Report; shared each year with its shareholders and other stakeholders. The report outlines an extensive corporate structure devoted to learning and development which is built on, and aligned to, the company's key strategic pillars. According to NCB's Learning Report (2021), the company's five strategic pillars are supported by an advanced learning structure which has Schools of Management devoted to each strategic priority:

(i) School of Leadership and Organizational Development, (ii) School of Wealth Management, (iii) School of Banking Applications and Risk Management, (iv) School of Client Relationship Management and (v) School of Digital Transformation and Analytics.

The company's General Manager made the important point that "the future of the modern workforce is embedded in a culture of continual lifelong learning...and we believe that organizations that embrace and nurture the development of enduring human capabilities will be well positioned to gain and maintain a strategic advantage, (NCB's Annual Learning Report, 2021p. 2). Additionally, the Learning Report provides critical data in the form of learning metrics to measure: percentage of employee training received, percentage increase in job performance as a result of training, and percentage of skills learnt that have been applied on the job; among others. These HC metrics are considered critical to measuring firm performance. While acknowledging that learning was not the only factor, the company's General Manager highlighted: "the positive correlation between the wealth learning strategies and the financial achievements reported in the audited statements as of September 30, 2021. (NCB's Annual Learning Report, 2021, p20).

This emphasis on Human Capital Development as a key strategic tool is also evident in a number of other top-performing companies across multiple industries in Jamaica, to include: tourism, telecommunications, manufacturing and the financial sector; but what does the term 'top-performing' actually mean? Within the context of this study, the term 'top-performing' refers to companies that exhibit a competitive advantage in their industry, in terms of growth, market share, and revenue earnings/profitability. According to Selvam et al, (2016,) three key determinants of firm performance are profitability performance, growth performance and market value performance. Although not the only indicators, Selvam et al (2016, p93) highlighted that

the point that, “superior financial performance ...can be represented by profitability, growth and market value”. These variables are further discussed within the context of each case in Chapter Five (5) of the study.

This thrust towards human capital development for sustained competitive advantage, although not a novelty as a global phenomenon, is just gaining momentum in the Jamaican landscape; and is being positioned by leading organizations as a crucial strategic factor, in the push towards financial and economic sustainability for Jamaica at the macro and micro levels. Despite the momentum, a critical gap remains as many other Jamaican companies have not yet gotten to the point where human capital is viewed and treated as a strategic resource. Hence, the need for further research, specifically within the Jamaican context, to fully explore the approach taken by the more successful companies that have been successfully using HCD strategies to improve performance; as a way to bridge the knowledge and learning gap for other Jamaican companies who have not experienced the same measure of success.

Aim /Purpose of Study

Against this background, the aim of this study is to explore the concept of Human Capital Development (HCD) within an organizational context; by examining how each dimension of HCD can be leveraged to add value and improve competitive advantage. The following themes will be used to frame the study and undergird the central and sub-research questions:

- **THEME 1:** Understanding the Dimension of Human Capital (HC)
- **THEME 2:** Identifying the Strategic Approaches to the Human Capital Development (HCD)
- **THEME 3:** Evaluating the operationalization of HCD Strategies for competitiveness

Motivation for the Study

While there is a preponderance of literature from scholarly work done on the importance of strategic people management to improve organizational intelligence and competitive advantage; there are still research gaps which need to be filled (especially in the Jamaican context). Jamaica has been on a slow but steady transition towards knowledge-based human capital strategies; but for most Jamaican companies Human Resource Management is still a purely reactive administrative function, completely detached from strategy and seen primarily as an expense-driven activity with little value to the bottom-line. However, it is quite noticeable that there is a growing number of Jamaican companies that have embraced the more strategic view of Human Resource Management and by extension Human Capital Development (HCD); and by their own pronouncements, are seeing bigger profits, larger market shares and improved competitive advantage as a result.

Importantly, the researcher's ultimate motivation comes from the fact that there is a real opportunity for this research to make a significant contribution, not only to academia by adding to the body of knowledge that already exists; but to also be used as an agent of transformation; helping Jamaican organizations to improve performance. The benefits to be derived from this research effort are many, to include the building of a HCD model with practical applicability to assist companies improve competitive advantage; as well the future development HCD theory to contribute to body of work which already exists in academia.

Chapter Two - Review of Literature

The previous Chapter provided the historical antecedence to the research as well as the contexts within which the research is framed. In this chapter, the researcher will conduct a review of literature as a critical analysis of the scholarly work which undergirds the larger research area. The review of literature also provides a theoretical base for exploring the concept of human capital development and how companies can gain a competitive advantage through people. Importantly, the Literature Review serves the dual purpose of adding clarity to the research questions while providing a theoretical context within which to conduct the research. The two main theoretical pillars for the research are (i) Human Capital Theory (ii) The Theory of the Resource-Based view of the firm. Additionally, the two main theories are augmented by theories of Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning and Organizational Intelligence; which form the theoretical framework of the study. However, as a necessary first step, the key terminologies will be conceptualized before moving on any further; namely: Human Capital, Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning and Organizational Intelligence.

Conceptualization of Key Terminology

Human Capital (HC)

Originally conceptualized in the 1960s as an idea surrounding the investment in education at the macro level of a nation by theorists such as Becker (1962) and Schultz (1960). Since then, the notion of Human Capital has evolved from being applicable at the national level to being adopted at the organizational level. Human Capital is viewed as one of the most significant forms of wealth by scholars and practitioners alike (Tuncdogan, 2021; Soltani and Zareie, 2020; Klemesh et al.; 2020; Ginting, 2020; Srivastava and Das, 2015; Afiouni, 2009;).

Bontis et al., (1999) define Human capital as the human elements of the organization that are capable of learning, changing and innovating; thereby providing a creative thrust towards organizational sustainability Afiouni (2009, p. 206) describes the concept as “the individual’s knowledge, experiences, capabilities, skills, creativity and innovativeness”; which are interconnected and which collectively contributes to organizational success (Diaz-Fernandez, 2017). Srivastava and Das (2015) proffer a similar definition which describes human capital as a collection of resources in the form of skills, abilities, judgements, experiences and wisdoms which exists individually and collectively in the capacity of people and serves as a form of wealth. As a construct, Human Capital is therefore based on the view that individuals bring intangible assets to the organization based on the individual’s tacit knowledge; which becomes of value to the organization the more that individual’s knowledge is integrated in a Knowledge Management System; as a way to improve organizational performance and competitiveness (Zareie, 2020).

Knowledge Management (KM)

Knowledge is purported to be an interrelation of values, judgement, competencies, capabilities and know-hows (Mahdi et al., 2019 and Mutheveloo et al., 2017). Kim and Lee (2010) describe knowledge as facts, concepts and information which exists in various norms, practices, processes, procedures, as well as in the experience of people. By extension Knowledge Management (KM) is described by Archer-Brown, (2018) as specific strategies and processes which are employed by organizations; focusing on the synergistic integration of the creative capacity of human beings and information processing capacity of the organization to create strategic value and maximize responsiveness and flexibility, of said organization towards the

achievement of sustainable competitive advantage (Sayyadi, 2019; Rajabion et al., 2019; Soltani and Zareie, 2020).

Knowledge Management is therefore concerned with the process of acquiring, integrating, sharing and reconfiguring knowledge...creating new ideas to enhance organizational innovation and problem solving.

Organizational Learning (OL)

Fundamental to any discussion about knowledge management is the concept of organizational learning. According to Soltani and Zareie (2020). Organizational Learning is the process of understanding the learning methods of an organization; by identifying and modifying errors based on distributed knowledge, opinions and attitude of people and groups within the organization; in order to increase novelty, efficacy and competitiveness. Organizational Learning has been conceptualized as an experience driven process which serves as a catalyst towards strategic change in an organization's knowledge base (Bianchil et al., 2021). Yuliansyah (2021, p3.) posits that "while there are differences in the way organizational learning is explained, the emphasis on knowledge is central in all definitions". As such, Organizational Learning requires the constant sharing of knowledge and improvements by all members of the organization, especially since organizational learning and change are inextricably linked (Kucharska and Bedford, 2020).

Organizational Intelligence (OI)

In its simplest form, Intelligence refers to an organization's ability to adapt to change; which according to Kucharska and Bedford (2020) is critical in today's aggressive, complex, and

dynamic business environment. The concept of organizational intelligence can be traced back to the early writings of Willinsky (1967). Since then, several scholars have conducted significant studies in to the subject area with some degree of convergence around its conceptual understanding (Matsuda, 1992; Liebowitz, 1999; Willinsky and Smelser, 2015). Earlier theorists such as Liebowitz (1999) and Matsuda (1992) defined Organizational Intelligence as the set of intelligibilities of an organization which are used to foster common direction; involving complex interactive exchanges between human intelligence and machine intelligence. More contemporary views as posited by Keshvaraz (2018) describes Organizational Intelligence as the composite of organizational knowledge and skills based on the organizations ability to exploit both its tangible and intangible assets; based on its capacity to collect, infer and process data for decision making. It involves the strategic use of human intelligence and artificial intelligence to exploit an organizations knowledge stock. (Keshavarz, 2018). The concept of Organizational Intelligence is closely linked to the concepts of organizational learning and knowledge management; as organizational must be able to manage and exploit knowledge and learning to improve intelligence (Kucharska and Bedford, 2020).

Human Capital Theory

With the current competitive realities of a technology-driven world and burgeoning demand for knowledge workers with new and better skills; it is understandable why an increasing number of organizations are pursuing people-based strategies for competitive advantage. However, this begs the question: why are people important to an organization? Organizations are made up of people, products and services are made for people, and its people who apply their knowledge, skills and expertise to convert raw input into a finished product. This

gives great impetus to the need to understand people as Human Capital (HC) within the firm; with a view to better understand how they create value for the organizations using their ideas, skills, competencies, commitment and effort exhibited; distinctly displayed as intellectual capital.

“The term human capital was first used by the father of modern economics, Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), referring to human intellect as one aspect of capital along with land, labour and monetary capital” (Awamleh et al., 2019). Centuries later, Human Capital (HC) is viewed as one of the most significant forms of wealth by several noteworthy scholars and practitioners. In fact, the CFO Research Institute in 2003 indicated that the estimated value of human capital was in excess of 36% of total revenue. This value supposedly increases for the organization the more that individual knowledge is integrated in a Knowledge Management System; as a way to improve organizational performance and competitiveness (Soltani and Zareie, 2020). While there is growing consensus around the pivotal role of human capital in achieving competitive advantage for organization and wider development of society as an engine of growth; scholars like Sung and Choi (2014) question the effectiveness of human capital especially as it relates to the significant spend on training and development by many organizations. For instance, Sung and Choi, (2014) highlighted data from Paradise and Patel (2009, p. 851) which states that approximately “\$US134 Billion” is spent annually on training and development of employees by American companies. However, while acknowledging that people development is an essential component to human capital management, Sung and Choi (2014) questioned the effectiveness of this significant spend. Sung and Choi, further pointed to the fact that the research findings into the link between the development of Human Capital and Performance is mixed; and is shrouded in some degree of skepticism. Almendarez (2013), argues

that the validity of Human Capital Theory is at times difficult to prove and is supposedly contradictory; further cautioning against the indiscriminate application of Human Capital theory while highlighting the point that there are other variables which should be examined in tandem with Human Capital Theory.

However, Bartlett (2001) suggest that the reason for the skepticism is due to the mixed results in some research findings; based on how the concept of Human Capital is conceptualized and operationalized in various studies. Bartlett (2001) further explained that a more systematic, multi-faceted approach is needed to fully understand the diverse factors of Human Capital Development; which takes into account other factors such as knowledge management, organizational learning and organizational intelligence (Sung and Choi, 2014). Hence, the approach taking by the researcher regarding this study, to also explore these moderating variables (knowledge management, organizational learning and organizational intelligence) as a part of an HCD framework to improve organizational competitiveness.

Notwithstanding the issues raised by Almendarez (2013), and Sung and Choi (2014), a number of research efforts over the last few decades converge at the point that investments in human capital contribute positively to a company's bottom-line, through improved performance and improved competitive advantage. According to Harvard Law School (2020), a 2019 study of 378 U.S. public company boards found that 80% of directors indicated that their boards now spend more time discussing talent strategy than it did five years prior; and 71% of directors indicated that human capital oversight is a focus of full-board meetings on a regular or as needed basis. Interestingly, 85% of directors support investments in employee training and reskilling to secure long term value even if they may not deliver short term returns. This view is shared by several internationally recognized groups which have significant influence over business and

commerce; groups such as: Global Reporting Initiative, the Business RoundTable, Sustainability Standard Board etc. Of key note, is the fact that these groups have identified human capital as a key driver for long term value (Klemesh et al., 2020).

Essentially, Human Capital Theory posits that the people in an organization with their knowledge, skills, experience and expertise; provide an important asset to the organization in the form of human capital. The social interactions, intellectual growth and the cultural context of the organization all help to enrich that capital making it extremely valuable to the organization. The value of human capital is further enhanced because while other resources in a firm like equipment, capital and technology, are easy to replicate; the human capital is not. This is because human capital is unique to each organization and is both socially–complex and culturally specific. The advantage provided to the company is therefore embedded in the firm’s history and culture; based on its complex social relationships, employees’ tacit knowledge and investments in organizational learning (Menguc and Auh, 2006). It is for this reason that human capital can offer an advantage for a company over its rivals; having invested in learning and development of those people resources which the firm possesses; and then appropriately complementing that investment with a Knowledge Management System to harness the power of that investment (Ginting, 2020). By so doing; a firm can create a distinctively unique value-added resource which is rare and very difficult to imitate. Therefore, if companies are organized to take advantage of this valuable, rare and inimitable resource it can create source of sustained competitive advantage as it becomes a learning organization (Wheelen et al., 2018).

Davenport (1999) highlights an important point about human capital management, explaining that when people enter the organization, they bring with them innate abilities, behaviours and personal energy; all of which make up the human capital of the organization.

Importantly, it is the worker who owns the capital and can therefore choose how and when to use it; thereby highlighting a two-way exchange of value as opposed to a one-way exploitation of an asset. The principle of this two-way exchange of value means that workers have choices; and in exercising that choice they decide how much energy, care and ingenuity they will display.

Srivastava and Das (2015) referenced a statement from Bill Gates where he emphasized the value and distinctive competencies of his employees which he credits as key to Microsoft's competitive edge the market; highlighting that his most valuable assets walk out the door every night. This underscores the point that the human capital of any organization has the choice; and they can leave the organization with their intellectual capital, with all the investments made over time. The aim then should be for organizations to create a social and cultural context that fosters organizational learning and intelligence while creating and enhancing organizational citizenship; so that people choose to stay with the organization. Hence the need to understand the different dimensions of human capital and strategically incorporate this understanding in how the organizations manage knowledge, learning and growth. Thereby ensuring that investments in human capital redounds to the benefit of both the individual and the organization; proving an essential source of innovation and strategic renewal (Kamaluddin and Rahman, 2016).

Another interesting perspective through which human capital theory can be viewed is as purported by Tuncdogan, (2021) which examine human capital through its level of impact and efficacy on performance. Tuncdogan (2021) builds on the work of Gerrard and Mockett, (2018) who sought to understand the specific structure of human capital; theorizing that a deeper analysis is required to fully understand the true impact of human capital on performance and by so doing necessitates a conceptual distinction between 'Gross human capital resources; and Active Human Capital Resources. The former represents the total of the knowledge skills and

abilities of the full cadre of resources; while the latter refers to the actual subsection of gross human resource that is actually being utilized towards a specific performance goal. Thereby acknowledging the potential of organizational slack, which refers to the portion on human capital not engaged for a particular performance goal. This approach to the analyzing and understanding human capital seeks to explain on a more microscopic level how human capital mechanism function for efficacy within an organization, Tuncdogan (2021).

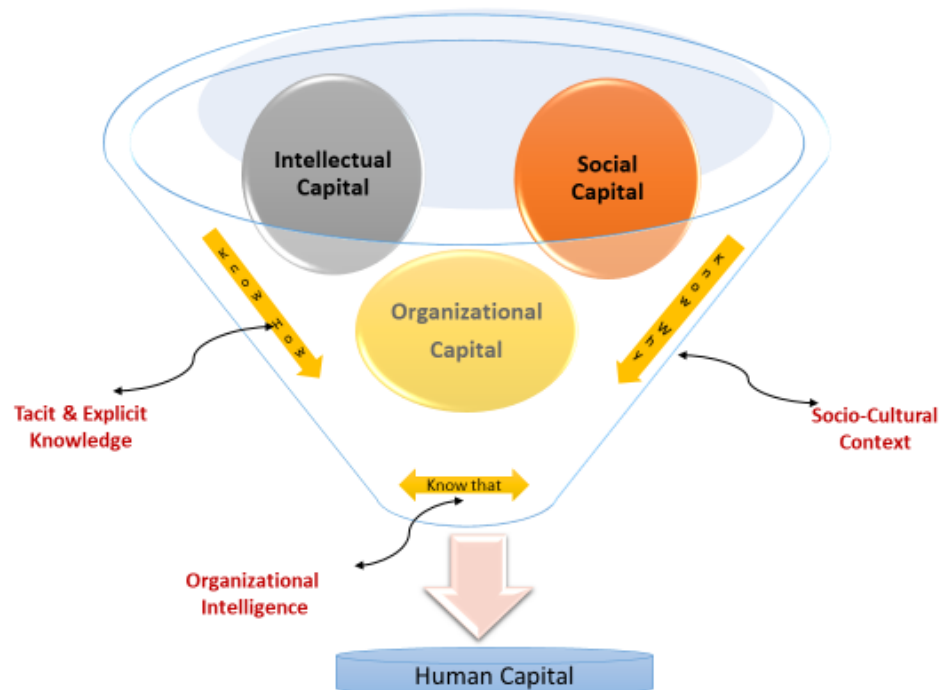
The Dimensions of Human Capital

The concept of human capital, exists with many layers of complexity which must be properly examined in order to be fully understood. There are hosts of theories which identify the concept and context of HC with varying degrees of relatedness and overlap amongst the key components of HC. Indeed, there is undeniably some amount of dissensus around the relationship between Human Capital and Intellectual Capital, as well as contending issues about whether Social Capital (SC) is a part of, competing with or complementing HC. Theorists such as Bontis (1998) posit that Human Capital interacts with Structural Capital and Customer Capital to form an organization's Intellectual Capital. The term Structural Capital contextualized by Bontis (1998) refers to what other researchers like Stiles and Kulvisaechana, (2003) term as Organizational Capital, which embodies the organization's systems, mechanisms and procedures that are collectively engaged, as well as the relationships which allow the organization to function in an organized and cohesive manner (Bontis, 1998). It is important to note that the original theory by Bontis (1998) was refined in later research to distinctly identify Relational Capital (Social Capital) as a key factor in the HC discussion; not subsumed under Structural Capital as was previously theorized (Bontis et al., 2007).

The authors note the compelling perspective offered by Armstrong and Taylor, (2014); and Sohel-Uz-Zaman et al., (2019, p.171) who theorized that Human Capital consists of three individual but interrelated constituents. Each of these three pillars: Intellectual, Social and Organizational Capital, although specific, are inter-dependent and operate in unison to generate value that improves competitiveness. Notwithstanding the on-going debate about the different dimensional elements of HC, the researcher has adopted the theoretical perspective offered by Sohel-Uz-Zaman et al., (2019), and Armstrong and Taylor (2014), which identify the three key constituents of HC to be Intellectual Capital, Organizational Capital and Social Capital. When deconstructed, the author posits that HC in the organizational context, would include capabilities, competencies and expertise (Intellectual Capital), social interaction, networks and culture (Social Capital) and the documented policies, procedures and systems (Organizational Capital).

A Theoretical Model for HCD

This three-dimensional perspective of Human Capital will be used as the main theoretical frame, through which the study will be examined; with specific application to the Resourced Based View Theory to explore the matter of competitive advantage. Consequently, each of the three dimensions of HC is discussed in detail below to properly distill the essence of each dimension as a way to explain the spheres within which Human Capital Development operates at the organizational level. Figure 1 (below) provides a graphical representation of the Theoretical Model of the three dimensions Human Capital.

Figure 1**Theoretical Model – The Three Dimensions of Human Capital**

Adapted from Nonaka (1994); Armstrong and Taylor (2014) and Sohel-Uz-Zaman et al., (2019)

The Intellectual Dimension of Human Capital

The concept of Intellectual Capital (IC) has been widely researched, and a number of diverse theoretical perspectives offered regarding its meaning, components and characteristics. Scholars such as Nguyen, (2016), Chang and Hsieh (2011), Arruppallal et al, (2015), highlight the lack of consensus regarding the definition of IC; as there are significant areas of disagreement amongst scholars regarding the term's conceptualization. Arguably, these diverse theoretical perspectives seemingly vary based on the school of thought, to which theorists

belong, (Daou et al, 2014, Bakhsha et al, (2018). In explaining the various viewpoints, Bakhsha et al, (2018), explained that from the perspective of the accounting discipline, IC is viewed as an asset on the balance sheet; for the human resource discipline, IC is viewed through the lens of return on investment, as well as human resource development; while researchers in the technology discipline view IC from the standpoint of codified information systems.

Understandably, there is great difficulty in determining a clear and concise definition of the concept.

Interestingly, the notion of Intellectual Capital had its genesis in the field of economics, through the work of economist James Galbraith in 1969; who defined IC as an organization's intangible assets, which are capable of affecting future economic outcomes (Hudson, 1993). Galbraith (1969) theorized that IC was dynamic in nature and was distinctly different from other fixed-forms of capital within an organization (Ding and Li, 2010). Among the contemporary theorists who followed on from the foundation laid by Galbraith (1969), are Lyn (1998), Bontis, Keow and Richardson, (2000), who conceptualized IC from a more of an accounting/financial related standpoint; purporting that IC generally refers to the difference between book value and market value. Additionally, the International Accounting Standards (IAS 38) in March 2004, defined IC as "an identifiable non-monetary asset with physical substance held for use in the production or supply of goods and services."

However, other scholars have taken a more functional, resource-oriented approach to their explanation of IC (Stam and Andriessen, 2009); where the definition takes into account all internal functional areas of an organization; along with the external business' eco-system within which an organization operates. According to Bontis (2001), IC refers to the intangible assets possessed by an organization. These intangible assets include education, competence,

knowledge, intellectual agility, customer relationship, brand and organizational systems and structure. Similarly, Edvinsson, (1997) posited that IC is concerned with organizational knowledge, technology, employee's functional experience, professional skills; as well as customer relations. Stewart (1997) furthers this point, by indicating that IC refers to various types of intellectual materials, that an organization has formalized and leveraged towards wealth creation.

Notwithstanding the afore-mentioned economic, financial and functional perspective's, there are still a host of other scholars like Naphiet and Ghoshal (1998), Klein (2009), Seviby (1998), who define IC using a more knowledge-centric approach; where IC is defined as an organization's knowledge, knowing abilities, intelligence, experience, creativity, entrepreneurship and capabilities. From a knowledge-centric perspective, IC is further theorized to include an organization's knowledge resources; which are embedded in systems and processes; as well as in the organization's culture. Essentially, the knowledge-based perspective of IC is a more internally-focused perspective, that looks at how knowledge (both implicit and explicit) is managed within the organization, (Bakhsha et al, 2018). According to Sohel-Uz-Zaman et al., (2019), Intellectual Capital refers to the collection of human expertise, experience and tacit knowledge; which can create value for the organization. Roos at al (1997), define IC as the complete knowledge-base of an organization's members; which can be effectively converted into brands, patents and trademarks.

Consequently, IC is theorized to be the sum of all knowledge used in business operations to gain a competitive advantage; and encompasses the knowledge, skills and abilities within an organization; including intellectual communities and even professional practices (Ginting, 2020). From the researcher's standpoint, knowledge and knowledge management is at the core of the

conceptual definition and operationalization of IC. Simply explained, knowledge is what Assensoh-Kodua (2019) referred to as, people's understand about things, concepts, ideas, theories, procedures and practices. It can be described as know-how or when it is specific, expertise. Furthermore, knowledge is purported to be one of the most valuable resources possessed by any organization, especially in its quest for competitive advantage (Wang and Wang, 2020). It is arguably one of the most productive resources of capable of driving superior performance (Torres et al., 2018). As an intangible resource, knowledge in the form of Intellectual Capital, is combined with other tangible resources such as land, money etc. to make up the market value of the company. This value is extracted from knowledge management systems that include people, databases, business processes and relationships (Ginting, 2020). Knowledge Management is therefore key to development of Intellectual Capital as a critical resource for organizational competitiveness (Torres et al., 2018). This is important because it is not the knowledge itself that provides the source of competitiveness. Rather, competitive advantage is achieved when knowledge is applied and leveraged as intellectual capital towards the achievement of the strategic goals and objectives (Allameh, 2011; Darroch, 2003).

In the same way that there are divergent views on the definition of IC; there are also diverse views on the measurement and classification of IC components. In explaining the growth and variety of theoretical perspectives on IC, Bontis et al, (2010, p105), highlighted the fact that "the field (of IC) has exploded with dozens of dedicated publications and academic research...but the multidisciplinary nature of intellectual capital, lends itself to both richness of perspectives as well as difficulty for valuations". Importantly, seminal contributions have been made by theorist such as Brooking, (1996), Bontis, (1998), Mouritsen et al, (2001) and Huang et al, 2007, inter alia). In the case of Brooking (1996), four elements (assets) were identified as the

components of IC: (i) human-centered assets, (ii) infrastructural assets, (iii) market assets and (iv) intellectual property assets. However, Bontis (1998), purported three overarching elements of IC, that is, (i) human capital, (ii) structural capital and (iii) relational capital; while Maouritsen et al (2001) identified (i) human capital, (ii) structural capital and (iii) customer capital. Quite noteworthy is the fact, that there are still many other scholars who theorize one or more additional elements as being key constituents of IC; these include theorists such as Wang and Chen, (2013), Haung and Jim, (2010), Inkinene et al (2017) who included organizational capital as a critical element of IC; Scafarto et al (2016), Nguyen, (2016) who focused on technological and innovation capital; Castro et al (2013) and Lin et al, (2018) who focused on customer capital.

Amidst the copious amount literatures on the subject of IC components/elements, some consensus was reached around the work of Edvinson and Malone, (1997), Bontis (1999), Huang et al, 2007; whose theoretical positions coalesced around three key components of IC: Human Capital, Structural Capital and Relational capital. For Bontis (1999), Human Capital included learning and education, experience and expertise, and innovation and creation; Structural Capital included systems and programs, research and development, intellectual property rights; while Relational Capital included strategic alliances and licensing agreements, relationships with suppliers and customers, and knowledge about partners, suppliers and customers. Building on the work of Bontis, (1999), Huang et al, (2007, p387) make the very important point that “most models assume three categories concerned with external relationships, internal infrastructure; and with people. Huang et al (2007) further pointed to the work of Petty and Guthrie, (2000) which refined the distinctions between the elements of IC into two broad categories: Internal Capital and External Capital; where the former is concerned with Customer-related capital; and the latter is concerned with Structural (organizational) Capital and Human Capital. In developing

their own priori classification /taxonomy of IC; Huang et al (2007) condensed original list of fifty-six (56) sub components of IC, to forty-six (46) sub-components which were categorized as: Customer Capital (external), Human Capital (internal) and Relational Capital (internal).

A deeper examination of the sub-elements under each of the two afore-mentioned categories as presented by Huang et al (2007); revealed that eight (8) of the fifteen (15) sub-components under Human Capital (the focus of this study), are key considerations for the more pointed issue of HC development; while the other seven (7) factors center generally around issues of HC management. Moreover, these eight (8) HC developmental factors are all concerned with knowledge and/or knowledge management. This is more in keeping with the perspective of this study; as well as the viewpoint of theorist such as Ginting, (2020), Assensoh-Kodua (2019), Bakhsha et al, (2018), Naphiet and Ghoshal (1998), Klein (2009), Seviby, (1998); who take a more knowledge-based view of IC; when it concerns the issue of human capital development for firm competitiveness.

Interestingly, the significant work done by the afore-mentioned scholars to distil the key elements of IC provides greater clarity on its conceptualization. Specifically, the work of Bontis, (1999) provides a widely accepted three-frame classification of IC; and Huang et al provided a very useful taxonomy for understanding the forty-six (46) sub-components for IC; while Petty and Guthrie, (2000) added contextual understanding to the issue by identifying two spheres where these components and sub-components occur, that is, internally (within the organization) and external (outside of the organization). Together, these theoretical perspectives play a pivotal role in this study; by providing a deeper understanding of IC as strategic driver in the development of HC for firm competitiveness.

Ultimately, while noteworthy contributions have been made by theorists who have examined IC from a functional approach or through the lens of economics and finance; for the purpose of this study, the researcher will take a knowledge-based approach to the study of IC. Note also that study takes an internal organizational perspective. Importantly, the knowledge-based approach is deemed more suitable, as the focus of this study is on the development and leveraging HC. Moreover, when examined through the lens of the Resourced-based View of the firm, an internal organizational perspective is required to determine those internal elements of intellectual capital that can be leveraged towards firm competitiveness. The ensuing discussion will take a closer look at IC from a knowledge management perspective.

Understanding Intellectual Capital Development – A Knowledge Management Perspective

As mentioned previously, knowledge management is key to the development of Intellectual Capital since the ability to leverage the Intellectual Capital Dimension of HC, comes when an organization builds up its stores of knowledge; and leverages that knowledge to solve organizational problems. Within this is mind, it is important that the concept of knowledge management be thoroughly examined to identify its key components and characteristics. Interestingly, the concept of Knowledge Management has been widely researched and has been theorized by many scholars as being imperative for organizational competitiveness, (Chen et al., 2017; Oh and Han, 2018; Muniz, 2019; Wang and Wang, 2020; Soltani and Zareie, 2020; Halisah et al., 2021, inter alia).

Knowledge is arguably one of the most valuable resources possessed by any organization, especially in its quest for competitive advantage (Wang and Wang, 2020). Knowledge Management is therefore closely linked to Human Capital Theory as well as the

Resource Based View (RBV) Theory; and is viewed as an important strategic imperative for companies seeking to find a competitive edge through idea creation, innovation and entrepreneurship. Importantly for this study, Knowledge Management constitutes the first of two key components in building an Integrated Human Capital Development (HCD) Framework for competitive advantage, the other being Organizational Learning which will be discussed later in the study.

When examined through the lens of the RBV Theory, knowledge is arguably the most productive resource of an organization capable of driving the superior performance (Torres et al., 2018). As one of the foundational theorists, Scarborough et al., (1999) made the vital point that Knowledge Management is concerned with the management and exploitation of an of an organization's stocks and flow of knowledge; the former accounts for the level of expertise and encoded knowledge which exists in organizational databases and software systems; while the latter refers to the extent to which knowledge is transferred from people to databases and from people to people. It is essentially focused on how the organization can leverage stores of knowledge and use it for a competitive advantage (Torres et al., 2018). This is critical because it is not the knowledge itself that provides the source of competitiveness; it is the application of that knowledge towards the achievement of the strategic goals and objectives of the firm that will enhance the firm's sustainability.

The goal of sustainability is better achieved by employing specific use of knowledge management techniques along with identified best practices; supported by an innovative learning environment to create value and uniqueness which fuels organizational competitiveness; (Akram et al., 2018). This competitive sustainability is evidenced by increased efficiency, improved revenue and greater long-term value for stakeholders (Lemmetty et al., 2020). Essentially the

strategic management of the stock and flow of the organization's knowledge; where data is transformed into knowledge and knowledge is transformed in to performance will improve the organization's intelligence Keshavarz et al., 2018).

Simply explained, knowledge can be viewed as “what people understand about things, concepts, ideas, theories and procedures and practices. It can be described as know-how or when it is specific, expertise” (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019, p.146). However, there is an inherent difficulty in defining and managing knowledge across the organization, referred to as organizational knowledge (Flothmann and Kuhane, 2018); and understanding Knowledge Management requires a pluralistic approach which embraces both tacit and explicit knowledge as previously highlighted (Chen et al., 2017; Oh and Han, 2018; Muniz, 2019; Wang and Wang, 2020). Nonaka (1994), posits that, explicit knowledge is both discreet and transmittable but also contends that tacit knowledge is quite difficult to replicate and is only transferrable through a process of socialization that is both time consuming and costly. Explicit knowledge can be easily acquired through books computer databases which is easy to call upon when needed by an organization; while Tacit knowledge which resides solely in the people of the organization, is quite challenging to access as it is deep seated in the experiences, expertise, culture etc. of individual (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019).

Therefore, the real challenge for organization lies in the management of tacit knowledge which is hard to formalize and to communicate; which has in part influenced the new wave of research into tacit knowledge or know-how (Liebowitz, 2019). Organizations need to take a knowledge-based view; where knowledge is being constantly created, applied and renewed within an enabling learning environment (Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2017). Importantly, although knowledge is created individually, it also belongs to the organization being both firm specific

and culturally complex; making it hard for competitors to replicate, thereby providing a source of competitive advantage. In light of the challenges in harnessing tacit knowledge, the leadership of any organization must strive to create an enabling organization characterized by mutual confidence, respect, listening, learning, teaching and innovation in order to achieve competitive advantage, (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019).

A report from the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2017 entitled *The Global Human Capital Report* provided a critical assessment of human capital theory; and therein underscored the complexities which are inherently involved in the development of a multi-layered Knowledge Management System. The report conceptualizes Knowledge Management from a general societal perspective to an organizational one; and declares that an effective knowledge management system would consider factors of capacity, development, know-how and deployment. 'Capacity' according to WEF, (2017) refers to the formal education in a professional area of study based on knowledge acquired mostly at the individual level; and represents the stock of knowledge residing at the individual and organizational level. The next factor is 'Development' which refers to continuing education and life-long learning to upskill and reskill the workforce to achieve organizational goals and objectives; while the third factor 'Know-how' speaks to the breadth and depth of competence, skills and expertise that reside in the organization. Deployment is explained as the management and application of knowledge, skills, competence and expertise to develop strategic solutions to problems, enhance innovation and foster entrepreneurship within the organization (WEF, 2017); with a view to improve organizational intelligence and competitive advantage.

Earlier scholars such as, Scarborough, Swan and Preston (1999) effectively conceptualized the Knowledge Management process as the acquisition, creation, sharing, storage

and application of knowledge to enhance learning and performance in organizations. Subsequent researchers have proffered various conceptual definitions of the KM process; which include most similar elements with slight variations. Additionally, Darroch (2003) describes KM as the process of creating, acquiring, sharing and applying knowledge within and between firms in order to innovate. Bosua and Venkitchalam (2013) contend that the KM process consists of knowledge creation, transfer, storage and re-use. Similarly, Allameh et al., (2011) theorize that the KM process involves identifying, capturing, sharing, disseminating, application and storage; while Jiminez-Jiminez and Sanz-Valle (2011) describe the process of KM as consisting of knowledge accumulation, distribution, interpretation and organizational memory.

Scarborough and Carter (2000) provide a useful framework for examining the knowledge management process; which theorizes that Knowledge Management can be examined from three perspectives; the first being a focus on the technical aspects of Knowledge Management which is concerned with the centralization of knowledge stores and the codification of tacit forms of knowledge; which essentially refers to Knowledge Acquisition, Creation and Storage. The second perspective examines Knowledge Management as a socio-political construct; which is concerned with the important transition of knowledge from being the exclusive property of individuals and group to organizational knowledge. The technical perspective addresses the important matter of knowledge transfer. The third and final perspective examines Knowledge Management through economic lenses; which focuses on how knowledge is created and exploited to improve organizational performance. This perspective in effect address knowledge application to improve organizational intelligence, performance and by extension competitive advantage; Scarborough and Carter (2000).

Undoubtedly there is an abundance of theories on how the KM process works for strategic advantage; and there is a great degree of convergence around the conceptualization of the KM processes. However; for the purpose of this study, the process as previously described by Scarborough et al., (1999), although foundational provides a comprehensive conceptual framework which the researcher believes best allows for a thorough examination of knowledge management in the ensuing discussion. Each element in the Knowledge Management process as conceptualized by Scarborough et al., (1999), is described below.

Knowledge Acquisition

All organizations experience knowledge gaps at both the strategic and operational levels which can affect the competitiveness of the company. These gaps create deficiencies in the competency levels needed for creative problem solving, decision making to drive innovation and entrepreneurship. Consequently, organizations will seek to acquire the knowledge needed to fill these gaps from both internal sources such as employees; and from external sources such as customers, suppliers inter alia (Henttonen et al., 2016). Therefore, Knowledge Acquisition is the gathering and assimilation of knowledge as a crucial organizational resource from sources both internal and external to the organization to improve performance (Pandey et al., 2018). Voon-Hsien (2013), adds that knowledge can come from a multiplicity of sources including the more obvious ones such as current employees of the firm; but also, from other less obvious sources such as previous firms where employees have worked; networks built through clubs and associations; as well as from exchanges and collaboration with customers and suppliers. Organizations must pay keen attention to the external environment of the firm to ensure the

timeliness of knowledge acquisition to prevent strategic surprise and ensure that the organization is fully armed with the right type of knowledge at the right time (Soltani and Zareie, 2020).

According to Annosi et al., (2021), pursuing a knowledge acquisition strategy ensures that a firm can build and enhance its knowledge stocks through exploration of the knowledge owned by another firm in a related business in the same industry even if the business is only remotely related. Additionally, a firm can also build and enhance knowledge through exploitation by using its own established knowledge. “Knowledge management practices related to exploitation create conditions for using the firm’s existing knowledge, thus favouring consistency, stability and control. In contrast, explorative knowledge management practices involve a search for new knowledge, thus enabling experimentation flexibility and risk taking” (Annosi et al., 2021, p129). However, Yang (2021) noted that as organizations seek to leverage its human capital to respond to the changes in the environment, a balanced approach ought to be taken to Organizational Ambidexterity, as it relates exploration and exploitation of knowledge-based resources.

Knowledge Creation

Knowledge Creation refers to the development of new skills, expertise and competencies which can be transformed into knowledge-based strategies to improve organizational performance. It involves research on markets, products, services as well various industry stakeholders to create opportunities through innovation, unique value and leadership (Shujahat, et al., 2019). Based on the multi-faceted nature of knowledge with its many complexities of being abstract and situated, mental and physical, static, coded and verbal, individual and

collective, implicit and explicit; formal Knowledge management systems are needed to collect store and retrieve information as needed for organizational purposes (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019).

According to Kim et al, (2018), organizations gather information from multiple sources; which it stores, analyzes, interprets and shares throughout the organization using special KM tools to inform decision making. “Knowledge Management Systems have the capacity to change, upgrade and exploit knowledge-based resources that represent knowledge related to the company’s dynamic capabilities...creating a spiral of corporate knowledge, so that companies not only produce new knowledge but also enhance the status of knowledge-based resources”, (Ginting, 2020, p.115). As knowledge is created, organizations build on their store of knowledge. This knowledge stock can reside in various forms throughout organizations; these include procedural, technical and operational knowledge which can be stored in policy documents, reports, manuals and databases. While, the flow of Knowledge can be achieved through written publications, workshops, meetings, master classes; the intranet etc. (Darroch, 2003).

Knowledge Storage

According to Mahdi et al., (2019), organizations have now come to the realization that a critical way to achieve sustainable competitive advantage is through the effective knowledge management strategies; where knowledge is both cared for and developed on. The rapid changes in the environment requires organizations to respond with effective KM systems that stores and documents things related to how the organization is managed (Khunsoonthornkit et al., 2018). This underscores the importance of Knowledge Storage as an important part of the KM process and involves the preservation of organizational knowledge in repositories and databases to allow for sharing and application. Therefore, Knowledge assets ought to be managed in a controlled

manner to ensure optimal relationship between people and information with a supporting system or procedure (Chandra, 2019). Importantly, organizational knowledge is obtained, used and stored in an organized way through the process of coding. This coding serves as a Knowledge Map to guide the efficient retrieval, re-directing and usage of the information stored in documents and databases. Thereby leading to improved organizational efficiency and efficacy which significantly affects the intelligence of the organization.

Knowledge Mapping improves the management of the knowledge resources to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the knowledge transfer and application process to solve organizational problems and improve decision making. The significance of proper storage and coding is critical because knowledge is only of strategic value if it is highly organized and properly stored; so that it can be harnessed and exploited. Indeed, by storing knowledge, organizations can transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge creating a much-valued resource which can contribute to the social complexities and uniqueness of the organization's resources.

Knowledge Sharing

The sharing of knowledge is another important part of the KM process and involves the exchange of both tacit and expert knowledge. Marques et al., (2019) opine that Knowledge Sharing refers to the exchange or transfer of abilities, skills and expertise between individuals, groups and organizations. Further, Populova and Mokros, (2007, p. 1048) explain that Knowledge Management necessitates the use of “a systematic approach to facilitate the flow of data, information, and knowledge to the right people at the right time, so that they can act more efficient and effective” Hanif et al., (2020).

Notwithstanding, the process of knowledge sharing includes: retrieving and understanding structured and unstructured data; converting data into useful information and sharing knowledge Populova and Mokros (2007). Knowledge Management promotes an integrated approach to identifying, managing and sharing of knowledge as a key organizational asset (Taft, 1999). It involves the identification, collection and storage of knowledge as well the planning and controlling strategies to develop and deploy this knowledge asset based on the organization's strategic needs and priorities (Kim, 2000). Knowledge sharing therefore, identifies the best information needed to apply to a specific gap or problem to enhance learning and performance by creating networks within the organization to connect individuals and groups to facilitate the exchange of information through knowledge sharing (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019).

Organizations that seek to have an effective Knowledge Management system should understand the differing impact that tacit knowledge sharing has versus explicit knowledge, on organizational performance. Ginting (2020) points to the findings of a study by Wang et al., (2014) which states that sharing tacit knowledge positively affects human capital development; while sharing explicit knowledge positively affects structural and human capital; but does not address the relational. Moreover, relational capital is key to social context and culture of the organization and affects the successful transfer of knowledge, organizational learning and ultimately organizational intelligence. Understandably, this would be evident in the performance of work teams and group dynamics especially in a cross functional context. Therefore, while explicit knowledge positively affects a firm's financial performance, tacit knowledge is key to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of operational performance.

Wang et al., (2014) emphasizes the fact that tacit knowledge affects overall company performance differently from explicit knowledge; and these differences ought to be factored into

the development of the organization's knowledge management system in order to achieve the most optimal results (Ginting, 2020). Ultimately, organizations should strive to convert implicit (tacit) knowledge which is operates at the individual level (Anand and Walsh, 2016) to explicit knowledge as a part of the continuous updating of knowledge to facilitate organizational learning; understanding the gravity of the impact of knowledge management on organizational performance (Cerne et al 2014).

The challenges which are expected in treating with tacit knowledge, points to the need for organizations to develop a culture of knowledge sharing; which according to Halisa et al., (2021) refers to the belief systems and organizational values that encourage knowledge sharing; while acknowledging the difficulty that exists in getting individuals to share their knowledge voluntarily. As Gupta and Singh (2017) emphasized, the challenges with knowledge sharing at the individual level occurs in part as the individual knowledge owner considers the personal costs or benefits associated with sharing knowledge. Therefore, where individuals believe that sharing knowledge might negatively affect their competitive edge in the organization they might not be as willing to engage sharing. Consequently, "organizational development activities require a cultural shift by encouraging desired values, collaborative work behaviour, reinforcing employee engagement..." (Gupta and Singh, 2017 p675). The aim then should be to foster a culture of learning where knowledge sharing is promoted and co-operation is encouraged amongst individuals and groups; appropriately re-enforced in the practices, processes, values and norms of the organization. Halisah, et al., (2021) acknowledges that where there is strong culture of knowledge sharing, there is also the consistent creation of new knowledge, which is a necessity if organizations are to be agile enough to respond to the dynamic and demanding forces

in the external environment. As acquired knowledge is integrated and shared, value is created which leads to improved performance (Yang, 2021).

Knowledge Application

According to Capeda-Carrion et al., (2017), competitive advantage does not reside with the knowledge itself, it is the application of that knowledge that has been acquired and shared that provides the competitive advantage. Knowledge Application is the strategic improvement of business processes, activities and functions by combining the knowledge that has been acquired and created to improve the competitive performance of organizations (Kansakoski, 2017). “In the face of dynamic conditions, the process of creating organizational knowledge needs to be followed by upgrading and exploitation to create sustained competitive advantage” (Ginting, 2020, p 115). Interestingly, although data can be stored in sophisticated application and documents in a static format only; they may be out of alignment with the strategic imperatives at a particular time.

However, through strategic knowledge application techniques, knowledge can be shared, interpreted and applied through people-to-people interaction aimed at achieving strategic goals and objectives (Ashish et al., nd). Essentially, when markets shift, technologies proliferate, competitors multiply and products become obsolete overnight, successful companies are those that constantly create new knowledge, disseminate it widely throughout the organization and quickly embody it in new technologies and products, (Ashish et al., nd, p1075). Therefore, an effective Knowledge Management System (KMS) drives a firm’s innovation and performance; thereby positively affecting the company’s competitiveness (Mardania et al, 2018). However, although technology is important, knowledge management is more about the people than it is

about the technology. Technology should support the overall knowledge-based approach, it should not replace it (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019). As knowledge is applied, the Intellectual Capital produced pulls on knowledge skills, expertise of the human capital in the organization, the collective and individual learning as well the organization's stakeholder connections, internal processes and procedures. As a result, organizations develop knowledge-based dynamic capabilities which will allow the organization to integrate and reconfigure knowledge to achieve strategic objectives (Sepulveda-Rivillas et al., 2021).

Having fully examined the three-factor framework by Scarborough and Carter (2000) as well as the five pillars outlined by Scarborough, Swan and Preston (1999), the researcher has a comprehensive theoretical platform on which to move on with the next phase of study of the investigation into how human capital can be leveraged for competitive advantage.

Knowledge Management for Competitive Advantage

An organization's intelligence, which is predicated on the stock and flow of knowledge within and organization, is increased when implicit knowledge is converted to explicit knowledge. This means that tacit knowledge in the form of ideas has significant potential to increase innovation and creativity. In the same way, explicit knowledge as expressed through specific competencies, expertise can produce improved productivity leading to improved profits. Therefore, knowledge management plays a pivotal role in a firm's quest for sustainable competitive advantage (Ginting, 2020). Ginting (2020) furthers this point by stating that strong emphasis ought to be placed on the development of the talent (human capital) as a complementor to a robust knowledge management system.

Importantly, as knowledge Management is considered within the context of improved organizational intelligence for competitive advantage, one must note that it is the organizational members who possess and accumulate knowledge over time through experimentation, observation and error. This therefore suggests that it is through people that the value of knowledge increases; by repetitive application of the learning which not only enlarges it but also increases its dept. In fact, it is the creation, integration and regeneration of knowledge that will improve organizational intelligence and ultimately provides a source for sustained competitive advantage (Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2017; Henao-Garcia et al., 2020). This illuminates the view purported by Torres et al., (2018) of the three dimensions of knowledge management: people, process and systems. Therefore, organizations would need to bring all these knowledge elements together as part of an integrative human capital framework existing within a cultural context of learning. As organizations recognize that it is not enough to focus only on profit performance, there is need to encourage employees to contribute to an organization's knowledge-based activities as a driver to competitive performance; by implementing appropriate compensation schemes linked to knowledge-based activities as a way of reinforcing a knowledge-based learning culture (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019).

Ultimately, by taking "a knowledge-based view of the firm, employee and leadership development benefits greatly from continuous and rigorous personal and organizational learning associated with knowledge management (Avramchuk 2020, p.20). Importantly, as the dynamism of the external environment brings new imperatives to the fore, organizations will need to adjust their knowledge management strategies and techniques to regenerate knowledge-based activities on these external dictates; emphasizing the need for flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness of an organization's knowledge management system (Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2017). When

utilized as a driver for organizational intelligence, Knowledge Management improves the organization's dynamic capabilities; thereby fostering the regeneration and growth of new knowledge resources capable of adapting to the forces at play in the environment. These dynamic capabilities serve to align organizations processes and practices towards improving competitive performance (Lopez, 2005).

The Social Dimension of Human Capital

According to Fu et al., (2017) and Sohel-Uz-Zaman et al., (2019), Social Capital is based on the principle that knowledge is generated through people-to-people interactions, which create social network resources. In the process of those interactions, Social Capital is formed as norms, values and trust that is built within the organization, based on shared values and goals. Thereby creating a social network that facilitates the development of Intellectual Capital (Stiles and Kulvisaechana, 2003). Interestingly, there are varying scholarly perspectives on how Social Capital is conceptualized relative to Human Capital. For instance, Srivastava and Das (2015) present a framework that treats Social Capital as a separate element from HC, as opposed to being one of the pillars of HC. Srivastava and Das (2015) further contend that the different elements of capital operate on a continuum from physical capital (what you have) to human capital (what you know), to social capital (who you know) and finally psychological capital. An alternative perspective is offered by Klyyer and Schenkel (2013) who opine that human capital and social capital operates competitively, as social capital is more valuable than knowledge resources in organizations where human capital is scarce. When carefully interrogated, what is described by Jerzak's (2015) model, as structural capital is quite similar to what (Sohel-Uz-

Zaman et al., 2019; Stiles and Kulvisaechana, 2003; Youndt et al., 2004) explain as Social and Organizational Capital.

Having examined the different perspectives, the researcher acknowledges the view of Sun et al., (2020) and Florin (2003) who point out that Social Capital is a fundamental element of HC, and the two co-exist in inter-dependency, because knowledge, skills and expertise are actively needed; and are quite beneficial to the formation of strategic social networks built on organizational learning and organizational culture. Moreover, Chan and Chen (2016) highlight the point that Human Capital and Social Capital are neither complementary nor competitive; since their relationship is often contingent on the level of support and resources available to organization and its network structure (Semrau and Hopp, 2016).

Arguably, the value of Human Capital is significantly heightened by its uniqueness to each organization; along with its social-complexity and cultural-specificity. This exists as Social Capital where the value is embedded in the firm's history and culture, based on its complex social relationships, employee's tacit knowledge and investments in organizational learning (Menguc and Auh, 2006). Consequently, organizations should strive to build a culture of mutual respect, listening, learning, teaching and innovation (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019), which will foster the transfer and application of individual knowledge to firm-specific organizational knowledge as part of how the organization learns.

Understanding Social Capital Development - An Organizational Learning Context

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, HC Value is positively affected by the uniqueness that emerges in the social capital dimension as human capital resources become more socially-complexed and culturally-specific. This occurs as organizations embrace knowledge

management and organizational learning as ways to drive continuous improvements and improved organizational performance (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019; Basten and Haamann, 2018). Against this background, understanding the concept of Organizational Learning is fundamental to any discussion about the Social Capital Dimension of HC. Organizational Learning as a concept was made popular by authors such as Argyris and Schon (1978) and later in (1991); as well as Levitt and March (1988), etc. and is positioned in this study as the second critical component in creating and Integrated Human Capital Development (HCD) Framework for Competitive Advantage; but what exactly is meant by Organizational Learning? “Organizational Learning is a social and psychological process which is a collection of intuition, interpretation, integration and institutionalization of knowledge (Souza and Takahashi, 2019; Engstorm, 2019). Organizational learning equips individuals with professional, personal and social expertise and competence to adapt and respond to the dynamic changes in the environment (Raudeliuene et al., 2020). In analyzing the cognitive foundations of Organizational Learning, Kump et al. (2015) theorize that there is both collective non-declarative knowledge which is based on repetitive practices involving collaborative efforts on shared tasks ultimately improving skills and expertise; as well as collective declarative knowledge which is developed through verbal communication at the organizational level to improve efficiency and effectiveness of business and achieve long-term sustainability (Kump et al., 2015).

Learning can occur in both a systematic and non-systematic way; and the efficacy of the learning will be dependent on whether the organization approached learning in a deliberate systematic way. Nonaka (1994) opined that as organizations learn, knowledge is created; organizational learning takes place as tacit and explicit knowledge interacts in a transformative process; thereby facilitating an exchange of knowledge between individuals and groups. This

view is supported by scholars (Muniz, 2019; Oh and Han, 2018; and Ghasemzadeh et al., 2018). Arguably, the quicker an organization is able to learn the greater the level of sustained competitive advantage (Peris-Oritz et al., 2018); since success in business is becoming more dependent on learning (Argyris, 1991). This is because Organizational learning plays a pivotal role in a firm achieving a competitive advantage and affects the overall outcome of the organization in some positive ways (Phan and Hoang, 2019); through increased employee commitment, innovation and performance (Gil et al., 2019).

Critics of the notion of organizational learning like Garvin et al., (2008) argue that the concept tends to be too broadly defined; and is often used to describe various forms of organizational changes. However, Matlay, (2000) contends that for the many definitions proffered by scholars, there tended to be noticeable similarities and as they were for the most part complementary in nature. Notwithstanding, the concept of learning has evolved overtime and its application within an organizational context; and has been predominantly viewed as a composite of individual training, development and learning; especially since a learning organization is founded on the learning process of individuals in the organization. Consequently, a Learning Organization can be understood based on the cumulative learning at the individual and collective levels (Hyland and Matlay, 1998). Still, there is no guarantee that individual learning will translate to organizational learning; sometimes the learning benefits the individual only and not the organization. Beyond that, the learning may also be negative and would not be beneficial to the organization. Additionally, Organizational learning can prove to be challenging to actually implement due to the abstract nature of the phenomenon, and despite the plethora of literature which exists on the subject matter by noted scholars of OL Theory (Taylor et al., 2010; Garvin et al., 2008; Hyland and Matlay, 1997 etc.). Hence, the need for a framework which can

be practically applied within an organization to guide it on a learning trajectory. It is for this reason that the researcher contends that an Integrated Human Capital Development (HCD) Framework is needed; which effectively combines Knowledge Management with Organizational Learning as deliberate strategy to improve organizational intelligence and competitive advantage. Indeed, the researcher confers with the aforementioned theorists that Organizational Learning on its own is too abstract a concept to track and measure. Since knowledge management has already been properly dissected in previous section (above), a deeper examination can now be conducted on the concept of Organizational Learning, as the second component of this Integrated HCD framework.

Key Characteristics of Organizational Learning

Against this background, the researcher posits that the factors outlined by Wang and Ahmed (2003, p.10) as dimensions of Organizational Learning can be effectively used for the examination of the practicality of Organizational Learning for competitive advantage. The five dimensions identified by Wang and Ahmed (2003) recommends a focus on: individual learning, processes and systems, culture, knowledge management and continuous improvements. Each one of the five dimensions will be discussed moving forward.

Individual Learning

Firstly, there needs to be a ‘focus on the collectivity of individual learning’. This is based on the theory that Organizational Learning occurs when individuals confront organizational problems and inquiry into these problems on the organization’s behalf. Therefore, effective learning requires employees taking personal responsibility for learning and the application of that

learning to solve problems within the organization (Gil et al., 2019). Organizational Learning is theorized as occurring through the intentional facilitation of individual learning in order to positively transform the organization According to Kakapour et al., (2016), where organizations encourage individual learning as a natural part of the work environment, they foster feelings of loyalty, and empowerment which then propels employees to be more creative in identifying and capitalizing opportunities. Moreover, when an organization's leadership focuses on the learning needs at the individual level, it fosters the growth of employees internal and social desires to learn and grow (Hanh and Choi, 2019).

Process/System Learning

Additionally, specific organizational practices that supports this focus are staff training and development (Wang and Ahmed, (2003); then there needs to be a 'focus on process or systems.' This is based on the premise that Organizational Learning is a process used by organizations to understand and manage their experiences. Specific organizational practices that support this focus include the enhancement of information processing and problem-solving capabilities. Organizations build their capacity to learn by implementing supporting processes and systems which guide learning and knowledge management within the organization. Moreover, "organizations with the capacity to learn can respond to challenges they face and alter their operations accordingly to promote innovativeness and ensure the provision of new ideas, products or business processes" (Yuliansyah et al., 2021, p 1128).

Learning Culture

Thirdly, there needs to be a ‘focus on culture’. For successful organizational learning, there has to be a knowledge-based culture where learning is built in the norms and values of the organization at every level. Such organizations encourage risk-taking and error-taking as way to drive innovation, entrepreneurship and competitive performance (Milbratz et al., 2020). This is thought to be necessary because Organizational Learning is theorized as occurring through conscious individual and collective learning; where there is constant development, retention and leveraging learning to improve organizational performance. Specific organizational practices that support the creation and maintenance of a learning culture include collaborative teamwork and employee empowerment and involvement (Wang and Ahmed, 2003). Embedded in the notion of organizational learning is the matter of reflexivity, as organizations learn through past experiences and draw lessons to ensure better future outcomes. Through the process of organizational learning, organizations are more responsive to their environment and are able to improve performance which is important to achieving and maintaining a competitive edge, (Basten and Haamann, 2018). Furthermore, the current knowledge-based economy is centered around the creation of economic value by gaining deeper insight into how people learn, relearn and unlearn; transforming employee insight into a strategic asset to give firms a competitive edge (Sayyadi, 2019). This underscores the importance of being deliberate about developing a culture of learning which is driven by those who lead at the ‘top’ and then saturating the entire organization with that culture of learning.

Managing Knowledge for Organizational Learning

The theory according to Wang and Ahmed (2003) also requires a ‘focus on knowledge management’ because Organizational Learning is experienced as changes in the state of knowledge within the organization; and involves the acquisition, refinement and dissemination of knowledge so that it can be exploited to the organization’s benefit. Specific organizational practices which support this focus include the strengthening of the knowledge-base and the facilitation of interactions through a Knowledge Management System. Through the process Organizational Learning, knowledge, skills and abilities and experiences are channeled towards improved organizational performance. According to Basten and Hena (2018), Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning both operate in a complementary and interrelated way; with the aim of improving organizational productivity and performance through the systematic acquisition of organization and communication of knowledge. Basten and Haamann (2018) further purported that knowledge management and organizational learning work in tandem to facilitate continuous improvements and innovation. This further supports the researchers view that an integrated HCD framework offers better outcomes; where Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning are pursued in a collaborative, complementary way to positively affect organizational performance.

Wang and Ahmed (2003) posit that the final focus area should be on continuous improvements which is critical because, learning drives innovation and sustained organizational performance and facilitating entrepreneurship, developing organizational resources, creating new ideas to improve efficiency (Ferreira et al., 2020). Moreover, “Organizational learning can improve the quality of services and products, increase employee retention and lead new knowledge and skills...the development of knowledge can provide the impetus to improve

operational innovation in organizations leading to operational efficiencies, service quality for customers and long-term success” (Yuliansyah, 2021, p 1129).

With a systematic approach to organizational learning which encourages and rewards individual learning, learning processes and systems would be undergirded by targeted knowledge management strategies aimed at building a positive learning culture. Consequently, the organizations intelligence would improve, as it becomes more agile and responsive and moves to efficiently and effectively engage in continuous improvements to better performance and drive competitiveness. At this point, there would be the natural evolution from a state of organizational learning to truly becoming a Learning Organization.

From Organizational Learning to Learning Organization

According to Noe et al., (2015, p. 23), a learning organization embraces a culture of lifelong learning, enabling all employees to continually acquire and share knowledge”. In order to fully gain from the knowledge of employees, there must be a focus on development and empowerment in employees to become knowledgeable workers with specialized knowledge and expertise that they have developed overtime through training, experience and tacit knowledge; which can be applied and shared with others and applied to practically improve organizational performance (Noe et al., 2015). Consulting company Valamis (2020) emphasizes that for organizational learning to take place, the culture of the organization must value the sharing of knowledge; encourage employees to grow and develop; and even challenge the status quo through entrepreneurship; one which encourages the creation, use, transfer and retention of knowledge. Learning organizations are highly skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring and managing knowledge.

What then are the notable characteristics of a Learning Organization? (Gil et al, 2019 and Garvin 2008) proposed four key characteristics of a Learning Organization: learning leadership, learning structure, learning opportunities and learning culture. Effective leadership is the first critical component in a Learning Organization; as it is the leadership that set the tone and culture of the organization. “Leaders are largely responsible for the creation of learning environments in order for employees to continually develop their skills and understand the complexity of the organization’s environment” (Gil et al., 2019 p 22). Arguably, it is transformational leadership that best provides the desired outcome in a Learning Organization, that is, authentic leadership that encourages a culture that embraces change innovation and learning (Gil et al., 2019).

The organization’s structure is also of key importance to a Learning Organization. An organization may be structured using a mechanistic design or an organic design; the former being more centralized and rigid in nature with keen emphasis on authority, obedience and strict vertical chain of command. The latter emphasizes high integration, low centralization with strong emphasis on cross-functional teams, a more horizontal structure for communication, decision making based on mutual trust, reciprocity and shared responsibility (Draft, 2016). According Gil et al., (2019), it is the organic structure that best facilitates a culture of learning as would be indicative of a Learning Organization; and they point several other scholars (Khadra and Rawabdeh, 2006; James, 2003; Pedler, 1995) who also concur that an organic structure best facilitates organizational learning; further highlighting that an organic structure fosters a culture of openness to change and development.

Having specific and deliberate opportunities for continuous learning is another essential characteristic of a Learning Organization. Learning opportunities can emerge through the training and development of staff, knowledge management strategies, multi-tiered feedback

systems and management support for learning (Gil et al., 2019). Where there is leadership that articulates a shared vision and values, learning and feedback and contribution from employees there is usually opportunities for continuous learning; and employees are provided with opportunities to expand their knowledge, skills and expertise (Hanh and Choi, 2019). Moreover, there is openness, accessibility and availability on the part of leaders to discuss matters with employees' help to foster meaningful interactions between leaders and employees about organizations goals; thereby promulgating the culture of a Learning Organization. This learning culture provides opportunities for employees to master new knowledge and improve performance (Hanh and Choi, 2019).

The final characteristic as identified by (Gil et al., 2019) as being key to a Learning organization is its Learning Culture. Gil et al., (2019, p23) draw on a definition by Johnston and Hawke, (2002) which defines cultures as “the existence of a set of attitudes, values and practices within an organization which support a continuous process of learning for the organization and its members”. Interestingly, with an organic organizational structure with leadership that is open and focused on building a learning culture; there is arguably better learning and performance outcomes; as subordinates will embrace the learning culture based on the examples set by leadership. Hanh and Choi, (2019) theorize that leadership has significant influence on the learning culture of an organization which in turn affects performance and fosters organizational citizenship evidence by increasing employee motivation to learn and reciprocating learning towards their leaders and the wider organization through knowledge transfer. Consequently, employees feel that their input is valued and are willing to go beyond the call of duty and the limitations of their employment contracts and cooperative behaviour; even if they are not formally rewarded (Hanh and Choi, 2019).

Essentially, a Learning Organization values the importance of learning the lessons that come only through failure and therefore allows for the creation of fresh perspectives or solutions to organizational problems. This becomes of critical importance as organizations seek a competitive edge over their rivals. Organizational learning and responsiveness are important, not only for organizations to survive but to thrive. In order to fully gain from the knowledge of employees, there must be a focus on development and empowering in employees with specialized knowledge and expertise that they have developed overtime through training, experience and tacit knowledge; which can be applied and shared with others to practically improve organizational performance (Fareed et al., 2016). This brings to bear the emerging importance of organizations evolving to become knowledge-centered Learning Organizations as a key strategic imperative of Human Capital Development.

The Organizational Dimension of Human Capital

The preceding discussion regarding Intellectual Capital as the first dimension, essentially referring to an organization's stock and flow of knowledge; and Social Capital as the second dimension, which takes into account the cultural context within which that knowledge exists; is also inextricably linked to Organizational Capital as the third dimension of HC. Organizational Capital refers to the institutionalized knowledge that is owned by an organization; stored in documents, databases etc. As Organizational Capital is developed, two strands of knowledge emerge. There is collective non-declarative knowledge, which is based on collaborative efforts which exist in shared organizational tasks, performed through repetitive practices, as well as collective declarative knowledge which exists, through verbal communication at the group and

organizational level (Kump et al., 2015). The former serves to improve the expertise, skills and competency of individuals within the organization and the capabilities of the organization as whole, while the latter serves to improve the level of efficacy and efficiency within the organization. All of which enhances the competitiveness and sustainability of the organization.

Tacit vs. Explicit Knowledge as Organizational Capital

Flothmann and Kuhane, (2018) were of the view that as one considers the concept of organizational capital, one is compelled to contend with the inherent difficulty in managing that Organizational Capital, which essentially requires a pluralistic approach. This pluralistic approach emerges from the dichotomy of knowledge, being both tacit and explicit in nature, (Chen et al., 2017; Oh and Han, 2018; Muniz, 2019; Wang and Wang, 2020). Foundational theorists such as Nonaka (1991), posits that, explicit knowledge is both discreet and transmittable but emphasizes that tacit knowledge is quite difficult to replicate and is only transferrable through a process of socialization. Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995) were of the view that tacit knowledge is highly personal and hard to formalize and deeply rooted in the individual's actions and experience. Furthermore, the technical dimension of tacit knowledge is often times referred to as 'know-how' and is reflected in the expertise, craftsmanship and experience of the individual.

However, explicit knowledge can be easily acquired through books, computer databases, which is easy to call upon when needed by an organization, but tacit knowledge which resides solely in the people of the organization, is quite challenging to access as it is deep seated in the experiences, expertise, culture etc. of individual (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019). Therefore, the real challenge for organizations lies in the management of tacit knowledge. Consequently, specific

strategies are required to manage both tacit and explicit knowledge, ensuring that knowledge is being constantly being created, renewed and applied (Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2017).

Understanding the Development of Organizational Capital-Building Organizational Intelligence

Achieving and sustaining business success in today's highly competitive environment is to a great extent dependent on the ability of organizations to change and respond to the forces in the environment that drive competition. Therefore, organizations need business intelligence to effectively leverage the Intellectual and Social Capital; which it possesses to seize hold of opportunities ahead of its competitors and concomitantly mitigate against threats "Currently, the environment of organizations has social, political, economic, technical, technological changes and transformations... which requires organizations to create structural and behavioural changes. Consequently, organizations need to be equipped with organizational intelligence to understand and react to these changes", (Kiani et al., 2020, p 158). Adaptability in the face of change then becomes of key strategic imperative, which requires organizational intelligence to drive the evolution of organizations based on the external demands in the environment (Goswami, 2019). With improved organizational intelligence, organizations can better neutralize environmental threats and capitalize on opportunities by strategically engaging the enterprises' internal resources, creating new knowledge and improving overall organizational intelligence, (Awamleh and Ertugan, 2021).

"Organizational intelligence is the comprehensive management of the business as well as the intelligence of establishing policies. It reflects ways of mutual reinforcement to receive implicit

and explicit knowledge and increases the organizations general interaction to achieve specific results at specific times” (Awamleh and Ertugan, 2021, p2). The concept of Organizational Intelligence is inextricably linked to knowledge management and organizational learning, because organizations will need to capitalize on its knowledge stock to facilitate learning to improve problem solving and decision making in a changing business world, (Kucharska and Bedford, 2020). Foundational models of Organizational Intelligence were offered by Matsuda (1992) and Unland (1994). Since then, there have been numerous models that have been developed to explain this notion of Organizational Intelligence to include (Albrecht, 2003; Crohnn, 2004; Kiani et al., 2020, inter alia). The models offered by Matsuda (1992) and Uland (1994) provided a sound platform on which to examine the concept of Organizational Intelligence; and so, will be dissected to reveal the main elements of each model, as well as the areas of convergence and divergence.

Elements of Organizational Intelligence

Matsuda (1992) identifies the first key element of Organizational Intelligence to be Organizational Recognition; which is the ability of organizations to see invisible opportunities which the organization can seek to capitalize on by scanning the internal and external environment. This approach seemingly follows along the principles which guide the strategic management process; which starts with an examination of the external environment to see the possibilities on the horizon and then examines the organization’s internal capabilities to seize these opportunities. The ability to capitalize on opportunities and mitigate against risks rest quite heavily on the leadership of an organization who ultimately needs to determine the direction and destination of the organization and is this critical to understanding Organizational Intelligence;

especially since it is being examined with context of competitive advantage. Hence the emphasis on Strategic Visioning as critical factor in Organizational Intelligence; which focuses on answering the following questions on behalf of the organization: Who are we? For what purpose do we exist? What is our philosophy? Why should the society accept us? What value do we offer? Why should they pay us for what we do? (Awamleh and Ertugan, 2021). In intelligent organizations, the leaders of the organization must be able to articulate the vision, nourish it and lead the organization to accomplish strategic objectives (Wheelen and Hunger, 2018). Albrecht, (2003) proposes Shared Fate as another element which works in unison with an effective Strategic Vision. With a well-articulated and understood vision that employees can identify with both collectively and individually; organizational intelligence is significantly boosted as it fosters a sense of unity and togetherness in the organization which then propels employees to work collectively towards common goals and objectives.

Both models by Matsuda (1992) and Uland (1994) emphasize the importance of Organizational Memory as a critical component of Organizational Intelligence; and is conceptualized as the organization's ability to collect, store, maintain and use experience and information from past successes and failures as way to change, grow and improve. Matsuda's model (1992) did not identify Knowledge management as a distinct element; it was instead linked to organizational memory. However, the researcher concurs with Uland (1994) who distinctly identified organizational knowledge as a key component; recognizing that the management of organizational knowledge is critical to creating a learning culture and building organizational intelligence for competitive advantage. Albrecht, (2003) makes the point that organizational success is more and more dependent on the effective use of knowledge, data and information, intelligent organizations build up their capacity to identify, create, transfer, share

and deploy knowledge to significantly impact the competitive positioning of the organization. Organizations therefore need to create a culture of learning where knowledge deployment becomes a key asset to drive competition. Knowledge is therefore free flowing throughout the organization at all levels and in all directions; and a delicate balance is found between maintaining information and its purposeful accessibility when needed. Intelligent organizations foster a culture of knowledge, where new ideas are encouraged and protected; and questioning of the current status quo is a distinct feature that is nourished (Asghari et al., 2019). Organizational intelligence is manifested as organizations are fortified with in-depth knowledge on the various stakeholders of the business; its employees and the specificity of data generated in various operational areas of the business (Ismail and Al-Ass'ad, 2020). Essentially, directing the mind power of an organization in a particular strategic direction; calling upon organizations' changeability, flexibility and idea creation (Thannhuber et al., 2017).

Organizational Learning is theorized as giving overall improvements to both the quality and quantum of performance which propel organizations towards competitive advantage (Arefin et al., 2021). Of significance is the fact that both models appropriately recognized Organizational Learning as another key element; and from the preponderance of literature on this subject matter in relations to human capital development and knowledge management for competitive advantage; Organizational Learning is indeed key to Organizational Intelligence. Organizational Learning speaks to the organization's ability to apply the knowledge attained from the information stored interpreted and analyzed to solve organizational problem and inform decision making; and involves recognizing and modifying behaviour based on feedback as an indication of organization's adaptability and flexibility. "An organizational culture that supports learning

appears to be vital to the development of Organizational Intelligence” Kucharska and Bedford, 2020, p 1331).

Organizational Communication was also identified by both models as another component of Organizational Intelligence. However, Uland (1994) limited communication to the exchanging of information and knowledge between individuals and groups within the organization; while Matsuda (1992) extended the concept to rightly include the exchange of data, information and knowledge between human and machines as well as between an organization and its environment. Finally, Matsuda (1992) had an element called Organizational policy, which the model describes as how well the organization deals with problem solving; without avoidance and cover-up. Importantly, Matsuda (1992) makes the distinction between Organizational Intelligence as process and Organizational Intelligence as a product. As a process, the five elements are interdependent, but as a product, it is a desired state or outcome for an organization (Kiani et al., 2020).

Notwithstanding the earlier models which laid the critical foundation for the field Kiani et al., (2020) have since put forward a more contemporary perspective which although having essential the same elements as the models by Matsuda (1992) and Uland (1994); offers new insight with the current context and requires the following element for an organization to build its competitive intelligence, Intellectual Capital Management, Knowledge Management, Change Making Leadership, Organizational Learning, Organizational Culture, Talent Management and Social Capital. These factors that drive organizational intelligence, arguably have significant positive effect on individuals and groups but importantly, improves the organization’s overall performance in terms of agility, flexibility and its effectiveness at achieving strategic objectives, (Shahabia, 2012). Implicit in the notion of Organizational Intelligence are matters of

organizational structures, leadership, mission, vision, goals, core values, policies and procedure which guide the organizations operations and employee interactions. The aforementioned elements of Organizational Intelligence provide a practical blue print or template which can be used as a guide to identify and develop organizational intelligence (Ismail and Al-Ass'ad, 2020). Additionally, examining the key elements as part of a model or schema offers great value as a practical tool which organizations can use to evaluate existing levels of Organizational Intelligence against a desired outcome.

Organizational Intelligence for Competitive Advantage

The study so far has examined Human Capital Theory within the context of the Resource Based View; undergirded by theories of Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning as key pillars to drive Organizational Intelligence. The study now seeks to further expound on the main indicators of success that Organizational Intelligence is likely to produce. The review of literature reviewed thus far have collectively converged on the point that achieving a competitive advantage and ultimately being competitively superior, are critical goals for organizations; especially given the imperatives of technologically-driven, information-centered knowledge intensive global economy.

The researcher notes from the literature reviewed that Organizational Intelligence is undoubtedly at the fore of any discourse about competitive advantage, Kiani et al, (2020); and therefore, is thought to be a key determinant. This is unquestionably enough impetus for further research to fully understand how human capital can be leveraged to drive organizational intelligence and create a competitive advantage; as well as to see to understand what human capital development framework works best to propel organizations towards this end of

competitive superiority. As opined by Chopani et al (2012), the increasing focus on Organizational Intelligence comes from the perceived benefits that it brings to an organization in terms of increased innovativeness, greater efficiency; the building of dynamic capabilities and improved performance and ultimately, improved competitiveness.

Building Adaptive Capabilities through Innovation and Efficiency

Innovation

In the face of rapidly changing business environment, organizational intelligence plays a pivotal role in aiding organizations to adapt and exploit market opportunities whilst neutralizing threats; in order to create value and provide a competitive edge, (Awamleh and Ertugan, 2021). The drivers of competitiveness are more and more dependent on technological advancements which means that organization must stay on the cutting edge of innovation in order to stay at the top of the ‘game’. Moreover, as the level of innovation and entrepreneurship increase, so too does organizational intelligence which means better strategic outcomes, the reverse is also true because as organizations become more intelligent there is greater willingness to embrace innovation entrepreneurship and change (Milbratz et al. (2020). Consequently, more and more emphasis is being placed on the creativity and ingenuity of organizations to generate new ideas and create new products or services or find new ways of doing things, in order to remain relevant and compete effectively; as more “organizations innovate to increase their chances of survival and prosperity” (Zahedi and Ashtar, 2020, p89).

With innovation, organization apply new techniques based on the strategic direction of the firm to drive organization results. For an intelligent organization, innovation is multi-faceted in that it aids both the production of technologically-enhanced products; to incorporating

innovation in internal business processes as well fostering organizational agility. This is noteworthy, because innovation in organizations has evolved from just the physical properties of products to be more about the customer's perception of value; where high customer value arguably leads to better competitive positioning, (Zahedi and Ashtar, 2020).

In an intelligent organization, innovation is used to positively affect how human capital is engaged and leveraged for generated competitive advantage. Importantly, innovativeness requires organizations to cultivate an appetite for change; which according to Albrecht, (2003) is dependent on the culture of the organization. For some organizations change is unwelcomed, practices and norms are so entrenched that change is seen as the enemy and is not well received. However, for intelligent organizations that intend to stay relevant and thrive, change is not only inevitable, it is welcomed. Intelligent organizations see change as a natural part of an organization's growth which is exciting and new, and which allows the organization to respond effectively to the environment and remain competitive. Change is viewed positively, through the lenses of opportunity.

Efficiency

Organizational Intelligence fosters the creation of new knowledge and methods; as well as the integration and synthesis of new procedures and systems all with a view to improving performance. By so doing, operations are rationalized and ineffective and inefficient processes are eliminated. Not only is efficiency increased, but by using knowledge focused strategies, new ideas and solutions are developed and new approaches to problem solving introduced; thereby facilitating efficiency gains (Khedhaouria and Jamal, 2015). Intelligent organizations are learning organizations, so, as the organization learns and grows, knowledge is shared, integrated

and applied within the culture of learning. Consequently, not only is operational efficiency improved but there are also quality improvements as well to performance as, higher quality products are produced, value added services are provided for customers which then translates to better financial and non-financial performance, (Sayyadi, 2019; Kumar and Duggirala, 2021).

Efficiency gains are achieved as employees display what describes as ‘Heart’; which refers to the spirit of co-operation at various levels of the organization and the willingness to extend oneself towards a common goal of the organization. Therefore, in intelligent organizations, the culture allows productive emotional bonds to be formed between employees who have high levels of co-operation and participation. There is goodwill that pushes staff to go beyond the call of duty. There will be improvements in efficiency both at the individual and organizational level; as a result, to a robust knowledge management system and a culture of organizational learning; where the knowledge, skills, expertise of the human capital are harnessed and leveraged to improve organizational performance and competitiveness, (Chopani et al., 2012).

Additionally, the level of alignment and congruence among individuals and groups is also heightened in Intelligent Organizations; based on established rules, procedures and guidelines. Employees better understand their roles and responsibilities and where they fit into the large organizational vision. Intelligent organizations strive to have a clear understanding of individual roles and functions; so that people can work together to create synergies which will ensure more efficiency and efficacy in accomplishing the organization’s mission (Albrecht, 2003).

Building Absorptive Capability to Drive Organizational Performance

According to Obeso et al., (2020), knowledge management and organizational learning are critical factors to achieving organizational success; and both knowledge management and organizational learning are key determinants of organizational intelligence. Intelligent organizations take proactive approaches to strategic planning, using knowledge management and organizational learning to identify internal weakness and strengths; and using those strengths to overcome those weaknesses; while capitalizing on opportunities; which improves organizational performance. By taking a strategic approach to the management of human capital, intelligent organizations effectively allocate resources and employ knowledge management strategies that positively affect competitive advantage (Sayyadi, 2019). According Obeso et al., (2020), knowledge is embedded in an organization's improved performance and organizational learning allows for the effective processing of this knowledge to modify behaviour, and make organizational adjustments to improve performance (Yuliansyah, 2021).

Performance is everyone's concern; for both junior employee as well as management. Everyone has a role in the organization achieving its goals. The culture of the organization encourages a sense of personal ownership for performance that comes from employees understanding and believing in the shared vision for the company (Albrecht, 2003). The results are increased levels of productivity, effectiveness and profitability as the organization achieves its strategic objectives and improves its competitive positioning (Chopani et al, 2012). Where there is a high level of Organizational Intelligence, there is full alignment with organization's vision and strategic direction, shared knowledge, multi-level communication, continuous planning and assessment all of which guides the organization in terms of problem solving and decision making (Shropshire and Koury, 2020).

Additionally, in order to move from a position of competitive parity to achieving a competitive advantage, organizations must do more than just survive; instead, they have to thrive, ultimately aiming for competitive superiority in their industry. This implies long term sustainability and improved profitability. Intelligent organizations, are therefore focused on strategies for value creation based on innovativeness and responsiveness in order to stay on the edge of leading trends in their industries (Lu et al., 2021). As a result, organizational intelligence ought to be an important internal goal, in order to meet the external demands from its stakeholders and competitors. Furthermore, with quality improvements throughout the organization as a result of improved organizational intelligence, organizations should experience better performance and stronger competitive advantage (Chopani et al, 2012).

Human Capital Metrics – Measuring HC Value

Key to the translation of human capital to organizational intelligence for competitive advantage, is the issues of measuring the impact of human capital on an organizations financial and non-financial performance. This is done through Human Capital Analytics (HCA) using specific metrics and indices. HCA refers to the measurement, management and predicting of business performance; and in this age of Big Data organizations can significantly improve their performance by using analytic intelligence to improve human capital stewardship. (Frigo and Ubelhart, 2015).

A 2015 survey conducted by Deloitte; published in the Wall Street Journal on 436 North American companies found that companies with well-developed HC analytics financially outperformed their competitors by over 30% over a three-year period from 2011 through 2013. Share prices of 14% of organizations in the study with mature talent analytics capabilities

outpaced the Standards & Poor's 500 Market Index by 30%, on average, over the same three-year period. In 2009, the CEB Workforce Survey and Analytics conducted a study on American companies that had over ten years of growth in revenue, followed by the decline of the same ten-year period; using a multivariate regression across over 200 variables. The study found that in most cases, the decline was due to shortfalls in talent statistics bench marks and the use of incorrect HC metrics, (Frigo and Ubelhart, 2015).

According to Frigo and Ubelhart, (2015), consulting firm Aon Hewitt and Associates which is an industry leader in Compensation and Benefits consulting, conducted a survey of approximately 20 million employees from 1,000 companies over a ten-year period for the purpose of providing its corporate clients with comparative human capital analytics that would predict business results. Among the companies which participated in the pilot study were Siemens, JC Penny, Eli Lilly, Verizon Nationwide, among a long list of other notable companies. This monumental study led to the development of the 'Talent Quotient' as a key human capital metric. In the study employees from these 1,000 companies were tracked as they moved from organization to the next. The aim of the study was to determine the rate at which top performing employees in whom the companies invested the most were leaving those companies. The study had its theoretical base in the HC theory techniques expounded on by Rawley and Gup, (2009).

The findings from this research were considered 'ground-breaking' and claimed that a disproportionate loss of top performing employees (with heavy HC investments) predicted declining business performance. From the findings of the study, Aon Hewitt was able determine how the Talent Quotient for the participating companies affected company performance, using various financial indicators such as Cash Flow Return on Investment (CFRI). The study found that a \$10 Billion dollar Investment produced between \$70 million to 160 million dollars in return

which suggest a 10% increase. So far reaching was the finding of this study, that investors in the companies which participated began indicating an interest in the Talent Quotient of these companies, as a way of considering their stock valuation models, (Frigo and Ubelhart, 2015), The people management strategies of these companies became an important predictor of the expected financial performance of the companies and by extension, the performance of their stocks.

The findings of the Aon Hewitt Study were corroborated by a 2015 study commissioned by Investor Responsibility Research Centre Institute which was conducted Bernstein and Beeferman of Harvard Law School in 2015. The findings of the study further underscoring that human capital substantial and materially impacted firm's financial performance; and was compelling enough to require improved reporting for human capital metrics as way to measure firm performance. This view is supported by a joint study conducted by the Investor Responsibility Research Center Institute and Harvard Law School in 2015 found 92 other studies related to the relationship between Human Resource policies and the financial outcomes of an organization. Having reviewed the findings of these 92 studies, their conclusions were that there was a direct correlation between human capital performance and financial performance; which led to a recommendation that information on Human Capital be included in standard investment reviews and metrics based on its strategic importance, (Investor Responsibility Research Center Institute, 2015).

Bernstein and Beefernan (2015) further referenced a 2003 U.K. Task Force on Human Capital Management which emphasized the need for companies to report on their internal policy on human capital management; as a way of illuminating the link between the organization's approach to human capital management, its business strategy and organizational performance.

Among key reporting HC requirements recommended are: how organizations people strategy link to its business strategy; how these strategies are implemented in terms of policies and procedures and the impact of that assessment, Bernstein and Beefernan (2015).

Importantly, the Human Capital Management Institute (HCMHI) identifies over 600 human capital metrics which can be used to enhance organizational intelligence to improve organizational performance and competitive advantage. Important metrics identifies by HCMHI include Total Human Capital Cost in relation to revenue, profit, investment and full-time employees. Undoubtedly, the use of human capital matrices to predict organizational performance is fast becoming a global phenomenon. In fact, The International Standards Organization (ISO) further identified twenty-three (23) core HR metrics that organizations should be captured and reported as way of improving organizational intelligence and health. This is quite significant as the ISO is the largest international non-governmental organization for developing international business standards. Among the benchmark standards identified by the ISO are: Skills Analysis Assessment, Length of Service & Attrition rates, Employee Engagement Scores, Learning & Development Hours per Employee, Internal Promotion Rate and Leadership & Succession Planning Coverage (Schwarz, 2019).

Not only has the ISO endorsed this move to highlight Human Capital Metrics but the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as also amended its regulations to address human capital reporting and disclosure. Using the Human Capital Accounting Framework and Guidelines for 2019, the SEC declared that it is in the best interest of investors to understand how companies manage their human capital; essentially requiring material disclosure of human capital objectives, measures and performance, (Engel, 2021). As opposed to the previous requirement where U.S. Company's only had to report their number of employees; the

amended regulation now requires companies to disclose Human capital key performance indicators (KPIs). Among the Human Capital KPIs required to be disclosed are: Employee Turnover Rate, Profit per Employee, Training Costs, Percentage of Positions Filled Internally (Engel,2021). Arguably, the rarest and most valuable resource in technologically driven, digital society will no longer be ordinary labour or ordinary capital, it will instead be the human capital of an organizations; that is, people with ideas, innovation and expertise (Brynjolfsson, et al., 2014). Thereby enhancing the dynamic capabilities of organizations.

Essentially, the measurement of human capital is a critical factor to gage performance, identify areas of improvements and determine the impact of human capital interventions on organizational outcomes (Wuttaphan, 2017). From the studies conducted above there seems to be an almost limitless number of HC variables which can be measured, and the approach varies from company to company. However, as Wuttaphan (2017) drew on work of several other scholars (Guest, 2000; Mayo, 2012 etc.) to point out that, measurement of HC ought to be done in conjunction with other measures including financial performance, employee attitude, among others.

Notwithstanding, the difference in measurement approaches, there is strong convergence on the importance of HC Metrics to indicate performance outcomes. This is evidenced by aforementioned research findings from both academia and professional research; regarding the empirical support for the theory that that there is indeed a link between human capital development and organizational performance, which is manifested in competitive advantage. Additionally, one cannot overlook the fact that there appears to be a global momentum that has fueled the wide scale interest in human capital as a core strategy to improve organizational performance and competitive advantage.

The Resource Based View for Competitive Advantage

Having examined human capital based on its different dimensions and to further interrogate the important issue of ‘value’ of HC, the researcher intends to add another layer to the Review of Literature, by examining how HC value can be translated into a competitive advantage. To begin, Human Capital is “estimated to be three to four times the value of stock, bonds and other assets and is rapidly becoming the critical currency of our knowledge focused economy” (Afiouni, 2009, p. 206). Additionally, intellectual capital is theorized by Torres et al., (2018) to be more valuable than the financial and material resources in an organization. Noe et al., (2015, p 23) indicated a study conducted by the American Society for Training and Development of more than 500 publicly traded American based companies found that companies that invested the most in HCD had higher shareholder return; 86% higher than companies in the bottom half and 46% higher than market average. This arguably advances the view that investments in human capital and the leveraging of that human capital positively affects a company’s bottom-line. These perspectives are theoretically anchored in the Resource-based View (RBV) of the firm; and serves as a launching pad for a more robust examination of the notion of Human Capital Development.

Progoulaki and Theotokas (2009), posit that the Resource-based View is centered around the theory that organizations have a bundle of resources, capabilities and competencies which provides for a competitive advantage. These resources include, physical, organizational and human; the latter referring to the skills, expertise and intellect of employees (Barney and Hesterly, 2008). These human resources have specific capabilities which will allow the organization to take advantage of its other assets (physical, organizational and human) to create and add value, and create a competitive advantage. As explained by Torres et al., (2018), the

competitive advantage will emerge based on the management of the intellectual capital within the firm; because the firm's performance capacity relies on these human assets in the form of intellectual capital.

Therefore, the firm has significant potential to be competitively superior by using its human capital to exploit the other resources the firm possess (Cui et al., 2013). According to (Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2017), the performance difference between firms is due primarily to the difference in resource capabilities. As firms effectively engage their resource capabilities, they create improved performance through the combination of knowledge, skills, team processes and organizational capabilities; distinctive competencies will emerge which are unique and which give the organization sustained competitive advantage (Progoulaki and Theotokas, 2009; Henao-Garcia et al., 2020). These distinctive competencies will give the firm an important edge in taking advantage of opportunities in the market, (Darabos and Dvorski, 2014). Interestingly, RBV Theory assumes that resources and capabilities are distributed heterogeneously across organizations and that this heterogeneity continues over time, (Cepeda-Carrion et al. 2017). Firm heterogeneity is indicative by the differences observed internally as it relates to human capital management practices, firm specific resources, productivity outcomes and the ultimately financial performance of firms in an industry (Gerhart and Feng, 2021).

Another area of central importance to the RBV theory is an understanding of the difference between resources, capabilities and competency. Wheelen and Hunger (2018) defines resources as organizational assets, both tangible and intangible, which form the essential building blocks of the organization. In the case of the former, they include plant, equipment, finances and human assets; while the latter includes technology, patents, reputation and culture. Capabilities speaks to the organization's ability exploit those resources by converting inputs into outputs

through various internal processes linked to functions such as manufacturing, marketing, human resource management, distribution etc. (Barney, 2007). Competencies emerge out of capabilities through cross-functional integration and co-ordination; leading to core and distinctive competencies. A core competency is one which the organization does exceedingly well and spans divisional boundaries; while distinctive competencies emerge the more core competencies are utilized, to the point where they create value and are superior to that of the competitors. Competencies become more valuable the more they are utilized (Wheelen and Hunger, 2018, p.167)

The last few decades have seen an abundance of literature on the achievement of competitive advantage through people, written by highly respected scholars such as (Lado and Wilson, 1994; Pfeffer, 1998; Boxal, 1996 & 1998; Wright and McGhann, 1994 and Bernstein, 2019). However, there are other theorists who still contend that there isn't sufficiently strong evidence-based research to which prove a direct link between people management and competitive advantage. Skeptics argue that there is just not enough understanding about what actually converts the people resources in an organization into a source of competitive advantage. Despite these criticisms, notable theorists such as Boxall and Purcell, (2000) and Wright, McMahan and Williams, (1995); clearly point out that it is actually the distinctive features of whether an organization's resources are valuable, rare and inimitable, that would be deciding factor of the competitive advantage that such resources provide. How then, does a firm determine if it has distinctive competencies that can actually be a source of competitive advantage? Both Afiouni (2013) and Progoulaki and Theotokas (2009) point to the work of Wenerfelt (1984) and Barney (1991) who are founding theorists for the Resource Based View and the VRIO Framework respectively; indicating that in order to determine whether a company actually has

distinctive features, an assessment of the organization's resources using the VRIO Model would be necessary to determine if competitive advantage can be achieved and sustained.

According to Barney and Hesterly (2008), the VRIO Model theorizes that an organization has competitive superiority when it has distinctive and desirable competencies which are valuable, rare and socially complex, non-imitable and are effectively organized. Barney (2002) purports that a company can make this assessment of the firm's competencies by considering the following four questions on value, rareness, imitability and organization. Does the company have resources that provide customer value? Do no other competitors possess these valuable resources? Are these valuable and rare resources costly for others to imitate? Is the company organized to exploit these distinctive resources? Barney and Hesterly, (2008). Having considered these VRIO questions for a particular resource (like human capital), if the answer is yes to all the questions; then the firm possess a distinctive competence with its human capital. Despite having a distinctive competency, firms need to be highly organized to be able to actually exploit their valuable, rare and inimitable resource better than their competitor and maximize profit potential (Friend and Zehele, 2009; Wheelen and Hunger, 2018).

The researcher extends this school of thought on the RBV VRIO Framework, and contends that this last variable 'O' which address the question of whether the firm is effectively 'organized' to take advantage of these valuable, rare and inimitable resources and capabilities; is best manifested as Organizational Intelligence. Consequently, Organizational Intelligence becomes increasingly important to firms seeking to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage. The theoretical framework (below) therefore posits that when human capital (people) is developed using both knowledge management and organizational learning (process); the result

is improved organizational intelligence (performance) which translates to a competitive advantage (profits).

Interestingly, even though there many resources both tangible and intangible which can become a distinctive competency, Wheelen and Hunger, (2018, p. 167) emphasized that “firms that outperformed their peers in both revenue growth and profitability...generated value from knowledge-intensive intangibles such as copyrights, trade secrets and strong brands.” The key is the term ‘knowledge-intensive; which is centered on the enhanced knowledge base of the human capital within the organization to transform into a distinctive competency a resource that is valuable, rare and inimitable; thereby enhancing the dynamic capabilities of the firm (Ceppeda-Carrion et al, 2017). These dynamic capabilities come as the firm transform resources into capabilities, (Henao-Garcia et al, 2020). Dynamic capabilities are significant to the RBV theory because it speaks to the strategic allocation of resources through the configuring and reconfiguring of organizational processes to respond to changes in the competitive environment (Shams et al., 2020).

This is significant because a firm can be resource-rich with valuable resources that unfortunately have not been transformed into a distinctive competency; because it does not have the organizational intelligence which comes from the application of the requisite knowledge management system and organizational learning strategies to build out these competencies. This means that as soon as the company’s rivals are able to acquire similar resource or imitate the competence; the rarity is lost and although that resource is still valuable; it’s no longer rare because the competitors can easily imitate it. This means that the competitive advantage is lost. Undoubtedly, traditional tangible resources can create value, but the RBV Theory purports that sustained competitive advantage is achieved primarily through unique bundles of intangible

resources that are dynamic and complex; and which create distinctive competencies. As previously established, much depends on the firm's organizational intelligence which would indicate whether the firm is efficiently and effectively organized to take advantage of those competencies which allows it to perform better than its competitors; as opposed to the actual products and services the company brings to market (Saa-Prez and Garcia-Falcon, 2002; Suanto and Sudarsono, 2018).

Wheelen and Hunger (2018) make the important point that even though a company may possess resource capabilities and competencies in the form of human capital, which gives it a competitive advantage; sustaining that competitive advantage is dependent on two key factors: durability and imitability. "Durability is the rate at which a firm's underlying resources, capabilities and core competencies depreciate or become obsolete or irrelevant....and Imitability is the rate at which the firm's underlying resources, capabilities and core competencies can be duplicated by others"; Wheelen and Hunger (2010, p.188). Key to note is the fact that a core competency can be replicated by a competitor depending on its transparency, transferability and its replicability. Transparency refers to the ability of competitors to understand how a particular resource or capability is translated into strategy. Transferability refers to the extent that a firm's rivals are able to also acquire the same resources and capabilities to mount a competitive challenge. Replicability speaks to the extent that competitors can replicate resources and capabilities of its competitors. (Gerhart and Feng, 2021) referenced a case study done on Southwest Airlines which has achieved and maintained competitive superiority in the airline industry. Competitors were unable to imitate the strategies employed by South West Airlines as rivals could not replicate the dynamic capabilities which the company had developed to include the firm specific human capital. In fact, competitors were unable to match the labour cost of

South West Airlines for decades and despite the attempts of competitive rivals they were not able to achieve competitive parity in customer outcomes to date (Gerhart and Newman, 2020).

In discussing the issues of competitiveness, one must consider the highly dynamic forces of globalization, internationalization and the data revolution; which has created greater uncertainties in the external environment of any firm. When added to the mandates of governmental legislation and regulations, macro-economic imperatives, socio-cultural consumption patterns and technological advancements; there is without doubt a need to focus on building, integrating and augmenting internal competencies of an organization's human capital (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019). However, Suanto and Sudarsono, (2018) rightly pointed out that, to build an effective strategy organizational cannot only focus on the external environment with its dynamism and uncertainties, instead there has to be an equal focus on in internal resources and capabilities of the organization in order to formulate strategy to attend to those external imperatives. Essentially, organizations need to conduct a resource audit as a pre-requisite to strategy formulation. This will enable organizations to identify specific resources such as human capital; that propel the firm towards competitive advantage.

Summary

Ultimately, organizations strive for competitive advantage by offering customers a product or service that's of superior value to the competitors. Creating a competitive advantage for organizational success is therefore significantly dependent on the organization's ability to appropriately manage its human capital; by combing its stock of knowledge (intellectual, social and organizational capital) with its flow of knowledge (creation, transfer and integration) (Progoulaki and Theotokas, 2009) and (Afiouni, 2009). Based on the dynamic nature of the

environment within which organizations exist, Human Capital Development demands a drastic shift from the more trainer-focused, mechanistic, menu-driven short-term approach, to a more agile, humanistic, commitment–focused, knowledge-led learner-centered approach; which is indicative of an intelligent organization. When twined with a value-added strategy, the organization should be able to separate itself from its competitors and sustainable competitive advantage is more achievable.

Essentially, with improved organizational intelligence, organizations are better positioned to grow market share and thereby improving competitive advantage (Awamleh and Ertugan, 2021). In the final assessment, Organizational Intelligence is built by having a clear vision, with a more organic-type organizational structure that encourage organizational renewal as part of a knowledge-based approach. It is important that organizations create a culture of learning where knowledge can be used to re-engineer processes and procedure as necessary to keep the organization agile, adaptable and competitive, (Ismail and Ass'ad, 2020). Innovation and entrepreneurship are to be encouraged, so that organizations can intelligently respond to the demands and imperatives of the external environment. This is especially significant when considered within the context of the current contemporary realities of business, characterized by E-commerce, Cloud Technology, Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things. Of necessity, there is a demand greater Organizational Intelligence to creatively exploit knowledge and learning for the benefit of the organization; by using a systematic and integrative approach which combines innovative knowledge management strategies with organizational learning.

Having conducted an extensive review of literature from a multiplicity of scholars, the researcher has renewed impetus to further explore the nexus between Human Capital Development and Competitive Advantage. Against this background, the researcher moves on to

the Research Design which will outline the scientific approach of the study as it relates to the conceptual design, research philosophy, methodology. The researcher is keen to delve further into the phenomenon of interest, as part of the scientific inquiry into how human capital can be leveraged to improve Competitive Advantage.

Chapter Three - Research Design and Methodology

Chapter two provided an extensive review of literature on the complex phenomenon of Human Capital (HC), effectively interrogating the concept to identify and explain its dimensional manifestations; as well as the core characteristics of HC Development which are theorized to be: knowledge management, organizational learning and organizational intelligence. Additionally, Chapter Two explored the concept of HC Value in terms how it is conceptualized and measured to drive organizational competitiveness. In this chapter, the researcher moved on to develop a Conceptual Framework for the Study; as well as determined the methodological approaches which formed the overall research design.

Developing a Conceptual Framework for the Study

Developing a conceptual framework is of central importance when conducting the qualitative research; but what exactly is a conceptual framework? The definition of a conceptual framework is not without its fair share of debate and/or ambiguity. Much of the confusion oftentimes surrounds the use of the term ‘Conceptual Framework’, interchangeably with the term ‘Theoretical Framework’. Ravitch and Rigor (2016) theorize that a Theoretical Framework (which is the literature review), is actually only one part of the Conceptual Framework; and although not linear, the development of a conceptual frame, flows through several stages. Essentially, the conceptual framework is an overarching representation of the study; which links the various elements of the research; including the theoretical framework and the research design. It contains multiple parts, which may intersect and also overlap. Figure 2 (below) depicts the process employed in the development of the conceptual framework for this research.

Figure 2

Process Flow for Developing a Conceptual Framework

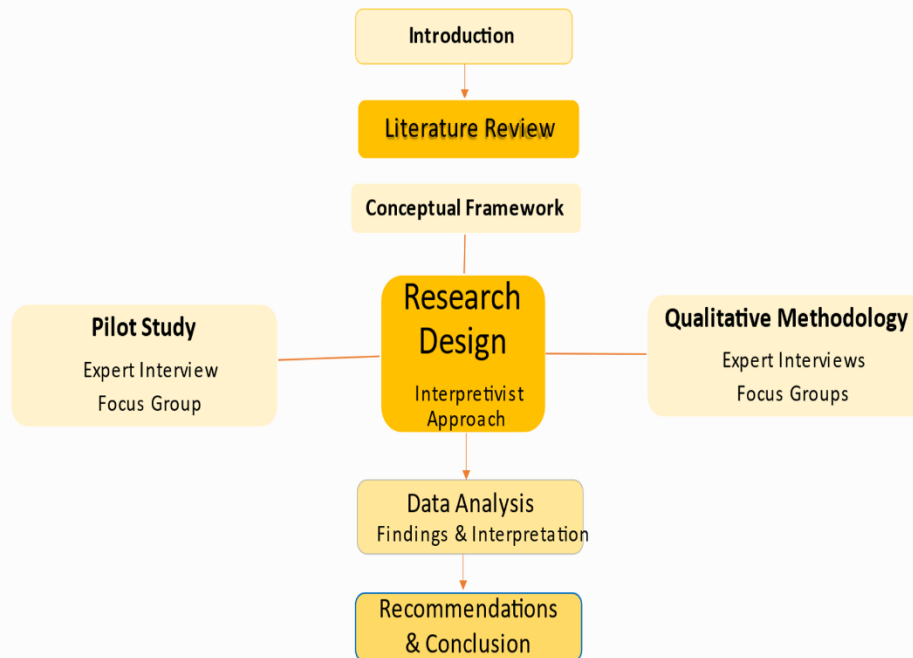


Interestingly, Miles et al., (2014), indicate that a Conceptual Framework may be done in a narrative or graphically form, to highlight the key concepts, variable and factors which are be studied as well the relationship and connections between them. Figure 3 (below) is a graphical depiction of the overall conceptual framework for this Study, from Introduction to Conclusion; as well as the various stages in between. The conceptual framework serves as blueprint or plan, explaining the lay-out of the research and how the various concepts and themes connect, relate and overlap with each other Ravitch and Rigor (2016).

Additionally, the conceptual framework provides an overall outline of the design of the research, and guided the direction that the research takes. It also explain why the methods chosen for the research design were appropriate and rigorous and helped the researcher navigate the different phases of the research (Ravitch and Rigor, 2016). With this in mind, the conceptual framework for this research was aimed at identifying the main concepts, constructs and theories, which have been dealt with in the previous Literature Review chapter; as well as the emerging themes which were of central importance to the framing of the research. These emerging themes serve as a guide to develop the key research questions later on this chapter.

Figure 3

A Model of the Conceptual Framework for the Study



Significance of the Study

Ravitch and Rigor (2016), purport that a conceptual framework makes the case about why a particular research effort matter, justifying its relevance and significance; while considering the context or setting of the research. Against this background, the chosen research area for this study is one of great significance because of the growing interest amongst scholars and practitioners alike, about the importance of Human Capital Development to organizational competitiveness and success. As discussed in Chapter One, over the years there have been a plethora of studies conducted around this topic (Noe et al., 2015; Boxall, 2003; Barney, 2002;

Becker and Youndt, 2004; Choudhury and Mishra, 2010; Diaz-Fernandez et al., 2016;Ginting, 2020); with more and more findings emphasizing that business competitiveness in the 21st century is significantly impacted by specific attributes of Human Capital; which serve as a distinct source of competitive advantage (Keshavarez et al., 2018; Latilla et al., 2018; Alawamleh, 2019; Soltani and Zareie, 2020; Ginting, 2020; Lu et al., 2021). This has even greater applicability for small island states like Jamaica with growing economies, where the industries in the productive sector are on a constant quest for greater competitiveness, both at the macro level and at the level of industry. Hence the approach taken by the researcher to conduct the research as a multi-case study across four (4) industries; purposefully selecting companies which employ strong, deliberate people-focused strategies; and are at the top of their respective industries. Moreover, the study to provides an in-depth exploration of the concept of HCD, to examine the dimensions at work in each organization; and to further explore the key characteristics or elements which are at work in each Dimension of HC.

Gaps in Literature Review

The development of a conceptual framework, of necessity must take into account the gaps identified in the Literature Review Chapter. Maxwell (2013), makes the point that, not only should the conceptual framework explain how the key theoretical concepts from the Literature Review interacts with the issue being researched; it should also identify areas of contradictions, inconsistencies and gaps. Ravitch and Rigor (2016 p.10), build on this point and further instructs researchers to “critically read and make connections between, or integrate and synthesize original work related to your emerging research topic and multiple theoretical and practical contexts”. The conceptual framework therefore, states how the study can make an original

contribution to improve the understanding of the phenomenon of interest; effectively providing a new way to frame the issue being investigated (Maxwell, 2013).

Although the review of literature for this study provided a plethora of theories on Human Capital (HC), there were noticeably gaps, inconsistencies and overlap in the literature, in terms of how the concept of HC is deconstructed within an organizational setting. These inconsistencies, gave impetus to the need to delve deeper into the concept of HC to effectively dissect the concept of HC to identify the key Dimensions of HC; which work both independently and collectively as a synergic force to drive Human Capital development for Competitive Advantage. Another critical gap in the literature emerged, as the existing theories did not effectively address what were the main elements of each dimension of HC; nor did they address how each dimension of Human Capital affected organizational competitiveness. Therefore, in order to address the issue of competitiveness, the researcher examined the dimensions HC through the lens of the Resource Based Theory– VRIO Framework; as a way expanding the theoretical frame for the study, with a view to making new contributions to the understanding of HC theory and its link to organizational competitiveness.

Based on the gaps identified, a deeper analysis of Human Capital as a construct within organizations was necessary, in order to gain better insight of what the main constituents /dimensions are; and how they work both interdependently as part of an HCD framework; and to further understand how they work synchronically to drive competitive advantage. Even more important is the fact that this research is set within the context of organizations operating in small-island developing states, a gap that is not sufficiently addressed in existing literature. Consequently, the researcher sought to illuminate the phenomenon of interest, using a multi-case

study approach. The development of a Conceptual Framework was therefore of central importance to the study, adding another layer of rigor to the research effort.

Philosophical Perspective

Before determining the methodological design of the research, it is of the utmost importance that a clear understanding be ascertained about the nature of the different philosophical assumptions and beliefs that undergird the research; and how these philosophical beliefs and assumptions influence the choice of methodology. Scientific research is characterized by the systematic pursuit of scientific knowledge of how the world functions (Park et al., 2019). Consequently, scientific inquiry operates through research paradigms which shape the way research is actually conducted. Park et al., (2019, p 690) further explain that the research paradigm chosen for a specific scientific inquiry is shaped by the research philosophies based on the following elements “ontology (how reality is viewed), epistemology (how the nature of knowledge is conceived), axiology (the roles and values in the process) and methodology (how the paradigm defines processes associated with conducting the science...)”

In explaining the concept of research philosophy, Rouna and Lynham, (2004, p.154); theorize that “how we see the world shapes and directs how we think about the world, how we think about the world shapes and directs how we act in the world; and how we act in the world in turn reflects how we think about and consequently see the world”. This worldview then creates the frame of reference or philosophical perspective through which we make sense of the world; which then informs one’s epistemological and ontological stances and undergirds professional scholarship and work-based praxis. Consequently, the choice of research method was influenced by the researcher’s underlying ontological and epistemological stance; which would have been

informed by their values (Greenbank, 2003). It is important to note that understanding the assumptions specific to each research paradigm is important; the researcher therefore considered carefully the two main philosophical approaches (Positivism and Interpretivism), to determine the one best suited for this study.

Positivism in Research

An ontological and epistemological stance based on Positivism, believes in a single reality where scientific inquiry is undertaken using an objective approach to knowledge acquisition; utilizing methods like surveys and experiments. In Positivism, the search for truth is done using a value-neutral approach; where the aim is to completely eliminate personal views, value judgements and pre-conceptions from the research process (Cohen et al, 2000). According to Park et al., (2019) positivist research uses a deductive model focused on determining casual relationships based on principles of generalizable inferences, replication of findings and experimentation in a controlled environment. A similar point is made by (Patton, 2015, p2) who emphasizes that a Positivist approach based on quantitative methods “seeks causal determination, prediction and generalization of findings” A Positivist perspective characterizes the social world as being stable and observable through lens of objectivity; where the phenomenon under investigation is isolated without interference from the researcher (Killam, 2013). The aim of positivist research is determining causal relationship and generate explanations based on hypothesis testing and large sample size (Park et al., 2019). Having considered these defining elements of Positivism, there was a clear misalignment between the positivist philosophy and the overarching aims and objectives of this exploratory study; which sought to gain a deeper, more meaningful understanding how Human Capital is being leveraged for competitive advantage

within the context of a select set of organizations in Jamaica. Causation, prediction and generalization were not the aim of the study; hence the positivist approach was deemed inappropriate for this research.

Interpretivism in Research

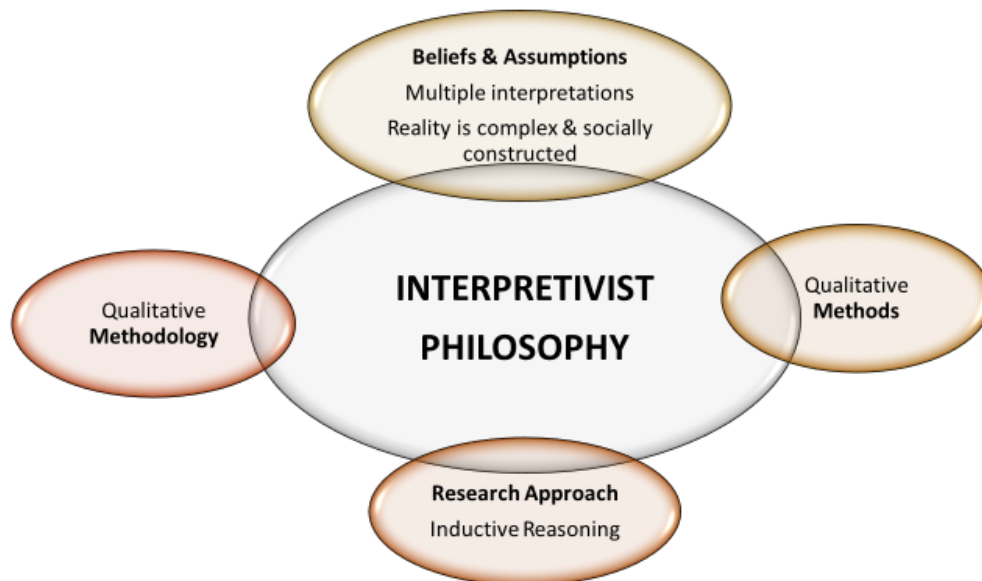
By contrast, Interpretivism views reality as being socially constructed, with multiple realities based on how one interprets that reality (Berger and Luckman, 1991). Unlike Positivism, Interpretivism accepts subjectivity as a natural part of the research process, and recognizes that values can influence research; and therefore, does not seek to de-personalize research. Qualitative researchers therefore, use methods such as participant observation, unstructured/semi-structured interviews; making very little attempt to separate the researched from the researcher (Greenbank, 2003). Essentially, the aim of interpretivism/constructivism as theorized by Guba and Lincoln (1994) is to reconstruct the assumptions previously held by both researcher and participants towards consensus building and acceptance of new interpretations; as the researcher takes the role of facilitator and participant in the research process. Figure 4 (below) is a diagrammatical representation of how the assumptions, belief system of the research philosophy interacted to inform the approach and design of this research.

With this in mind, Interpretivism appropriately represented the essence of the researcher's worldview; thereby formed the base of the researcher's ontological and epistemological stance, which sought to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon within its particular context. This was done by examining the insights, perspectives and experiences of information rich participants who are experts in the subject-matter. Consequently, the research design of this scientific inquiry was anchored in the qualitative research paradigm, predicated on

naturalistic inquiry and human construction; as it sought to explore and gain a deeper understanding into how Human Capital is being leveraged for competitive advantage.

Figure 4

Interpretivist Research Philosophy



Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p8) make the important point that “qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities, processes and meaning. By extension, qualitative research focusses on the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate nature between the researcher and what is being studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.” It further recognizes the underlying value that exists as social experiences create and give meaning. The researcher therefore, convinced that a qualitative research design best suited this study; because it allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest and allowed for

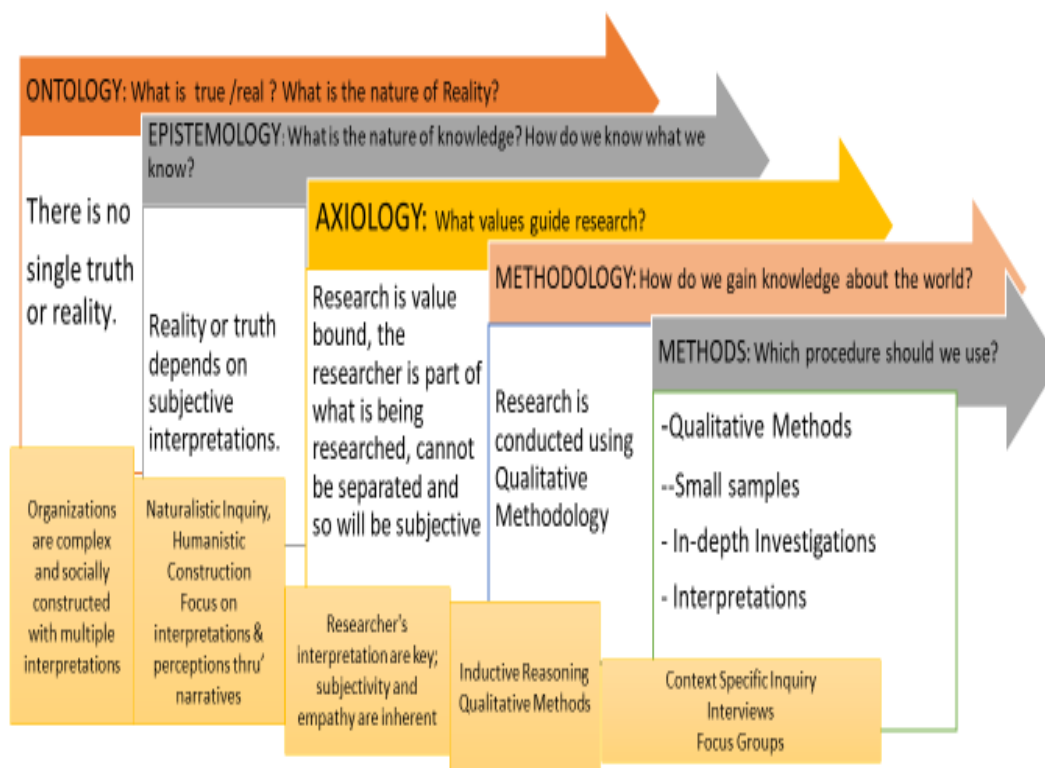
context specific exploration of a phenomenon within its natural setting, using a variety of data sources. Further, it allowed for a collaborative approach between the researcher and participants having both flexibility and rigor (Baxter, 2010). This resonated with the researcher's relativist worldview which is premised on the belief that multiple realities exist; and subjectivist epistemology which believes that understanding is created together by both researcher and participants; using a naturalistic set of methodological research procedures which allowed the participants to share their realities (Crabtree and Miller, 1999). Undoubtedly, an interpretivist approach was more suited for the research; as the research aim is to uncover underlying meaning using socially constructed humanistic inquiry; taking into the contextual representation of the cases in the study.

The researcher noted the implicit nature of the subjective epistemology of qualitative research, and therefore understood the need to be careful not to fall into the trap of reckless abandonment of objectivity; as this would have negative implications on the trustworthiness of the research findings. Hence, reflexivity was an integral part of the research process; which allowed the researcher to consider her own beliefs, judgements and values and practices to see how they influenced the approach taken in conducting scientific inquiry. By using reflexivity, the researcher took into account pre-conceptions, underlined assumptions and of necessity requires honest acceptance that the researcher was an active part of the research (Finlay, 1998). Importantly, a keen awareness of how the researcher's personal values could influence the research (through reflexivity) was critical; and when combined with a technique called Bracketing, the researcher was able to 'put to the side' her personal perceptions, experiences and values as a strategy to mitigate against biases (Chan et al., 2013). Based on the principles of the interpretivist philosophy and the nature of the study being undertaken, qualitative research was

indeed most ideal; because the aim of this qualitative research was “illumination, understanding and extrapolation to similar situations” (Patton, 2015, p2); which represented the core objectives of this research. Figure 5 (below) depicts the natural trajectory of the research philosophy which undergirds this study, from Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology, to Methodology.

Figure 5

Research Design based on an Interpretivist Philosophy.



Research Logic

The logic which drives scientific inquiry can either be deductive or inductive. Moreover, the research logic of a particular study is determined by the choice of methodology; that is, whether quantitative or qualitative. Deductive logic undergirds quantitative research and

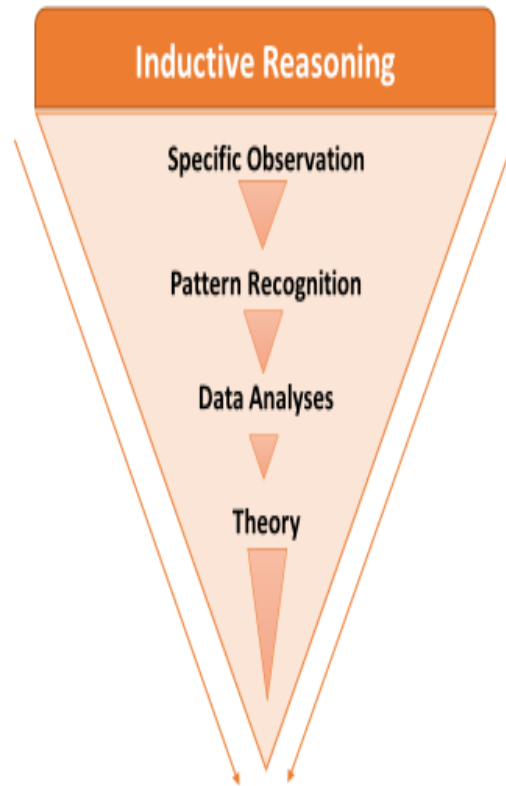
inductive logic undergirds qualitative approach. The former begins with expected patterns which are tested with a view to identifying theory, developing new hypothesis (Saunders et al, 2016); while the latter starts with observations to determine recognizable patterns for the purpose of creating new theory (Dworkin, 2012).

Based on the methodological approach to this study which was previously described in detail as being qualitative, the research logic which guided this study was inductive reasoning. The process of inductive reasoning moved from specific observations to patterns recognition, then related data about these observable patterns were collected and analyzed and conclusions drawn based on the findings from the data analysis (Dworkin, 2012). Specifically, the logic which guided the research approach for this study was based on the researcher's observations of the performance of specific top performing companies in Jamaica; which declared a strategic focus on people development.

Interestingly, there were recognizable patterns which emerged over time demonstrating superbly outstanding performance of these publicly-listed companies on Jamaica Stock Exchange. On the basis of these observations of noteworthy performance patterns (financially and competitively), the researcher pursued this exploratory study to understand the strategic approaches taken by these Jamaican companies to leverage Human Capital to drive organizational competitiveness. Figure 6 (below) demonstrates the nature of inductive reasoning in this research.

Figure 6

Inductive Reasoning for Qualitative Research



Research Methodology

The Purpose of the Study

Based on the aforementioned, the purpose of this study was to explore the strategic approaches employed to leverage Human Capital; and further examined how these strategies were operationalized to improve the competitiveness of a select set of Jamaica companies across multiple industries?

Rationale for the Choice of Multi-Case Qualitative Study

Framed within the context of Interpretivism, the methods chosen for this research design is aimed at reinforcing the researcher's quest for a deeper understanding of the subject matter that is richer and more purposeful. As a qualitative study, the researcher delved deep into the phenomenon of interest; with a view to finding solutions to a specific, practical issue affecting Jamaican organizations seeking to achieve and maintain competitive advantage. In refining the research design, the researcher considered multiple types of qualitative design to determine which one was a best-fit for this research. Creswell (2014, p236) posits that the qualitative researcher "might study individuals (narrative, phenomenology); explore processes, activities and events (case study, grounded theory); or learn about broad culture sharing behaviours or groups (ethnography)". In determining the design for this research, the researcher considered four main types of qualitative research design: phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory and case study.

Phenomenology aims to understand and describe the essence of shared experiences, perceptions and feelings of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Patton (2015) further

explains that in phenomenology, the researcher attempts to access the participant's 'life-worlds' through the essence or structure of their lived experiences; providing a vicarious description of the experience for those who will read the report. This approach was not deemed suitable for the type of research being conducted for this study, as the researcher did not want to access the 'life-worlds or lived experiences of the participants.

The other design considered was Ethnography, involves the study of the cultural characteristics of people whether as individual, community or organization. The understanding, describing and interpreting of culture is of central importance to ethnography describing the shared patterns of beliefs, activities rituals etc. (Creswell, 2014; Draper, 2015). Ethnography was definitely not an appropriate design for this research, as the researcher was not interested in the cultural beliefs and behaviours of the participants.

Grounded Theory was also considered in developing the research design. Grounded Theory is concerned with developing theory from the data gathered from the field and involves studying a process or intervention (Charmaz, 2001). It focuses on the development of theory from the bottom-up, grounded in the empirical data collected during the research. This approach, the researcher believes could be of some value to the overall research effort depending on what the findings ultimately point to and what patterns are observed; especially since the researcher does have the desire to possibly develop a theory from what may emerge from data analysis to explain how human capital development has been used to improve competitive advantage. However, since the process requires multiple stages of data collection, a larger sample size and the refinement of the interrelationships of categories (Patton, 2002). Grounded Theory seemed to be somewhat beyond the scope of this particular research effort, at this time. Notwithstanding,

since the theory emerges at the end of the study, based on the data from the study, Grounded Theory may be considered later on for future related research.

The final design considered was Case Study, which is concerned with the development, description and analysis of a case or multiple cases, as a bounded system such as, an individual, group, process or activity, (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2014). The Unit of Analysis may be an individual, programme, process or organization. Baxter and Jack, (2010) outlined four clear criteria which need to be met for a Case Study Design: (i) the study should seek to answer the how and/or why questions, (ii) the context is deemed important to the study (iv) there should be no manipulation of the participants in the study and (iv) the context and the phenomenon are inextricably linked. Based on the aforementioned, a Case Study design was deemed most suitable for this study. More specifically, the research used a Multiple Case Study design which had both exploratory and descriptive elements; where the former sought to explore the similarities and differences in how the phenomenon of interest was being leveraged for organizational competitiveness across the various cases; and the latter sought to describe what was observed within each organization's (case); at the strategic and operational levels as it relates to human capital development (Yin, 2014).

Multi-Case Study using Action Research

Whilst the research could have been conducted using a single-case or comparative case study design, the researcher was very deliberate about pursuing a multi-case study design; as this would allow for the examination of the concept of Human Capital Development from multiple perspectives, (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2014). Moreover, the multi-case study approach bolsters the research, as it allows for a more detailed account and balanced view of the phenomenon of

interest. According to a 2021 Project report from the Ministry of Industry Investment and Commerce entitled, 'Jamaica: Foundations for Competitiveness and Growth', Jamaica is classified by the World Bank as a middle-income country with two broad economic sectors which contribute to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP): (i) Services Sector and (ii) Goods Producing Sector. The former includes industries such as tourism, banking, insurance, distributive, telecommunications inter alia; whilst the latter includes agriculture, manufacturing, construction etc. Consequently, the researcher sought to have representation from companies in both the services and goods-producing sectors of Jamaica. Ultimately, five (5) publicly-listed companies (from the Jamaica Stock Exchange) were chosen, across four (4) industries in the Jamaican economy, namely the Banking, Insurance, Telecommunication and Manufacturing Industries.

Importantly, this multi-case study will take the form of Action Research which was focused on the practical applicability of the research findings to solve real-life problems within a particular locale. As explained by Lomax (1995), in Action research, the researcher's values are of central importance to the process and are considered within the context of the research question "How can I improve?" which appropriately fitted the proposed research interest which asks the question: how business competitiveness can be improved using Human Capital Development strategies. Lomax (1995) further states that the value-guiding nature of action research influences the choice of and level of data analysis used by the researcher, and involves a deeper understanding of the values that underpin the practice of both the research participants and the researcher.

Among the significant benefits of using a multi-case design, is the fact that the analysis can be done within each case setting; as well as across the various cases. By conducting the

multi-case study across different sectors, the research is deemed more dependable and transferable; based on literal replication of similar results (Baxter and Jack, 2010). Drawing on the work of Stake (1995), this particular multi-case study can be described as an Instrumental case study as the aimed is to get deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Overall, this research effort employed a qualitative design, and a multi-case study approach based on Action Research for practical applicability in industry.

Research Title, Aim and Objective

At this juncture, it is important to indicate the title of the research; as well as the overarching aim and objectives, which guided the development of the central and sub-research questions. They are as follows:

Research Title

'Leveraging Human Capital for Organizational Competitiveness, A Multi- Case Analysis of Successful Jamaican Companies'

The research is so entitled because it aimed to explore how the human capital of these industry-leading companies were being strategically developed, to provide a distinct source of competitive advantage. In so doing, a multi-case study approach was utilized; to be able to effectively identify, cross-analyze and distill the key elements of HCD strategies of the chosen companies; with a view to developing framework for future applicability for businesses in any sector of society.

Research Objectives (RO)

Based on the aforementioned title and rationale, the phenomenon under examination in this research was the concept of Human Capital Development; and the overarching aim of the study was three folds:

- **RO1.** To identify the strategic approaches employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital.
- **RO2.** To evaluate how Human Capital Development is operationalized to improve HC value towards greater competitiveness.
- **RO3.** To identify a framework for Human Capital Development (HCD), which can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness.

Research Questions (RQ)

Based on the overarching aims and objectives of the study, the following research question and sub-research questions were developed:

Central Research Question

How is Human Capital being strategically leveraged to improve Organizational Competitiveness, in a select set of top-performing Jamaican Companies?

Research Questions (RQ)

RQ1. What strategic approaches have been employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital (HC)?

RQ2. How are the Human Capital Development (HCD) strategies operationalized to improve HC value towards greater competitiveness?

RQ3. How can Human Capital Development be modelled into a framework that can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness?

Linking the Literature Review to the Research Design

As pointed out earlier in the discussion about Conceptual Framework, Ravitch and Rigor (2016) emphasized the importance of ensuring that the research questions are linked with the major themes coming from the Literature Review. This aided the researcher in crafting appropriate research questions to measure the phenomenon of interest. Additionally, having fully conceptualized the research approach based on the Interpretivist philosophy, the research design framework can now be used to demonstrate how the research questions were inextricably linked to the major themes from the Literature Review; and further how the question crafted for the Interview and Focus Group questions were framed by and birthed from those key research questions; which all surrounded the Central Research Question of the Study. Tables 1, and 2 (below) provide a tabular representation of the connection between the Theoretical Framework and the Research Design.

Table 1 also demonstrates the two core theoretical perspectives from the Literature Review: (i) the Dimensions of HC and (ii) the RBV –VRIO Theory; represented as both themes and sub-themes; and further shows how they connect to the main research objectives and

translate to the key research questions. Owing to the fact, that the research objective was to explore the concept of HC in its three (3) dimensions, each of the key research questions also examined the concept using this three-dimensional approach. Therefore, the aim was to identify the strategies and operational initiatives at each of those three dimensions.

Table 1*Linking Literature Review Themes with Research Objectives*

Linking Literature Review Themes with Research Objectives						
Theoretical framework	Key themes From Lit. Review	Sub-themes from literature review		Research Objective #1	Research Objective #2	Research Objective #3
HC DIMENSIONS	HC Theory	HC Theory	RBV/VRIO Framework			
Intellectual Capital Dimension	Knowledge Management Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Acquisition • Knowledge Transfer • Knowledge Application 	V - Valuable HC Resources R - Rare HC Resources	To identify the strategic approaches employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital.	To evaluate how Human Capital Development is operationalized to improve the HC value towards competitiveness	To develop a framework for Human Capital Development (HCD), which can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness
Social Capital Dimension	Organizational Learning and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual/ Team Learning • System Learning • Continuous Improvements • Learning Culture • 	I- Inimitable HC Resources	To identify the strategic approaches employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital.	To evaluate how Human Capital Development is operationalized to improve the HC value towards competitiveness	To develop a framework for Human Capital Development (HCD), which can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness

Organizational Capital Dimension	Organizational Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Vision & Fate • Organizational Memory • Dynamic Capabilities 	O - Organized HC Resources to be leveraged	To identify the strategic approaches employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital.	To evaluate how Human Capital Development is operationalized to improve the HC value towards competitiveness	To develop a framework for Human Capital Development (HCD), which can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness

Based on the research objectives identified in Table 1 (above), the researcher was able to more pointedly and accurately craft the battery of questions for the data collection instruments; from the key research questions. Each question was influenced by the findings coming from the Literature Review stage of the research; and was therefore supported by source references from the Literature Review. See Table 2 (below), which depicted the development of the questions for the data collection instruments for both the Expert Interviews and Focus Groups.

Table 2

Linking Research Questions, with Conceptual Themes & Key References

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION: How is Human Capital being leveraged in a set of top-performing Jamaican companies across multiple sectors?					
Research Questions (RQ)			Interview Questions		Key References
RQ1	RQ2	RQ3			
THEME: INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL DIMENSION OF HCD					
What strategic approaches have been employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital (HC)?	How are the Human Capital Development (HCD) strategies operationalized in each dimension to improve HC value towards greater competitiveness?	How can Human Capital Development be modelled into a framework that can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness?	1	Describe the organization's approach to HCD; as it relates to how L&D is represented in the organizations structure (level, authority and size)? Is there a formal department, with specific roles and functions?	Annosi et al (2021), Basten, and Haamann (2018_ Bontis (1998)
			2	Does your company have a Corporate University as a part of its internal structure or does it pursue external partnership with an Institution to provide L&D services? Is your organization's L&D model (i) Brick & Mortar, (ii) E-Portal or (iii) Blended?	Wang, li and Qiao (2010) Wang (2008)
			3	Does the organization have a formal Knowledge Management system to include a repository of data (hard & soft)?	Yang (2021), Scarborough et al (1999) Wang et al (2014)
			4	Are there specific policies and procedures; which govern how the KM system works? What techniques are utilized to encourage the transfer of knowledge from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People to systems • System to people • people to people 	Chandra, (2019) Ginting, (2020)
			5	Is Learning & Development required for all levels of staff? Are there areas of emphasis based specific strategic focus?	Gil et al, (2019), Hyland and Matlay, (1997).

THEME 2: SOCIAL CAPITAL DIMENSION OF HCD					
What strategic approaches have been employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital (HC)?	How are the Human Capital Development (HCD) strategies operationalized in each dimension to improve HC value towards greater competitiveness?	How can Human Capital Development be modelled into a framework that can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness?	6	Describe the approach used in developing and articulating the strategic vision and mission of the organization; to achieve maximum buy-in by employees at all levels?	Wheelen and Hunder, (2018)
			7	Would you describe your organization as having a culture of learning; and if so, what techniques are used to encourage continuous learning?	Milbratz et al, (2020), Wang and Ahmed, (2003).
			8	How does the organization's leadership work to encourage systematic and spontaneous feedback as a function of organizational and individual learning?	Gil et al, (2019)
			9	What approach is utilized to generate 'Shared-Fate' (unity of purpose) and team spirit across the organization?	Uland (1994)
Theme 3: Organizational Capital Dimension of HCD					
What strategic approaches have been employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital (HC)?	How are the Human Capital Development (HCD) strategies operationalized in each dimension to improve HC value towards greater competitiveness?	How can Human Capital Development be modelled into a framework that can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness?	10	What is your organization's value proposition and how does it distinguish itself from its competitors?	Awamleh and Ertugan, (2021)
			11	Describe the areas of competitive strengths (dynamic capabilities) for your organization? To what extent are these dynamic capabilities driven by the development of your organization's HC resources?	Halisa, et al (2021), Wheelen and Hunger, (2018)
			12	Is your organization best described as (i) Change-making - Proactive) or (ii) and Analyzing - Responsive or (iii) and Status-quo keeping - Reactive? Explain your answer	Kiani et al (2020)
			13	Is talent strategy and human capital oversight discussed at the board level? If so, is there support at the board level for the strategic investments in human capital development?	Klemesh et al, (2020), Frigo and Ubelhart, (2015)
			14	Does the organization have a talent strategy for attracting, improving and retaining high performance talent?	Klemesh et al, (2020)

			15	Does the organization employ Human Capital Analytics (specific HR metrics and indices) to inform decision making and predict business performance? Name a few key metrics?	Rawley and Gup, (2009)
			16	Are you seeing a need for a shift/re-focus in strategic priorities to embrace more targeted HCD strategies to meet the demands of a technology-driven digital world characterized by: AI, IOT, Big Data?	Assensoh-Kodua, (2019), Schwarz, (2019), Basten and Haamann (2018)

Role of the Researcher

The role of researcher differs depending on the type of research being pursued; that is, whether quantitative, qualitative or Mixed Method. In quantitative research, the role of the researcher is virtually non-existent due to the need to be value-neutral, ensuring that research subjects are independent of the researcher; with the aim of removing all biases and subjectivity. However, in qualitative research, the researcher's role is distinctly different, being far more immersive and interrelated with the research participants. Guba and Lincoln's (1994, p 111) point out that both "the investigator and the object of the investigation are assumed to be inextricably linked so that the findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds". In conducting this qualitative study, the researcher's role was to conduct the research using established scientific principles; ensuring that throughout all phases of the research (data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting) that the highest ethical standards are maintained. The researcher was careful to document the relevant procedures and protocols which were to be observed throughout the research process to safeguard the research participants, ensuring the integrity of the research process and trustworthiness of the research findings (Yin, 2014). With this mind, Greenbank (2003), posits that the researcher should detail existing

assumptions, experiences, expectations and biases in relation to the subject matter being researched. This self-declaration from the researcher in relation to the study, should also include whether the researcher is a part of the phenomenon of interest with an insider view or whether the researcher is external to the phenomenon of interest, with an outsider view. It is noteworthy that for this study, the researcher has significant professional knowledge and experience on the chosen subject matter of Human Capital Development; and worked in a facilitatory manner with the highly qualified participants who are subject matter experts on the topic being researched. This allowed the researcher to probe deeper to discover and interpret underlying meaning, in the quest for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest; based on individual and collective experiences of the participants.

The Pilot Study

Justification for the Pilot Study

Although, more commonly used in quantitative research, Pilot Studies have become increasingly important to the planning and execution of successful qualitative research endeavors, especially as it relates to the methodological issues in the research, (Watson, 2016). A pilot study can be described as a smaller version to the main research, which is undertaken to test if the mechanism of the main study work as they are intended (Wray et al., 2014). By conducting a pilot study, a researcher is able test the various research procedures and protocols and to determine where adjustments are needed to make the study more effective; whilst gaining valuable insight into future difficulties which are likely to occur (Kim, 2011). According to Malmqvist et al., (2019) where interview questions or procedures are conducted in the qualitative pilot study, do not stimulate the appropriate kinds of responses or provide for rich data; then the

relevant modifications can be made to improve the rigor of the data collection instrument. The pilot also serves as a good indicator for the researcher, regarding the management of researcher biases. Additionally, Yin (2014) explained that, the researcher is also an instrument in the research process, which means key emphasis ought to be placed on matters of preparedness, trustworthiness, humility and reflexivity (Malmqvist et al., 2019).

Objectives of the Pilot Study

With this in mind, the researcher used the lessons learnt from the pilot study as a critical check point to enhance the dependability and trustworthiness of the study; based on the experiential learning which occurred at each phase of the pilot study. Wray et al., (2014) emphasized that a pilot test provides the researcher with a better understanding of the subject matter being investigated and also provides an opportunity to engage practically with the various procedural requirements of the research. Therefore, the objectives of the pilot study for this research effort were: (i) to test the instrumentation rigor, (ii) to test the soundness of the methodological procedures and protocols (iii) to observe participants' understanding (iv) and to gain insights to foster effective management of researcher biases.

Instrumentation rigor

The first objective of the pilot study was to test the rigor of the data collection tools to gauge their effectiveness at eliciting the type and range of response required; as well as the wording and ordering of questions. The data collection instrument used was a semi-structured interview instrument, which allowed for open-ended answers. In administering the questions to the interviewees, the researcher realized, that although great care was taken to ensure that the

questions crafted for the interview came from the key themes emanating from Literature Review; the questions were quite complexed in how they were phrased. Essentially, the questions were more academically phrased; which meant that during the interview, the interviewer needed to deconstruct the questions and re-interpret them within the context of business to ensure that the interviewee fully understood what was being asked. This was necessary to ensure that appropriate answers were elicited based on the central research question of the study. This point was emphasized by Malmqvist et al., (2019) to state that the focus of the pilot should to identify areas of modification needed to either questions or procedures which do not effectively enable the research to gather rich data. Consequently, the instrument had to be re-ordered and questions re-crafted before being administered in the main study. In restructuring the instrument, the researcher found it useful to also order the questions under the previously determined themes to ensure efficacy in measurement. Additionally, some questions were removed, some were merged and a few new ones added; all of which served to improve and refine validity and reliability of the instrument.

Soundness of the methodological procedures and protocols

The credibility of the findings of the study is greatly dependent on the soundness of the methodological procedures used in the process. Moreover, having conducted the pilot study, the researcher will also be able to better determine if additional resources are needed and whether there are unforeseen barriers to successfully executing the study (Watson, 2016). Wray et al., (2014) also opined that the pilot study offers valuable insight into which communication procedure works best in successfully accessing participants, and what communication medium is more effective for data collection. With this in mind, the research design for this qualitative study required that data collection be done primarily through interviews and focus group

discussions; which would have been administered in a face-to-face setting. However, because of the global pandemic (Covid-19), face to face contact was completely restricted due to Government of Jamaica lockdown orders; which were in effect at the time for the entire island. Consequently, the researcher had to move to conduct both interviews and focus group sessions virtually. This meant learning to utilize and manipulate various online video conferencing software; which were used to facilitate the data collection. By conducting the Pilot Study, the researcher was able to test the efficiency of multiple software and then to settle on the one that was most reliable, accessible and user-friendly for both the participants and the researcher. The researcher settled on using Zoom Video Conferencing and Microsoft Teams. Owing to the move to on-line data collection, the researcher had the opportunity to test the various protocols, (such as participant's consent and data privacy) to ensure that they were sound; and made the modifications necessary to ensure that they now reflected the realities of the new on-line modality for data collection. While the move to online posed some challenges, it also offered some benefits which came to bear in the Pilot Study. For instance, once the interviewee provided the written consent, the researcher was able to have the session recorded not just for audio but also for video, which gave the researcher the ability to observe the participants' responses and reactions to the questions asked; which assisted the researcher with memoing and reflections.

Moreover, the move to the on-line environment for data collection brought to the fore, the issue of the reliability of local internet service providers on the island, which became somewhat problematic, based on the increased demand for internet service during the pandemic. In conducting the Pilot Study, the researcher experienced some technical challenges from loss of signal to non-connectivity from the participant's location, due to low internet bandwidth. This interrupted the session on a few occasions; but the researcher was able to successfully navigate

the challenges as they came. However, much was learnt and overall, the situation brought to bear the importance of having a contingency plan, in the event of any of these occurrences. The contingencies which were identified from the Pilot Study and duly taken into account in the actual study. These included the use of mobile data tethering (hot-spot) a secondary internet source, in the event that disruptions did occur due to the use of Wi-Fi. The researcher made sure to familiarize herself with the procedures to use tethering, so that she could also guide the participants on how to use that option for internet service if there was a challenge from their end. Additionally, the researcher identified and downloaded a Voice Recorder App, from the Google Playstore to serve as a backup for audio recording; which could be stored, sent and accessed via WhatsApp for easy retrieval and download.

Participant's Feedback

According to Watson (2016), Pilot Studies are critical to the successful planning and execution of qualitative research projects. Kim, (2011), further stated that while conducting the pilot study, the researcher can observe the impressions of the participants before, during and after the data collection sessions. This principle was applied and so, before, during and after the interview in the Pilot Study, the participant was asked to share feedback on various aspects of the process. Moreover, the researcher was able to play back the video conferencing recording; to note carefully the participant's demeanor, reactions and body language throughout the interview process. This proved to be quite valuable in assisting the researcher's reflexivity and memoing as well assisted with the identification of areas of ambiguity, omissions in the questions asked; and also allowed the researcher to determine where rephrasing was necessary, to ensure optimal understanding from the participants. Based on the participant's response, the researcher was also

able to note the types of follow-up questions which were needed to allow for greater probity and consider these issues, in the refinement of the data collection instrument before moving into the actual study.

Based on the pre-interview feedback, the researcher was also able to gain insight into the amount of time involved, and the degree of difficulty in securing an interview with highly-placed executives in a successful company. Protracted delays, rescheduling issues and preferences for one communication method over another, were all brought into focus out of the Pilot Study. The researcher realized out of the Pilot Study, that although all participants for study would be given formal invitation letters sent via email; a variety of communication methods had to be employed; as some methods worked would better for some participants, in terms of their responsiveness and the researcher's ability to concretize interview dates. The researcher therefore, made the adjustments and utilized a variety of communication methods (emails, WhatsApp messages, telephone calls, text messages etc.), depending on what works best for each participant. For the Focus Group participants who were middle managers from different organizations, who would need to agree on a single date and time, the researcher found that it was most effective to reach participants via WhatsApp; and then to create a WhatsApp group for each focus group; so that group discussions could be held to decide on the session date and time. This approach was gleaned from the Pilot Study and proved to be far more efficient than traditional emails and telephone calls.

Management of Researcher Biases

In qualitative research, some subjectivity is inevitable, however qualitative researchers still ought to be careful to manage researcher biases. Having conducted the Pilot Study, the

researcher was given a unique opportunity to begin the practice of reflexivity very early in the process; as way of building a habit of reflecting; which would follow through the entire research process. According to Kim (2011), reflexivity is a very useful strategy to mitigate researcher biases, forcing the researcher to be more aware of self during the interaction with the research participants. As the Pilot Study moved through its various stages, the researcher reflected on the various aspects of the study, carefully considered the feedback from the participants in the Pilot and identified key areas which needed to be augmented/improved. The Pilot Study provided a unique learning opportunity for the researcher to learn about self, through self-reflection and evaluation; while learning about the research process through feedback and observations of what when went well, and what did not.

Conducting the Pilot Study

The Pilot study for the Expert Interviews was conducted on February 20, 2022; while the pilot study for the Focus Group was conducted on April 18, 2022. The Expert interview for the pilot, was conducted with a senior manager of a successful bank in Jamaica. The Pilot for the Focus Group had 5 participants who operate at the middle management level of their organizations. In light of the fact that the research design of the study has two main data sources (Expert Interviews and Focus Groups), the Pilot Study was also conducted on a two-tiered level to ensure that both data sources were also represented in the pilot. This was to ensure that the researcher fully considered and planned for the likely challenge which could emerge in the collection of qualitative data from both sources; as a way of improving the chances of a successful research effort.

The pilot interview was conducted on-line using Zoom video conferencing and the interview lasted about 80 minutes. The Focus Group session was done face to face with the aid of a research assistant who was on-site. This meant consideration had to be given to venue choice, room set up, recording devices, among other things. The session was conducted successfully and lasted about 90 minutes. In both cases, participants gave their written consent to allow their data to be collected, stored and used for the purpose of this study. With the sessions completed for both interview and focus group, the procedure to store, retrieve and transfer the data to NVIVO software for data analysis was the same for both sets of data. Within the NVIVO database, the transcripts were tagged as Pilot Study and assigned a reference labelling and code; which would be used by the researcher to identify the participants or the companies they represented, while maintaining their anonymity.

Results of the Pilot Study

Table 3 and Figure 8 (below) provide a tabular representation of the top twenty-five (25) words which were used most frequently in the two data sources (Interview and Focus Group). The key themes identified from the Pilot Study would be used to help the researcher in developing the coding strategy in the main study.

Table 3*Word Frequency Analysis – Pilot Study*

No.	Word	Length	Word Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words
1	organization	12	518	1.90	organization, organizations, organized
2	training	8	383	1.40	train, training, trainings
3	talent	6	366	1.34	talent, talents
4	people	6	363	1.33	people
5	company	7	360	1.32	companies, company
6	learning	8	337	1.24	learn, learned, learning
7	development	11	301	1.10	develop, developed, developing, development
8	culture	7	223	0.82	culture, cultures
9	team	4	213	0.78	team, teams
10	manager	7	213	0.78	manage, management, manager, managers, managing, management
11	know	4	205	0.75	know
12	things	6	197	0.72	thing, things
13	get	3	195	0.72	get, gets, getting
14	working	7	194	0.71	work, worked, working, works
15	need	4	193	0.71	need, needed, needs
16	want	4	189	0.69	want, wanted, wants
17	persons	7	181	0.66	person, personal, personality, personalized, personally, persons
18	times	5	174	0.64	time, times
19	grow	4	169	0.62	grow, growing, grows
20	one	3	164	0.60	one, ones
21	build	5	163	0.60	build, building, builds
22	investment	10	148	0.54	invest, invested, investing, investment, investments, invests
23	changing	8	142	0.52	change, changed, changes, changing
24	level	5	134	0.49	level, levels
25	employees	9	128	0.47	employee, employees

A closer examination of the table above illustrates that apart from the word ‘organization’ (which was inherently used because the study is being conducted within an organizational setting); the word which was used most frequently was ‘Talent’. This finding from the Pilot Study points to the importance of the notion of ‘talent’ to the issue of Human Capital Development for the companies represented in the Pilot Study. Furthermore, the word ‘talent’ emerged 518 times in data analysis of the Pilot Study; from both the expert interview and the focus group session. Based on this weighting (1.94%) placed on ‘Talent’; a deeper analysis was necessary to examine the root word ‘talent’ in terms of the context, its derivatives and conjectures; so as to better understand its underlying meaning within the Pilot Study. Consequently, researcher generated a Word Tree which further analyzed the concept of ‘talent’ as manifested in the Pilot Study. Figure 9 above; illustrates some important themes for HCD which have been observed from the Pilot Study; these include but are not limited to: Training & Development, Cross-training, Always (Continuous) Training, Training Webinars, Job-specific Training, Training gaps, Training for Job Enrichment and Enlargement, inter alia. The findings of the Pilot indicate key operational imperatives for Human Capital Development within the organizations examined in the Pilot Study.

Summary of Pilot Study

Overall, the researcher concurred with the perspective shared by Sampson (2004) that through the process of reflexivity, the researcher was able to build confidence and competence before being fully immersed in the actual research. Ultimately, conducting the Pilot Study helped the researcher to refine the methodological approaches and techniques used in the study to determine if they worked as was originally intended (Wray et al., 2014).

Additionally, the researcher got the chance to consider her skills in certain areas of the research, especially those driven by technology; and came to the realization that she needed need to augment her technical knowledge of certain software which were critical to the data collection and data analysis processes. It was also clear that a research assistant with a technical background was at this point, an absolute necessity; and had to be engaged before moving fully into the field work for actual data collection and analysis.

Research Setting and Context

As a qualitative study, the study was conducted in a naturalistic manner; within the participants' natural setting so as to get an authentic understanding of the perspectives of the research participants. The participants for this study were purposefully selected for this study based on the position they held within their respective companies. For the Expert Interviews, participants were identified as suitable for the study, if they operated in one of three capacities within their organizations: (i) Executive Leadership (President/C.E.O. /Managing Director/Executive V.P.), (ii) Head of Strategy and (iii) Head of People Management / Learning & Development. For the Focus Group Session, the participants were selected based on their professional experience in People Management /Learning & Development; as well as their responsibility level within their respective organizations; which had to be mid to senior level management. Additionally, the companies they represented have to be listed on the Jamaica Stock Exchange and should be among the top performing companies in their respective industries.

Recruiting Participants for the Study

The strategy used for getting access to the participants was the use of professional networking links (eg. Professional Bodies, LinkedIn and Professional connections). This was not very hard to do, because as publicly traded companies on the Jamaica Stock Exchange, the leadership of these companies are highly visible and data needed for the Document Analysis was also readily available based on the numerous publications which are released by each company on an annual basis. Therefore, with the use of professional networking, as well as LinkedIn, the researcher was able to make initial contact by telephone or email with the prospective participants to have a preliminary conversation; to ascertain whether they would be interested in participating in the Study.

Where interest was expressed, the researcher followed up with a formal invitation letter which was signed, scanned and emailed to the participants and their Executive Assistants (where applicable). The invitation letter was accompanied by the Research Project Guide with the details about the research effort; including procedures for anonymity, confidentiality and data protection. Also included was the Participant's Consent form; which was designed with a coding system, using an alpha-numeric code to refer to each participant from that point onwards in the study. Then follow-up was done by whatever medium the participant preferred, in order to concretize interview date and time, this could be email, telephone or WhatsApp messaging. Having secured a date and time for the interview, the video conferencing meeting link was sent, with the credentials to access the meeting. Interviews were conducted at a time most suitable to the participants, which in almost all cases was during the work week, during regular business hours.

Moderating the Sessions

The questions used for the data collection instruments were all semi-structured and based on the results of the Pilot Study, the questions were phrased for relatability of the participants with industry specific references were necessary. This allowed the participants to relax and feel comfortable enough to have a free-flowing conversation in a manner where they could share openly without hindrance; and without judgement. The researcher was ably assisted by a research assistant who assisted with technical matters as well as note taking, among other things. The use of an assistant, especially for technical matters was also based on the findings of the Pilot Study. Even after receiving written consent, the researcher ensure that each participant gave consent again to proceed with the interview/discussion via video conferencing; as well as to do the recording at the start of each session. This was an additional measure to ensure that participants were confident in the researcher's commitment to their privacy and confidentiality; as well to put them at ease before moving into the actual questions and answers. With the exception of few occurrences of low internet signals, the sessions went on as planned and were successfully completed without incidence. Interview duration ranged an average of 60 minutes.

Data Collection Procedures – A Triangulated Approach

In conducting this multi-sector case study, the research employed both primary and secondary data; and used a three-pronged triangulated approach to effectively dissect the complex issues surrounding the concept of Human Capital Development: (i) Expert Interviews (ii) Focus Group Sessions and (iii) Document Analysis.

Procedures for the Expert Interviews

As a qualitative case study, it was an absolute necessity that the data be collected from highly credible sources. As such, qualitative data was collected from an Elite Panel of Experts from four (4) key industries in Jamaica's Private Sector; namely banking, Telecommunications, Manufacturing and Insurance. In total the Expert Panel comprised twelve (12) participants from five (5) organizations, who are information rich experts; with extensive knowledge and experience to provide the kind of in-depth insight needed into the phenomenon of interest.

Data was collected using a standardized semi-structured open-ended interview instrument with carefully worded questions; arranged in a sequential and systematic order. There were little variations in the questions going in, but as the interview progressed with each respondent, the researcher had to add additional questions to allow for probity, where necessary. Slight variations also occurred due to the nature of the expertise of the respondent; that is, depending on the role the individual performed in the organization; whether the interviewee was the Head of Company, Head of People Management or Head of Strategy. The emphasis on standardization of the interview instrument is to ensure that the data collection is systematically focused on the central themes used to frame the research.

Interviews are intended to be conducted face-to-face; but with the advent of the Covid-19 Pandemic, this was not possible. Instead, video-conferencing technology was utilized. Although the face-to-face approach is arguably better when collecting qualitative data from highly placed individuals; the use of video conference was now accepted as a suitable alternative and its convenience actually work to the benefit of the researcher; as it will allowed for greater ease in setting up the interview process; without losing the formalities which senior executives would require.

With any Elite Panel of Experts, the researcher was aware of the difficulties that come with accessing these persons of influence; to include scheduling issues, delays and cancellations. Hence the researcher was very proactive and strategic in how she went about the process of getting the panelist to fulfil the research objectives. The researcher utilized a number of professional contacts in each of the identified organizations represented on the panel; as well as her networking skills to gain access to these individuals; rather than only relying on the formal route of making 'cold calls'.

Focus Group Session

To bolster the data collected from the Elite Panel of Experts, two Focus Group Sessions were convened with management practitioners in the field of Human Resource Management/Development; who are subject matter experts and could therefore offer more insight to assist the researcher in understanding the central and sub-research questions. As was the case for the Elite Panel for Expert interviews, the sample size for the Focused Group Session and the number of sessions to be conducted was significantly driven by the level of data saturation. Hennink et al., (2019) point to varying studies (Guest et al., 2006; Hennink et al.,

2016; Francis et al., 2010), which noted that scholars have put forward varied sample size that they theorize will allow for data saturation; but they made the point that two to three focused group sessions are sufficient to capture 80% of themes, including the most prevalent themes.

Based on the findings of the research done by Hennink et al., (2019) which in turn draws on the works of several noteworthy scholars, the researcher conducted two (2) Focus Group Sessions which were sufficient to allow for data saturation to be achieved; especially since the use of focused groups was just one of three layers in the data collection strategy. Additionally, the researcher designed the focus group session so that each one consisted of 5-6 persons; thereby ensuring that the number remains appropriate to allow for the in-depth data sharing that is desired. Participants for the Focused Groups were drawn from the organizations chosen for the case study, as well as other top performing organizations within various sectors of Jamaica.

Document Analysis

As previously mentioned, five (5) companies have been selected for a multi-sector case study analysis where the researcher will explore in-depth the concept of human capital developed as operationalized within these organizations. The use of Document Analysis from these cases, allowed for the critical yet systematic examination of secondary data in the form of business artefacts, records, documents, databases which assisted in illuminating the specific organizational approach to knowledge management, organizational learning and organizational intelligence. The document analysis was guided by the previously conducted theoretical review of related literature. Being qualitative in nature, the data from the Document Analysis was used to support the data collected from Elite Interviews and Focus Group Sessions to concretize the research findings.

As it relates to ease of accessibility of written documentation on the selected companies in the Case Analysis, all five companies are publicly traded firms and so they have made a lot of public information about the strategic and operational aspects of their organization as a whole; which was easily accessed over the internet. I was also to request access to certain documentation during the Expert Interviews; which worked well based on the level of authority of the person being interviewed.

At this juncture, it is important to point out that although the process of data collection and analysis may seem sequential, it was actually iterative in nature. In fact, from the point where the collecting of data began, some level of analysis occurs which may in turn lead to further collection of data and the cycle continues (Haig, 2010). Pawluch (2005), concurs with this perspective and further indicated that instead of a sequential order, there is constant interplay as steps are interrelated and intertwined. There was on-going dialogue with the data through the research process; thereby characterizing the process at best, as emergent, fluid and flexible (Pawluch, 2005).

Data Collection Process

Pre-Collection Phase

The pre-interview stage began with the development of key research documents: the data collection instruments, interview protocols, focus group protocols, the research project guide, participants consent form and the invitation letter template, (see appendices A through G). Once these key documents were developed, they were submitted to the University of Sunderland for approval from the University's Ethics Committee. Two instruments were submitted, one for the Expert Interviews and one for the Focus Groups. The questions on both instruments were

organized into three sections based on the three key themes used to frame the research: (i) Intellectual Capital Dimension, (ii) Social Capital Dimension and (iii) Organizational Capital Dimension (see appendices A and B).

In terms of the documentation used throughout the data collection process, the Protocol Guidelines outlined the steps to be taken before, during and after the interview or focus group sessions; to ensure that participants, were relaxed, fully engaged and that all ethical parameters were maintained. The research project guide provided a brief overview of the research project including the key ethical obligations of the researchers, the voluntary nature of the study and measures in place to store and protect participants' identity and data. The Consent Form was done as a template document; which was completed by each participant in order to give expressed consent to the researcher to proceed with the research; in accordance with the stipulations outlined in the research guide; as well as to record the interview and focus group session for the purpose of transcribing and data analysis. The invitation letter introduced the concept of a participant coding system with a unique code assigned to each organization and participant, for the purpose of the research only; without any reference to the name of the organization or the name of the participant. The Consent form for each participant was pre-filled with the assigned code for a specific participant, and sent along with invitation letter and other research documents previously mentioned as a pre-cursor to the interview / focus group session.

Importantly, based on one of the findings of the Pilot Study, it was necessary to revise to both instruments to improve their efficacy. Ultimately, the number of questions on each instrument was refined and modified to 12 questions and 10 questions respectively for the Interview and Focus Group instruments. With the revisions completed and all documents in place, the researcher was able to move into the actual data collection stage at that point; and so

the first set of documents were sent out on February 01, 2022. The same was done for all 12 participants and then the follow-up process continued to secure a date and time for the actual interviews. The process was lengthy and time consuming, as the researcher navigated executive calendars, delays and cancellations. Notwithstanding, the process was soon underway; and the first interview was set for Executive VP of Jamaica's largest insurance company on the 2nd of March, 2022. For the Focus Groups, the researcher used WhatsApp app to create a group (with the participants' consent) so that I could speak with all the prospects to finalize date and time. This method of using a group chat via social media, was actually quite efficient and made the finalization of the details for the focus group sessions very easy; and with no rescheduling or delays.

In-Collection Phase

Once the interview dates and times were set for each expert interview, the meeting link was sent via Zoom Video conferencing or Microsoft Teams depending on the preference of the participant. The process was iterative, so interviews were under way for some participants, while others were still being scheduled. Overall, the 12 interviews took place over the months of March and April 2022; and the 2 Focus Groups were also held in April 2022. None of the participants from the focus groups participated in the expert interviews; they were executed as two distinct samples by design. In conducting each interview, the researcher made sure to follow the protocols which were developed to guide the proceedings. Participants were given a brief overview of the research project, the title, aim, methods etc., and they were advised of their rights under the study, the ethical safeguards in place, and asked to indicate their willingness to proceed based on the information provided to them. With the consent of the participant received,

the research then moved into the actual interview, where interview questions were asked one at a time; with appropriate follow-up questions to allow for probity. Where necessary, clarifications were sought and received from both participants and researcher. Participants were encouraged to share freely and to answer honestly. Each session was recorded, and participants again had to click in the video conferencing app, to indicate their willingness to allow the recording to proceed. On average, the interview session lasted approximately 60 minutes; while the focus group sessions lasted just about 90 minutes.

Once the interviews were completed, and the session ended, the software automatically generated the recording in audio and video and downloaded it to a file in the researcher's cloud storage; which was encrypted and password protected. Back up recordings were also done on a voice recording app on the researcher's phone and shared via WhatsApp which operated on both phone and computer. Then these recordings via the mobile app were downloaded to a designated folder in the researcher's cloud storage; that is password protected. Following which the recordings were deleted from phone.

Post Collection Phase

All recordings and transcripts were saved using the previously developed coding system for each participant, and kept in a file that was encrypted and password protected to ensure that safe storage of this valuable data. None of the data was stored in the participants' actual names or names of their companies. For those interviews done in Microsoft Team, a transcript was also produced automatically, which was safely stored in like manner as previously described. However, the majority of the interviews as well as the focus group session were done using Zoom; and so another software called Otter AI was used to do the transcribing of the audio. Once

all the transcripts were produced, organized and safely stored, the researcher was able to move to the data analysis phase.

Sampling Strategy

Purposeful Sampling

The overall sampling strategy used was Purposeful Sampling which was deemed appropriate for this qualitative multi-case study, because the aim was to conduct in-depth data collection for a specific purpose. The goal was not to have a representative sample or make generalizations from a sample to a population as is done with quantitative research (Patton, 2015). Instead, Purposeful Sampling gathers a non-representative sample of a larger population to explore the complexities of phenomenon of interest, across cases. Cases were selected therefore, because they were ‘information rich’ and had the ability to illuminate and provide deep meaning and insight to what is being researched. Sampling choices would be based on the fact that a case selected presents an intense manifestation of the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2015).

Sample Size

Determining the sample size was one of the most challenging issues in qualitative research, as the literature surrounding the subject matter is quite limited (Guest et al, 2008). As would be expected, for qualitative research the sample size is smaller than that for quantitative research; specifically, because qualitative research “is not concerned about making generalizations to a larger population of interest and does not rely on hypothesis testing but rather is more inductive in its process” (Dworking, 2012, p1). Scholars such as Boddy (2016)

indicate that determining sample size in qualitative research is to a great extent context specific and is greatly dependent on the research paradigm being employed for the study.

The sample size would therefore be much smaller in qualitative studies and focused on collecting thick and rich data, based on an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of interest; usually focused on the how and why of situation, process, issue etc., (Dworking, 2012). Boddy (2016) makes the important point that under specific defined circumstances a sample size of one (1) case can be justified especially when the findings are new and highly relevant; however, based on theoretical saturation, a sample size of twelve (12) is considered a likely point where data saturation can be achieved amongst a relatively homogenous population.

Importantly, in determining the sample size for this multi-case study, the researcher paid attention to the homogeneity of the group, in terms of their approach to the phenomenon of interest. The homogeneity of the sample will allow for cross-analysis of the key themes across the cases which adds to the robustness of the analysis. Additionally, using the Criterion-I Technique, as outlined by Palinkas (2015), the researcher was able to select the cases based on the predetermined set of criteria, that are of central importance to study. The following are the pre-determined criteria which were established for selecting the cases. The selected companies:

- must be in a sector of the economy that contributes significantly to the economic development of Jamaica;
- be the top performing or among the top performing companies in the respective industry;
- Have the characteristics of a learning organization, with a distinct strategic focus on human capital development.
- Have established a Corporate University or Learning and Development Arm that operates strategically to drive the management and development of talent within the organization.

Based on the aforementioned, five (5) companies from four (4) key industries in Jamaica were selected for this multi-sector Case Study. These cases not only met the stated criteria but they also present an intense manifestation of the phenomenon of interest; as organizations which are highly successful in their industries and which openly credited their success to their specific people-focused strategies to achieve competitive superiority.

The participants chosen for the sample are the senior executives in each of the selected companies, holding positions such as: Chief Executive Officer, Managing Director, as well as Chief Human Resource/People Officers and Chief Strategy Officer etc. The actual titles vary from company to company. Notwithstanding the peculiarities of titles, the research participants were selected because of their position of expert leadership within each organization; and the known successes of their respective organizations throughout the industry, having successfully distinguished themselves from their competitors based on a particular differentiated strategy. A total of twelve (12) participants have been identified for the Sample for the Elite Interviews and 12 participants for the two (2) Focus Groups. Note carefully, that the researcher is aiming for a sample size of twelve (12); which based on the scholarly work done by theorists such as (Boddy, 2016; Guest et al., 2008; Fusch and Ness, 2015 and Dworking, 2012) is the recommended sample size which is theorized to allow for data saturation to be achieved. In explaining the concept of data saturation, Fusch and Ness (2015) purported that data saturation is achieved when enough information exists to replicate the study, the ability to obtain new information has been maximized and it is no longer practical to continue with further coding. The researcher bore in mind, this issue of the data saturation point, as the data collection process proceeded. The two additional Focus Groups was a deliberate strategy by the researcher to ensure data saturation.

The researcher also noted carefully the point made by Bernard (2002) who highlighted that in addition to having a vast array of knowledge and expertise on the subject area, the importance of participants being willing and able to communicate their experiences and opinions in a reflective and expressive manner. As such, the researcher paid special attention to the choice of organizational representatives selected for the Elite Panel, noting that these industry representatives openly and willingly spoke about the importance of human capital development to their respective entities in the public space; and continued to highlight their people-focused strategies to the wide audience through the local print, electronic and social media. Ultimately by using purposive sampling, the researcher was able to ensure that that the participants selected for the sample were ‘information-rich; possessing expert information on the issues which are of central importance to the research (Patton, 2015). The sampling strategy utilized information-rich cases because they present an intense yet credible manifestation of the phenomenon of interest, (Cresswell et al., 2011) which for this study is human capital development.

Data Analysis Procedures

Using a multi-sector case study approach as the scientific base for conducting this qualitative inquiry, the researcher collected qualitative data from various sources and analyzed this data using methods to include coding, memoing, and specific data interpretation procedures (Haig, 2010). Specifically, the researcher organized the relevant ideas based on similarity of content and placed them into categories, then each piece of data was reviewed, contrasted and compared one with the other; so that areas of commonality and dissimilarities can be identified. This then allowed the researcher to determine the patterns as well as the main themes used to frame the research effort (DePoy and Gitlin, 2016). The data analysis was conducted using the overarching framework by Miles and Huberman (1994) which broke down data analyses into three distinct phases: Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusion Drawing. The framework from Miles and Huberman (1994) was augmented by other scholars such as Johnson and Christensen, (2014) Haig, (2010) and Braun and Clarke, (2019).

Data Reduction Phase

The first phase of the data analysis process began with the reducing of the data collected to ensure that it was manageable in terms of size and to do the relevant editing for intelligibility. In the case of the interviews, the transcripts were quite large and in excess of 30 pages each, while for the focus groups the transcripts were about 40 pages each; which made it difficult to process unless the data was reduced. Editing was also necessary because there were some expected errors made by the software in translating words and phrases; especially if the internet signal fell during an interview/session. Additionally, Jamaicans speak a local dialect which came out naturally from each participant, especially the more relaxed they got in each interview or

discussion. Therefore, translation had to be done from Jamaican Patois to English. Consequently, a detailed data reduction process was conducted to carefully review and format the; data without compromising data quality. The data reduction process was carried out for each transcript produced from the interviews and one for the transcript from each focus group session.

With the data reduction process completed, the coding process began with each transcript being imported into the NVIVO software. Great care was taken to ensure that all reference to the company and participants were removed in the formatting process prior to the importing; where each file was given an alpha-numeric participant code; which was previously developed to maintain anonymity of the participants and their organization. After, the transcripts were imported to NVIVO, the next step was to create a 'case' for each transcript (referred to in the software as a file). The case was an actual replica of the transcript file; which was used to create the Nodes in the coding process. See Appendix K which displays the summary of the transcripts imported to NVIVO which were converted to files; where each file represents a transcript. The total data set of both interview transcript and transcript from the focus group session are depicted in the table. The table displays horizontally, the total words and paragraphs in each file; as well as the alpha-numeric data collection codes which was assigned to each transcript. This allows for an audit trail so that the data in software to be traced back to the original transcript where the data is in its rawest form; which gives credence to the authenticity of the data and the credibility of the data analysis process.

The next step taken was to create the Priori Codes in NVIVO, which were previously developed based on thematic framework emanating from Literature Review and which informed the framing of the research questions; (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). Two (2) main Priori Codes (PC) were developed going into the coding process (PC1) Competitive Differentiator and

(PC2) HC Dimensions; based on the two main theoretical pillars of the research: Resource Based Theory for Competitive Advantage and Human Capital Theory. The process then required a thorough examination of the data set, based on these two Prior Codes; which would eventually result in generation of Inductive Codes as the data analyses got more intense and sophisticated. Overall, the coding process was done electronically using the NVIVO 12 software. It is noteworthy to point out that the NVIVO software uses the term 'Node' to refer to 'Code'; notwithstanding the different terminology, they both mean the same thing.

With the case created and the main priori codes determined, the next step was to create **Case Classifications** and add the distinctive **Attributes** to represent specific categories for each case. Three Attribute categories were created (i) Industry – where each company belonged, (ii) Competitive Differentiator - represented competitive strategy used by the company and (iii) Position/Level representing the specific area of expertise of the participants from each company. Figure 14 (below) displays the Case Classification and Attributes as categorized in NVIVO. It is important to emphasize at this point, that the creation of the categories was important for triangulated analysis, as this is multi-case study. See appendix J with Case Classification with relevant categories for competitive differentiator and expertise.

Importantly, the coding strategy used for this qualitative study was both meticulous and multi-layered, with the aim of producing robust data set for the data analysis phase. The aim is to ensure the scientific rigor in process. With this mind, the researcher drew on the work of Haig (2010), which conceptualizes the coding process as comprising three essential steps: Open Coding, Axial Coding and Selective Coding.

Open coding - in conducting the open coding, the researcher examined the data in each case (transcript) line by line in NVIVO, focusing on the ideas presented by each unit of data with

a view to coding specific portions of the data to specific nodes. It was during this process that inductive coding emerges, as new nodes are created as the researcher based on the themes which are emerging from the data in the case. New nodes continued to emerge as the researcher moved through each case. By then patterns started to form which became more and more pronounced as the researcher move steadily through each case. With each case coded, the pattern recognition became more defined.

Axial coding – having identified categories in the opening coding, the next step was the process of Axial coding; which was necessary to re-organize the data into conceptual components based on connections made between categories. Essentially, the researcher reviewed the nodes created to see where sub-components were needed based on emerging themes; and where it was necessary to create new nodes. The next step was to move to selective coding.

Selective coding – was final of the three steps in the coding process; and at this stage, the researcher conducted a systematic synthesizing of related categories so that categories were refined and authenticated. The combined effect of the steps taken in the coding process (open, axial and selective) allowed for the effective transformation of the raw data from the data collection phase, into a coherent depiction of study to show patterns and relationship between key themes. At the end of the final stage of this three-tiered coding process, there was a systematic synthesizing of related categories/ themes, resulting in robust data analysis framework in NVIVO of 61 synthesized nodes. This coding framework in NVIVO represents the overarching structural frame for the Thematic Factor Analysis in the next stage of the study and is referred to as the Project Codebook. See appendix I which displays the complete the codebook for the research project in its entirety; effectively illustrating each node (coding

category), the number cases (participants); and number of text references extracted from the transcripts associated with each case.

Data Display Phase

The second stage of the data analysis according to Miles and Huberman, (1994) was the Data Display stage. In this stage, the data is examined based on various thematic categories, to determine the frequency and re-occurrence of ideas across the various nodes/codes; as the first part of the Thematic Factor Analysis. This analysis of qualitative data allowed for the identification and presentation of themes from the data. (Baun and Clarke 2019, p5) refer to these themes as ‘Domain Summaries’; which essentially means “summaries of what participants said in relation to a particular topic or data collection question.” This thematic analysis can be done both manually and electronically.

However, the researcher used the software NVIVO to electronically conduct the thematic analysis of the cases across all the major themes (nodes). The data which was electronically generated from NVIVO was displayed in a tabular format in a multi-layered way; in the form of a matrix. With the data organized in a matrix format, pattern recognition became easier; which facilitated the determination of relationships between concepts; as well as the identification of similarities and differences which existed across categories, based on the parameter defined in the research design.

Essentially, re-occurring themes which form critical pillars of the data analysis were analyzed using NIVO tools to determine the relationship between themes. Within the context of NVIVO, the researcher used a combination of codebook approach and reflective approach to conduct the thematic analysis process. The Codebook Approach as described by Smith and Firth,

(2011), uses a structured codebook to conceptualize the emerging themes as domain summaries; based on the interpretative nature of the data being coded (Braun et al,2019). The code book for this research was displayed in appendix I. (Braun and Clarke, 2019), opine that such an approach works well with Reflective Approach which takes into account the interpretative nature of the data; and the researcher's role in that interpretation to determine patterns and meaning. This occurs on two levels: "the researcher's reflective and thoughtful engagement with their data and their reflexive and thoughtful engagement with the analytical process", (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p594); both of which were experienced by the researcher in this study.

One of the key NVIVO tools which was used by the researcher in the data analysis phase, was the Word Frequency Analytic tool. Once the parameters were set in NVIVO to indicate what aspect of the data is being interrogated, specific Word Frequency reports were generated which displayed list-views of key concepts which emerged as the main recurring themes. Interestingly, the data was presented in a tabular format with the attending details of the frequency, weighting and word similarities listed horizontally. From the Word Frequency Analysis, images such as Word Clouds, Word Trees, as well Cluster Diagrams were generated to augment the analytical process. Additional Lexical Searches were conducted to create Word Grids for the major themes; in order to move to the next level of the process; which is the Framework Analysis. Additionally, the software was used to do Case Classifications with specific Attribute Values; across specific coding categories which was used to demarcate the various industries represented in the study; as well as the different competitive strategy being pursued by the cases in a particular industry. Figure 13 (below) depicts a Bar Graph which displays the industries represented in the study. By classifying the cases by industry and competitive strategy, the researcher was able to

effectively triangulate the data; across the various case classification (industries) and attribute variables (competitive strategy) to further heighten the level of analysis.

Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, the issue of trustworthiness is of central importance, in the same way that validity and reliability are important to quantitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1986). Interestingly for qualitative research, each research outcome even with similar research parameters will likely yield unique outcomes, hence, qualitative research does not seek replicability or generalizability, and therefore the issue of validity and reliability are not goals of qualitative research. Instead, qualitative research strives for trustworthiness, which assures confidence in the credibility of research findings. Lincoln and Guba, (1995), provide a well thought out framework which is still quite relevant to qualitative research. This framework for achieving trustworthiness has four (4) important criteria: (i) credibility, (ii) transferability, (iii) dependability and (iv) confirmability.

Credibility for Trustworthiness

Credibility is concerned with whether the research findings are an accurate representation of the response given by the participants in the research; that is, whether “a true picture is presented of the phenomenon under investigation” (Shenton, 2004, p63). Additionally, creditability also addresses how the ideas generated in the findings relate or connect to each other Stahl and King, (2020); when examined from multiple qualified participants with a similar profile. Expressed another way, credibility seeks to determine how aligned the findings are to reality; even while acknowledging the inherent subjectivity in a qualitative research design

which is based on the philosophy that reality is constructed and interpreted by the researcher. (Lincoln and Guba, 1986, Stahl and King, 2020). According to Mathison (1998) and Stenbacka (2001) in (Golafshani (2003), the issue of creditability in qualitative research is appropriately addressed by taking a triangulated in the research methodology. “Triangulation means using several sources of information or procedures from the field to repeatedly establish identifiable patterns,” Stahl and Kind, (2020, p26). Additionally, Triangulation allows for the use of multiple data collection methods in order to gather multiple, diverse realities with the aim of strengthening the research (Golafshani, 2003).

Against this background, for this multi-case study in Human Capital Development a triangulated approach was employed using multiple theoretical perspectives, multiple data sources and multiple methods. All of which served to bolster the credibility of the research findings. Each triangulated technique and its applicability to this research effort is discussed below:

Triangulation of Data

As a multi-case study across multiple industries, the research employed triangulation across multiple data sources. This was achieved using open-ended interview questions which were administered in interviews and focus group sessions to participants; which operate at multiple organizational levels: Executive Management, Middle Management and Supervisory. The use of multi-level data sources added to the scientific rigor to boost credibility and dependability. Executive Management was engaged solely for the Elite Panel of Experts, while Middle Management and Supervisory participated in the Focus Group Sessions.

Triangulation of Methods

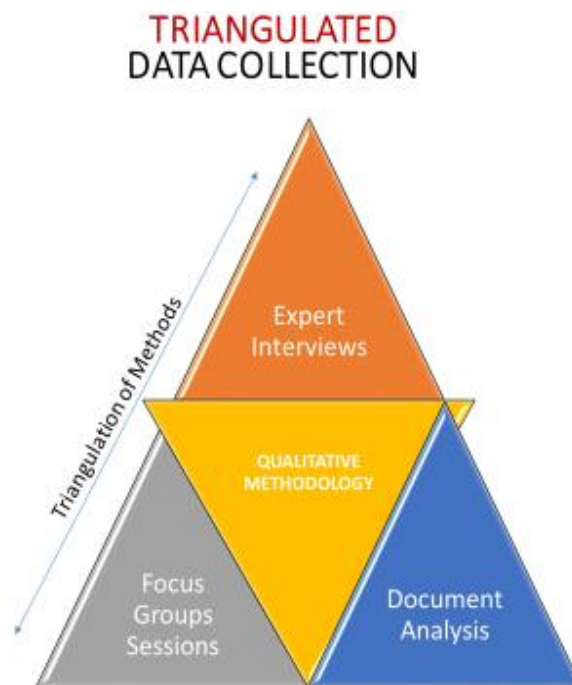
According to Golafshani (2003) the use of multiple methods of data collection such as to include interview, observations and recordings leads to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities. As such, multiple methods of data collection were used in the research; namely Case Study, Expert Interviews, Focus Group Sessions, Document Review and Business Artefact Review.

Triangulation of Theories

In explaining and interpreting the data, multiple theories were consulted to augment the findings coming from the data and improve the creditability. Triangulation offers the researcher the ability to cross-check information and conclusion through the use multiple theories, data sources and methods (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). Where there was consensus, the researcher identified points of convergence among the various data sources and categories in the study which helped to concretize or validate findings and conclusions (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

Figure 7

A Triangulated Approach to Data Collection

**Transferability for Trustworthiness**

Transferability is based on the view that patterns from one context may be transferred to another. According to Stahl and King, (2020), one of the goals of qualitative research is to transfer the understanding from one research findings or context to another context. To ensure transferability in this research, the research employed Thicke Description in the recording and interpreting of findings; moving beyond just the basic narrative of what was shared by the respondents to also consider the business and competitive context within which each organizations operated. that is, the companies' industry, competitive profile and performance. This allowed the researcher to garner a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest, based on the competitive realities of each company. It worth noting that these contextual factors added 'richness' to interpretation of the data collected from the purposive sample, by providing enough details on the contextual specificity of this research; so that readers are able to make a

determination as to whether the prevailing environmental of this research is similar and therefore justifiably transferable to another research setting (Shenton, 2003).

Importantly, the researcher noted the caution given by Stahl and King, (2020) that transferability of findings from one study should not be seen as a recipe for another study, instead it should be seen as a suggestion that in itself requires research in order to have true applicability in a new setting. Therefore, due consideration ought to be given the boundaries of the study, the organizations which took part in the study, the types of participants who contributed to the study, the data collection methods utilized, inter alia; in order to determine transferability, (Shenton, 2003). Notwithstanding the caution, with the enhanced rigor from the Triangulated techniques as well as well as the use Thicke Description; both credibility and transferability is a possibility for other organizations with similar competitive profile; even if they are not in the same industry

Dependability for Trustworthiness

Dependability in qualitative research can be likened somewhat to reliability in quantitative research. Dependability is to a great extent concerned with the methodological soundness and thoroughness of the procedures used in the research (Shenton, 2003). Therefore, these methodological procedures should be carefully laid out with specific details to allow a future researcher to repeat the study, albeit not gaining similar results Stahl and King, 2020, Shenton, 2003). For this study, the researcher outlined in great detail in Chapter three (3) the methodological procedures in a logical and systematic way, providing the operational details of how the data was gathered and analyzed. Overall, a comprehensive research design was presented with details of how the entire research was conceptualized and implemented.

Stahl and King, (2020) offered another perspective on Dependability; where they describe the concept as the ‘trust’ in the trustworthiness, emphasizing the importance of building trust in the research process. They further recommend two main techniques for Peer Scrutiny, Reflexive Analysis to include Bracketing. The researcher notes the importance of reflexivity in the research process; therefore, for the purpose of this study, reflexivity was built in at every level, to ensure a reflexive appraisal was conducted of what was being done at various stages of the research. The techniques of bracketing and memoing were integral, and was therefore used throughout the process. Importantly, Lincoln and Guba (1995) argue that there is a close connection between credibility and dependability, theorizing that by ensuring credibility, dependability is also assured. Based on this premise by Lincoln and Guba (1995), the criteria of credibility and dependability have both been carefully attended to in the research design; as explained in earlier paragraphs.

Confirmability for Trustworthiness

Stahl and King, (2020, p28) describe confirmability to be “getting as close to the objective reality as qualitative research get”; further noting that only few qualitative research go this far. However, taking a more balanced approach to the principle of confirmability would entail ensuring that the insights gained from the findings of the study reflect the views of the respondents only; without undue influences from the researcher’s biases. With this mind, the researcher leaned on the theoretical perspective of Miles and Huberman (1994); which recommend that specific steps be taken where possible to ensure that the research reflects the experiences and perspectives of the participants and not the perspectives and opinions of the researcher. Consequently, the researcher took stock of her own predispositions and inherent

biases; and countered these biases through reflexivity, carefully detailing of the methodological choices which were used underpin the research. All of which have been adequately provided for this study and thoroughly discussed in Chapter three (3).

In summary, by taking a multi-layered approach to the research design, based on Triangulation (Yin, 2013), Thick Description, and ensuring high instrumentation rigor for data collection; as well ensuring consistency in the development and use of the interview protocols; reflexive analysis and bracketing; the researcher has appropriately attended to the central issues of credibility, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985); as well as transferability of results to other situations (Hays et al 2016).

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research takes a very naturalistic approach where the researchers interact very closely with the research participants. Consequently, an inherent part of qualitative research is building of rapport and inter-personal relations of some sort which requires a great deal of trust between the researcher and participants. This highlights the need for consideration to be given to ensure the ethical integrity of research. According to Orb et al., (2000), ethics in qualitative research is concerned with three overarching themes: autonomy, beneficence and justice.

- **Autonomy**- is concerned with the rights of the participants to know all the critical information about the research effort, to include the nature of the research, its purpose, the identity of the researcher. Consequently, the researcher ensured that participants gave

their informed consent in writing; and that they indicated that they understood and agreed to participate; and also understood that have the right to withdraw if they so desire.

- **Beneficence** - this very important to ensure that participants are treated well in the process and that the researcher is careful to prevent potential harmful consequence. As a result, two key factors were considered, Anonymity and Confidentiality. In respect to Anonymity, the researcher was careful to protect the identity of participants and used pseudonym where necessary. In this research, the participants are well placed industry leaders and may even be competitors so the data shared could be considered trade secrets; which must be kept in the utmost confidence especially in a small jurisdiction like Jamaica; hence the importance of confidentiality. Therefore, participants were advised in writing how the research findings would be used; and how and when they would be published.
- **Justice** – at heart of the notion of Justice is the researcher endeavoring to be fair in all aspects of the research and minimize personal and other biases; and of course, ensure that nothing that is done in part of the research puts the participants or anyone else at risk of any harmful consequence. Hence, the researcher remained committed in all aspects of the research to ensure justice, beneficence and autonomy.

Limitation of the Study

Limitations within the context of research is described by Micthell and Jolly, (2010) as possible weaknesses that could affect the findings of the research. This weakness may occur in the research design or in the interpretation of the findings, inter alia. As qualitative research,

there are some inherent limitations which are likely to occur based on the nature of the research; these include but are not limited to (i) the time-consuming nature of the research, (ii) research bias (iii) technology challenges and (iv) the generalizability of findings.

Time Consuming Nature of Qualitative Research

One of the major limitations of qualitative research was the time-consuming nature of the attending processes, from data collection to data analysis. For this research, the sample size was relatively small with 12 participants for the expert interviews and 12 persons for 2 focus group sessions; yet it took quite a while to set and finalize interview dates. This was particularly true for the expert interviews because the study consisted of business leaders at executive level; and it took great effort and skill to get these appointments booked. Consequently, the process took several weeks, despite having the expressions of interest from these executives to participate. As expected, there were still delays and scheduling conflicts throughout the process. However, to mitigate these limitations, the researcher used the social media platforms to augment the traditional approach of telephone calls and email. Interestingly, the use of social media tools like WhatsApp and LinkedIn proved quite useful at ‘cutting’ through some of the ‘red tape’ to make the interview process a success.

Another time-consuming factor came in the data analysis phase, which required transcribing and editing large transcripts from the interviews. The process of transcribing and editing the transcripts was quite labor-intensive; especially since it was for several participants and multiple focus groups. Additionally, a lot of time was spent meticulously categorizing, coding and recoding data; and as described by Elo & Kungas, (2008), that process is unavoidably time-consuming and labour-intensive. To address this issue, at least at the transcription stage, the

researcher identified and utilized appropriate technology to assist with transcribing the data from the interview. The software used is called Otter AI; and it allowed the researcher complete the transcription process extremely quickly, saving valuable time in the transcription phase.

Research Bias

Qualitative research has implicit subjectivity and according to Denzin and Lincoln, (2008), hence the process is more immersive and there are much inter-relations between the researcher and the participants. Additionally, the researcher is viewed as an instrument of data collection. Therefore, to minimize the negative effects of researcher biases, the researcher engaged in a deliberate process of reflexivity where she could consider her own beliefs, assumptions and experiences as relates to the subject matter being researched, (Finlay, 1998). To minimize researcher bias, the research used a technique called 'Bracketing' to 'put to the side' personal perceptions and value judgements which could affect the study (Chan et al, 2013).

Biases may have also come from the participant themselves based on the subjective nature of the interpretivist approach to qualitative studies; which uses open-ended interview questions in the data collection process. Consequently, the researcher had limited control over what participants actually said; because a lot was dependent on participants being honest and open in their responses. To mitigate against these possible limitations, the researcher did significant preparation to ensure that participants had full understanding of the research effort, and ensured that the time and modality chosen for the interviews was most suitable for them; and that they understood the context of the research. Additionally, step-by-step protocols were developed for the interviews and focus group sessions, and every care taken to ensure that participants were reassured about the provisions of confidentiality and anonymity in the process.

With these measures in place, participants were demonstrably comfortable and shared openly in the sessions. Importantly, the researcher ensured that questions were pointed; and probing questions were used to refine answers towards the main point of inquiry; so that participants did not go off on a tangent away from the main question.

It is important to note that one of the main strategies used by the researcher to assist with the management of biases is the conducting of the Pilot Study as recommended by Yin (2014). This allowed the researcher to see how effective the questions on the interview instruments were, while also identifying gaps and overlaps which could be addressed by the interview protocols. The Pilot Study also help the researcher identify potential areas of biases from either the researcher' or participants' side early enough, so that they could be addressed. This point was made by Malmqvist, et al (2019); who opined that where interview questions or procedures were conducted in the qualitative pilot study, do not generate the appropriate kinds of responses or provide for rich data; then the relevant modifications can be made to improve the rigor of the data collection instrument.

Technology Challenges

The use of technology played a greater role in the data collection process due to the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic. As a result, interviews which would have been conducted face to face, were actually done virtually using video conferencing software Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Although the technology was convenient and offered the duality of visual and audio recordings; there were challenges faced with getting used to how the software operated, in order to effectively manipulate them. Additionally, there were limitations coming from the local

service providers of internet service in Jamaica, who simply could not cope with the demand for these services in the pandemic.

Consequently, there were at times issues with the internet bandwidth, causing signal disruptions. Interestingly, the conducting of Pilot Study proved quite beneficial at helping the researcher learn how to professionally navigate the technologies and to identify back up software applications via her mobile phone, which would use data and not wireless. This meant that when sessions were interrupted due internet connection, the session could be continued via mobile phone as an alternate medium. Therefore, the Pilot Study addressed the limitation by allowing the researcher to improve her prowess with various supporting technology, so that she was able to progress as planned with the study and even successfully guide participants in the use of the technology as well.

Chapter Four - Data Presentation and Analysis

Demographics of Participants

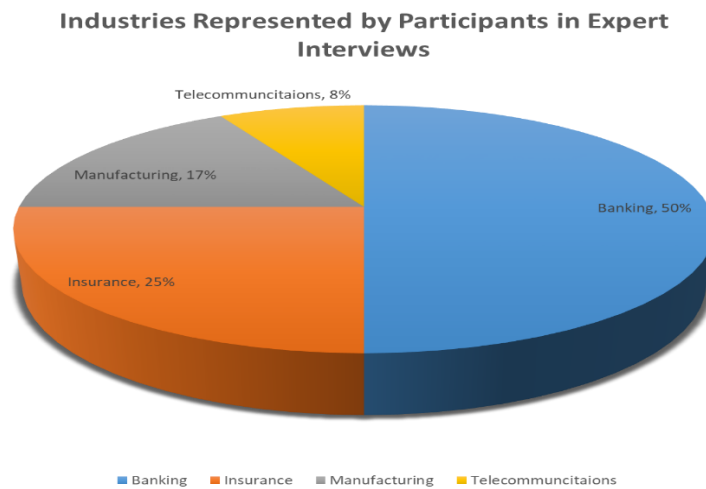
The study consisted of a total of 24 participants; 12 participants for Expert Interviews and 12 participants for the 2 Focus Group Sessions, each session with 6 participants. The participants who were apart of Expert Interviews were all full-time employees with their respective organizations; additionally, they have been operating at the Executive or Senior Management level for at least a decade, for some well over a decade. In the case of the Focus Group, all 12 participants are full-time employees of their respective organizations with a minimum 5 years mid to senior management experience. Appendix H outlines the demographics of the participants in the study; with categorizations given for professional level, type organization and type of industry.

A Triangulated Approach to Data Analysis

According to Golafshani (2003), triangulation in data analysis improves the reliability and validity of the research findings; as it allows for the data to be presented and analyzed in a multi-dimensional way. For this study is triangulated from multiple data sources (Expert Interviews and Focus Groups); multiple strategic perspectives (innovation, premium products and service quality differentiation); multiple sectors (telecommunication, manufacturing, banking and insurance; as well as from multiple levels of expertise (Head of Company, Head of Strategy and Head of People Management). This is illustrated in the analysis done below for the various case classifications.

Case Attribute Values – Business Sectors Represented in Study

In conducting the multi-case study on how Human Capital can be leveraged for Organizational Competitiveness, the researcher enlisted participants for 4 key business sectors in Jamaica. Figure 10 (below) illustrates the sectorial representation of the industries in the study; where 50% of participants were from the banking sector, 25% from Insurance, 17% from manufacturing, while the remaining 8% was from telecommunication. This was to ensure broad-based representation in the sample, of the key sectors which drive development. In fact, the banking sector is one of the largest contributors to GDP in Jamaica. Therefore, in selecting the industries, the researcher was careful to ensure that some of the key productive sectors of Jamaica were represented in the study.

Figure 10**Industries Represented by Participants in Expert Interviews*****Case Attribute Values – Areas of Expertise represented in the Study***

Then, the sample of experts chosen from each business sector was deliberately selected from the most outstanding companies in that industry; where the company had a strong focus on Human Capital Development as a strategic driver for its competitiveness and overall success. As illustrated in figure 11(below), the experts who participated in the Expert Interviews represented an elite panel of industry leaders at the highest level of leadership. Specifically, the positions/levels chosen for the purposive sample were: (i) Head of Company (ii) Head of Strategy and (iii) Head of People Management. While for the Focus Groups there was broad representation of both HR and on-HR participants; who operate at the middle to senior management level in their respective organizations. See figures 11 and 12; which show the position/level of the participants from the two main data sources (i) Expert Interviews and (ii) Focus Groups.

Figure 11
Leadership Level and Position for Expert Interview

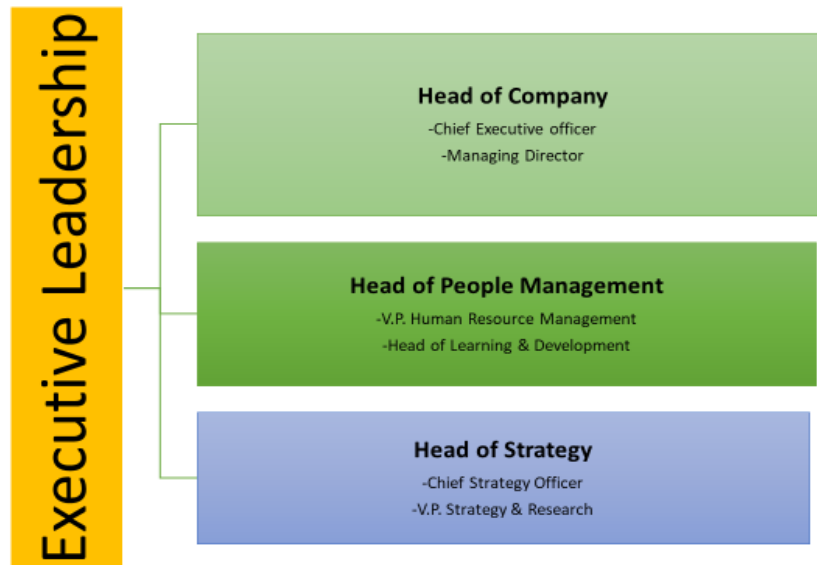
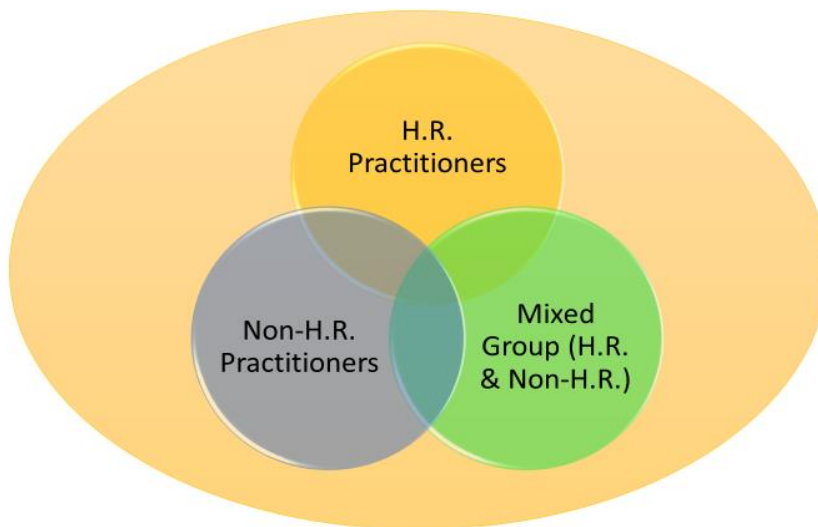


Figure 12
Professional Representation of Focus Group Participants



Case Attribute Values – Competitive Strategy

According to Wheelen and Hunger, (2018) a company can pursue one of two main generic strategies; a low-cost strategy or a differentiated strategy. For a low-cost strategy, the company would be focused on efficiency gains in terms of sourcing cheaper raw materials, lowering the cost of production and/or increasing productivity for greater output. However, Torres et al., (2018) further explain, that for companies seeking a competitive advantage through a differentiated strategy; there is strong and specific focus on people and building up the expertise of human capital to drive the strategic thrust of the company. Interestingly, of the four (4) industries represented in the study (telecommunications, banking, insurance and manufacturing); all the companies pursued a differentiated strategy; each with its own unique strategic focus based on its internal strengths and capabilities.

This is quite noteworthy, because companies that pursue a differentiated strategy, usually have an intense focus on building the capacity of their human capital as key way to build distinctive competencies, which refers to areas that they are distinctly better at than the competition as well as building their dynamic capabilities, which are the capabilities which ensure greater competitive suitability, (Torres et al., 2018). Importantly, each case selected for the study is a publicly listed companies with the Jamaica Stock Exchange, and each has a rich history of pursuing people focused business strategies. This is a message which is clearly and consistently articulated by the leadership of these companies who declare their organizations employing HCD strategies to drive performance, customer satisfaction and improved profit and competitiveness. It also very interesting that these companies (although not exhaustive); represent the top-performers in their respective industries; all using a differentiated strategy and all employing a strategic HCD focus to drive competitive advantage.

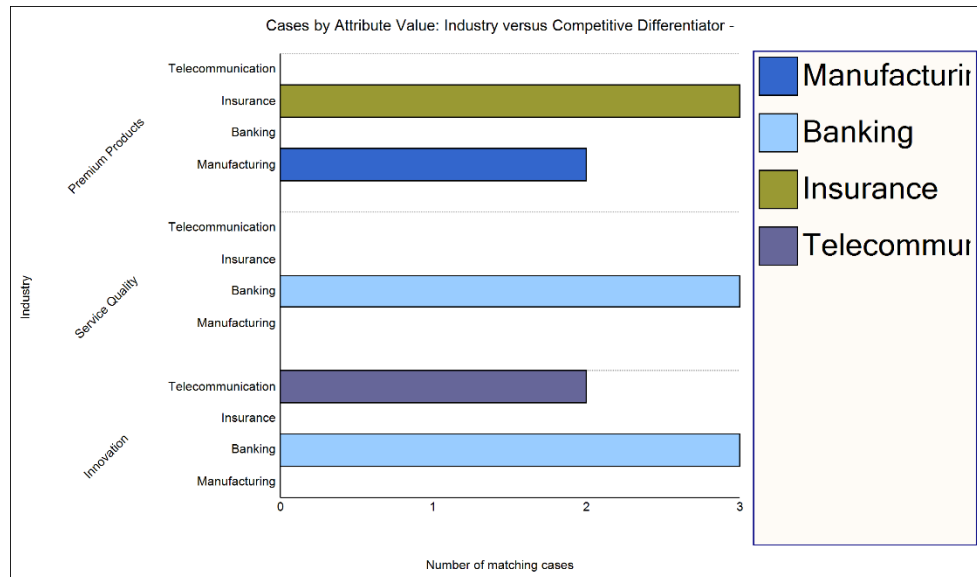
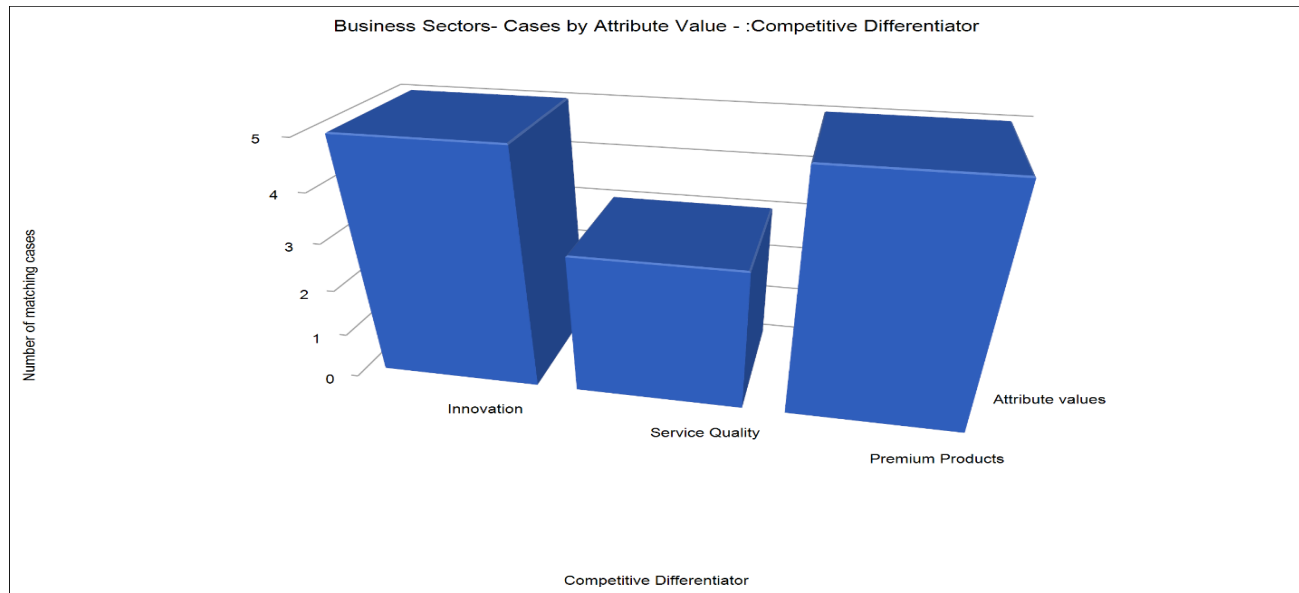
Figure 13**Case Classification by Attribute Values - Industry & Competitive Differentiator**

Figure 13 (above) illustrates the industry classification for each case in the study; and further shows the attribute value for each industry represented. A deeper analysis of the data (as shown in figure 14 (below) reveals, that two companies in the insurance and manufacturing industries respectively, pursued a differentiated strategy based on ‘Premium Product’ offerings. Two company in the telecommunications and banking industry, pursued differentiated strategies based on Innovation; while the 5th company also in the banking sector pursued a differentiated strategy based on Service Quality. Importantly, the literature shows that irrespective of the type of differentiated strategy being pursued by the company, there is the critical need to drive HC development to improve value, rareness, inimitability, (Barney and Hesterly, 2008).

Figure 14**Case Classification by Attribute Value – Competitive Differentiator****Word Frequency Analysis to determine Emerging Themes**

Having examined the sectoral representation of the participants in the study, and having looked at the competitive strategy being pursued by each company; the data analysis continued using the NVIVO tools to examine the data in a multi-dimensional way for each data source (Expert Interviews and Focus Groups). Consequently, the Word Frequency Tool was used to determine which words were consistently and repeatedly used; as a way of determining re-occurring patterns in the qualitative data collected. By so doing, the researcher was able to identify the re-occurring themes through various NVIVO reports such as data tables, Word Clouds and Word Trees (lexical searches). This entire section will be devoted to extensively analyzing the data set, using the triangulated approach as described above across data sources, industries, competitive strategy and expertise level.

Word Frequency Analysis across Data Sources

Figures 15 and 16 (below) are a depiction of the word frequency analysis conducted across both data sources; that is, from the Elite Interviews and the Focus Groups. The data was represented diagrammatically and in tabular format; and the analysis revealed noticeable commonality in the words most frequently used. Specifically, the twelve (12) most frequent words for both Elite interview and Focus Group are listed in Table 4 (below) shows that ‘knowledge, learning, people and training’ had the highest level of reoccurrence; with ‘knowledge’ being used 206 times (2.13%); while ‘learning’ 121 times (1.25 %) in analysis of the data form the Elite Interviews. Likewise, the words ‘training’ and ‘people’ were used 74 (1.13%) times and 66 (0.97) times respectively, in the analysis of the data on the Focus Groups. (Note that generic words such as: ‘company’ and ‘organization’ were excluded from the frequency count; because the context within which they were used was in reference to the companies/organization to which the participants belonged; and therefore have no real meaning to findings of the study.

When the premium products differentiated, strategy was examined using the word frequency analysis tool, the words which were among the most frequently used were ‘Learning, people, knowledge, training, development and team’, inter alia. This reveals a very similar set of findings as for the customer quality strategy; with the main difference being an emphasis on ‘client’ for the companies pursuing a service quality strategy; versus an emphasis on product development for the companies pursuing a premium product differentiated strategy. This is understandable, as an organization pursuing a strategy based on the provision of a quality service experience a strategic differentiator, would-be heavily client-focused and customer centric. While a company that differentiates itself based on offering premium products, will be heavily focused on product development to drive new features and unique qualities in its products. Interestingly, Table 5 (below) reveal that the words learning and knowledge were used 242 and 217 times (1.54%) respectively, while training and was used 178 times (1.38%). It is quite noteworthy that these three words were also among the most frequently used word for the Service Quality Strategy as well.

Table 6

Word Frequency Cross-Case Comparative Analysis of Experts Perspectives

No	Head of Company			Head of Strategy			Head of People Mgmt.		
	Word	Count	Weighted (%)	Word	Count	Weighted (%)	Word	Count	Weighted (%)
1	interviewee	483	1.38	company	394	1.26	interview	132	1.65
2	company	465	1.33	learning	380	1.22	interviewee	132	1.65
3	interviewer	438	1.25	organization	357	1.14	learning	118	1.48
4	people	408	1.16	interviewee	344	1.10	training	102	1.28
5	team	357	1.02	interview	342	1.09	people	90	1.13
6	learning	336	0.96	people	335	1.07	company	87	1.09
7	know	279	0.80	team	292	0.93	team	80	1.00
8	right	235	0.67	development	265	0.85	development	78	0.98
9	talent	223	0.64	training	257	0.82	culture	58	0.73
10	organization	221	0.63	know	245	0.78	persons	55	0.69
11	strategy	205	0.58	right	226	0.72	employees	54	0.68
12	training	190	0.54	talent	217	0.69	talent	50	0.63

Ultimately, the triangulation of data analysis across types of data sources, types of competitive strategies and types of expertise shows a clear pattern which appears to be centered around specific themes which consistent; irrespective of the angle of analysis. Based on these findings, the researcher is able to identify key conceptual pillars that are critical to understanding how Human Capital Development is operationalized in each Case. These findings will be discussed in greater details in the next chapter.

Word Frequency Analysis based on HCD Dimensions

The final layer of the analysis is to examine the data from the perspective of the key themes coming from the review of literature; which were used as the theoretical foundation to frame the data collection and data analysis processes as Priori Codes. These key themes were expressed as the three dimensions of HCD: Intellectual Capital, Social capital and Organizational

Capital. The word frequency analysis is discussed (below) for each dimension; pulling on all the data collected from both Elite Interviews and Focus group irrespective for all case classifications (industry and expertise).

The Intellectual Capital Dimension

For the Intellectual Capital Dimension, it is definitely not surprising that among the words with the highest frequency were the words previously identified as being common across three-tiered triangulated analysis done for the types of data sources, competitive strategy and areas of expertise. They are as follows: knowledge (443 times-1.56%), learning (442 times–1.56%), and training (428 times -1.51%) and people (372 times – 1.32%). However, other key themes emerged when the data is being examined from the Intellectual Capital Dimension, these included ‘repository’, ‘artificial’, ‘intelligence’ and ‘system’ which occurred 234 (0.82%), 180 (0.63%), 121 (0.43%) and 106 (0.37%) times respectively. Figure 22 and table 7 below provides further details on the findings of the analysis done on the Intellectual Capital Dimension of HCD.

Within the context of this study, the word ‘repository’ was used in reference to the system within the organization to store knowledge data, both physically and electronically; while ‘system’ was used in reference to the formal way of managing knowledge in terms of the processes, procedures and modality in which knowledge is collected, stored and shared. The terms ‘artificial’ and ‘intelligence’ although appearing separately in the word frequency analysis, were actually used as a single term ‘artificial intelligence’; which spoke to the use of technology in the form of computer systems; which would be used to accomplish various tasks that would normally require human intelligence. Therefore, there is seemingly a paring of the key themes surrounding people, knowledge, learning, talent etc. with the emphasis on the technology–enabled processes to manage knowledge and drive the development and engagement of Intellectual Capital across the cases in this study. The discussion around the findings from the analysis around the Intellectual capital dimension will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The Social Capital Dimension

The examination of the Social Capital Dimension revealed findings which were consistent with analysis done in prior sections (above). The words with highest occurrence were learning which occurred 402 times (1.21%), people which occurred 363 times (1.10%), team which occurred 301 times (0.91%) and knowledge which occurred 258 times (0.78%). However, the concept of development, talent and culture were also among the most frequently used words occurring 286 (0.86%), 225 (0.68%), and 200 (0.60%) times respectively. This makes a critical connection between human capital development and the cultural context within which that development of talent takes place. This matter of the cultural context within the organization and its implication for social capital dimension of HCD is further expounded in the next chapter.

Importantly, although not among the top twelve words, the concept of digital, data and feedback were also among the most frequent as displayed in the Word Cloud in figure 24 (above). Thereby, indicating a focus on digitization and data analytics as key pillars of the Organizational Capital Dimension of HCD; along with ‘feedback’ which supports the notion of ‘teams’ and ‘culture’ and has implication for all other processes.

Table 9

Word Frequency Analysis - Organizational Capital

No	Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
1	company	7	371	1.12
2	organization	12	361	1.09
3	people	6	361	1.09
4	interviewee	11	344	1.04
5	learning	8	336	1.01
6	interviewer	11	316	0.95
7	team	4	275	0.83
8	strategy	4	254	0.77
9	right	5	231	0.70
10	training	8	222	0.67
11	talent	6	218	0.66
12	culture	7	191	0.58

Comparative Analysis across the HCD Dimensions

When examined using a cross-case comparative analysis of the three dimensions, table 10 (below) shows a pattern across the HC dimensions that indicates a strong and consistent emphasis on people, and a deliberate focus on knowledge, learning, talent development, training, teams and systems. The issue of the cultural context of the organization as well as the use of technology has also come out as a key concept; all of which are discussed extensively in the next chapter.

Table 10*Word Frequency Cross-Case Comparative Analysis – HCD Dimensions*

No	Intellectual			Social Capital			Organizational Capital		
	Word	Count	Weighted (%)	Word	Count	Weighted (%)	Word	Count	Weighted (%)
1	knowledge	443	1.56	organization	416	1.26	company	371	1.12
2	learning	442	1.56	company	403	1.22	organization	361	1.09
3	training	428	1.51	learning	402	1.21	people	361	1.09
4	people	374	1.32	people	363	1.10	interviewee	344	1.04
5	managing	311	1.09	interviewee	344	1.04	learning	336	1.01
6	organization	296	1.04	interview	343	1.04	interviewer	316	0.95
7	team	241	0.85	team	301	0.91	team	275	0.83
8	repository	234	0.82	development	286	0.86	strategy	254	0.77
9	building	212	0.75	trainings	261	0.79	right	231	0.70
10	artificial	180	0.63	knowledge	258	0.78	training	222	0.67
11	intelligence	121	0.43	talent	225	0.68	talent	218	0.66
12	system	106	0.37	culture	200	0.60	culture	191	0.58

Overarching Themes from the Word Frequency Analysis.

Having thoroughly examined the data from various levels and from multiple angles using a triangulated approach; unmistakably clear patterns have emerged which point to specific findings for this multi-sector case analysis. Table 11 below displays the overarching findings from the Word Frequency Analysis effectively distilled through the three dimensions of Human Capital; as previously identified in the conceptual framework of this study in Chapter three. Essentially, the findings demonstrate how the most frequently occurring words/concepts are inextricably linked to the major themes in the Data Analysis process.

More specifically as displayed in column two (below), the findings from the Intellectual Capital Dimension reveal major conceptual themes to include: ‘Knowledge, Talent, Training, Team and Development’. While, the findings show that the major themes identified for the Social Capital Dimension are ‘Learning, Culture and Feedback’; and for the Organizational

Capital Dimension, the findings revealed ‘strategy, data and digital’ as key concepts themes. The third column (below) shows how the word frequency findings are linked to the coding categories in the data analysis. Interestingly, the concept of ‘people’ was a common thread in every facet of the analysis; which is quite understandable as the core of the study is about people, conceptualized for the purpose of this study as ‘human capital’.

Table 11

Overarching Themes emerging from the Triangulated Word Frequency Analysis

Overarching Themes emerging from the Triangulated Word Frequency Analysis			
N0.	Conceptual Framework Based on Findings from Literature Review (HCD Dimensions)	Findings from Word Frequency Analysis indicating Key Themes	Connecting Major Themes to Coding Categories from Data Analysis
1	Intellectual Capital	*Knowledge	Knowledge Management
2		*Training	Training and Development
3		Talent	Talent Development
4		Team	Team Engagement
5		Development	Talent/Training Development
6	Social Capital	*Learning	Organizational Learning
7		*Culture	Organizational Culture
8		Feedback	Organizational Learning/Culture
9	Organizational Capital	*Strategy	Strategic HC Oversight/Alignment
10		*Digital	Digitization / Data Analytics
12		Data	HC Policies & Systems
	Intellectual/Social/Organizational Capital	People	Inherent in all Codes and in the three dimensions

* Sample Words Selected from each HCD Dimension for Word Tree Analysis (below)

Connecting Major Themes to Coding Categories from Data Analysis

The findings from the analysis thus far, have revealed specific theme which indicate how the Human Capital Development has been operationalized in this multi-sector case study. These themes are pivotal to the understanding how HC strategies are developed and leveraged to drive competitive advantage for each case in its specific industry. To gain a more in-depth understanding of HCD, there is a need to deconstruct each dimension of HCD based on the key themes which have been identified in the data analysis findings. Table 11 (above) displays each dimension of HCD, based on the Conceptual Framework for this study in column two, then in column three, each dimension of HCD is deconstructed to show the key themes which guide the strategies employed by the cases in the study. Finally, column four illustrates how each theme was coded in the data to inform and frame the reporting of the finding of this study.

Word Tree Analysis for Keywords from each HCD Dimension

From the key themes listed in column three (above), a further analysis is done on a sample of two of these themes within each dimension of HCD as listed column two. This is presented as a Word Tree Analysis, which examines the selected themes from each dimension of HCD, in figures 25 to 30 below. The set of words selected from each dimensional category are as follows:

(i) **Intellectual Capital Dimension** - ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Training’, **Social Capital Dimension** - ‘Culture’ and ‘Learning’, **Organizational Capital Dimension** – ‘Digital’ and ‘Strategy’. The terms selected for the Word Tree Analysis (although not exhaustive), offers deeper insight into how each term was used, whether by it itself or as a root word; or as a phrase in a sentence; as well as how it is expanded to express a particular idea within a specific context.

Figure 25

Word Tree Analysis of 'KNOWLEDGE'– Intellectual Capital Dimension



Table 12*'Knowledge' Word Grid - Intellectual Capital Dimension*

'KNOWLEDGE'				
	Knowledge Management	Knowledge Strategies	Knowledge Repository	Knowledge Management Polices
	Knowledge Sharing	Knowledge transfer	Knowledge Sharing	Knowledge Development
	Knowledge Gap	Knowledge Hub	Knowledge Storage	Knowledge Ambassadors
	Physical Library– Knowledge Management	Digital Library – Knowledge Management	Knowledge driven by Machine Learning	Deposits of knowledge
	Query and contribute knowledge	Knowledge to develop skills and expertise	Knowledge about Core competencies	Knowledge Data
	Knowledge transfer- Succession Planning	Knowledge Culture	Knowledge from the Re-imagination process	Building & Growing Knowledge
	Formal System of Knowledge	Documented Knowledge	Analytics in Knowledge Management	Corporate University for Knowledge Management

Figure 26

Word Tree Analysis of 'TRAINING' – Intellectual Capital Dimension

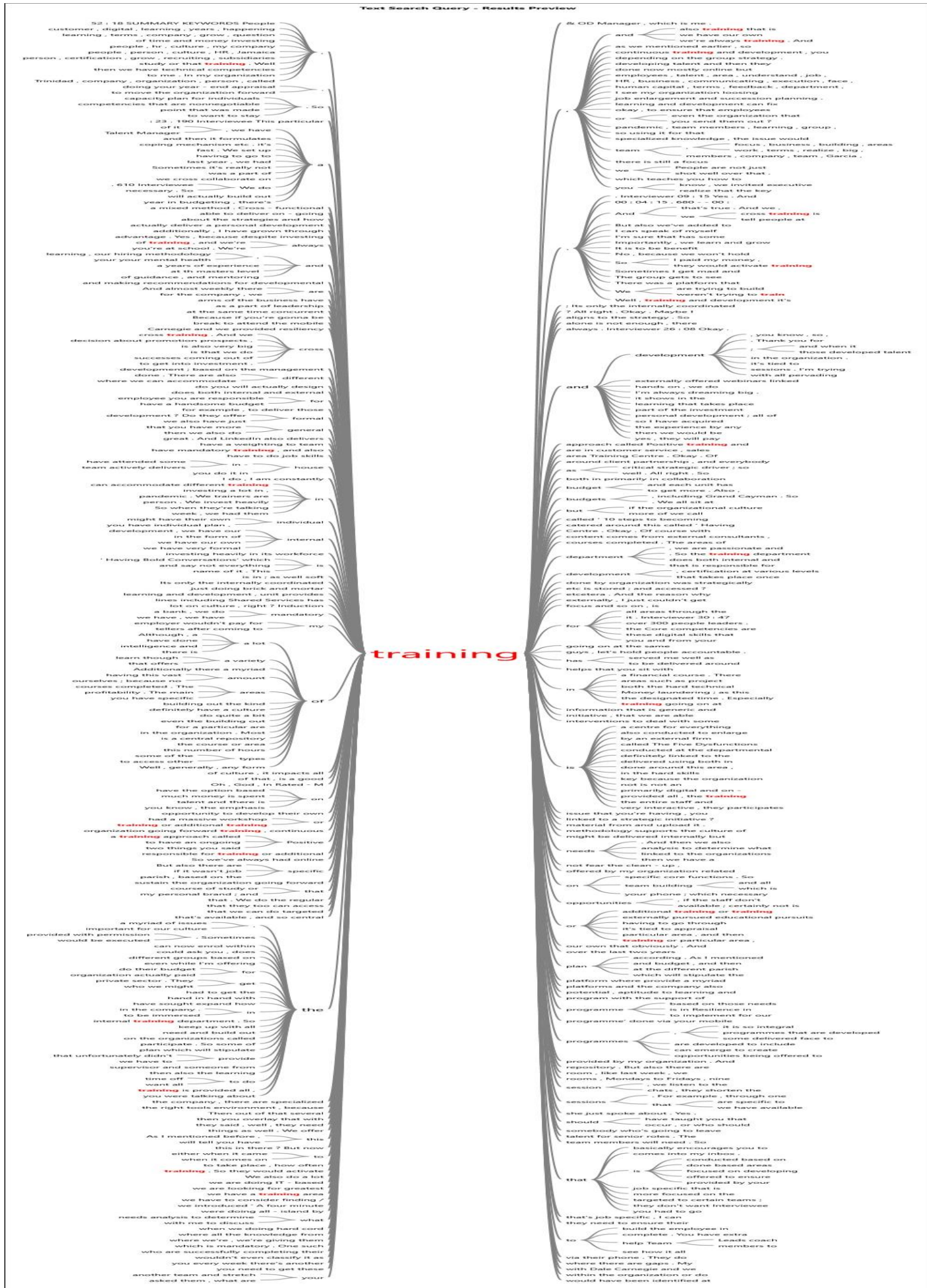


Table 13*'Training' Word Grid- Intellectual Capital Dimension*

'TRAINING'				
	Mandatory Training	Individual Training	Personal Development Training Plan	Capacity Building Training Plan
	I.T. Based Training	Resilience Training	Cross Training	Collaborative Training
	Training via LinkedIn	4 Minute Mobile Phone Training	Mixed Method Training (on-line/in- person)	Training for Job Enlargement
	Internal Training	Interactive Training	Immersive Training	Continuous Training
	Training Culture	Non-negotiable Training	Training in hard and soft skills	Specialized Training
	Training for Technical Competencies	Handsome Training Budget	Conflict Resolution Training – The Clean-up	Training for Career Prospecting & Promotion
	Needs-based Training	Training of 300 People Leaders	Training for Talent Development	Training – Mental Health
	A Culture of Training	Training as a part of my Personal Brand	Rated-M Training (Male-session)	Training for Succession Planning

Table 14*'Culture' Word Grid - Social Capital Dimension*

'CULTURE'				
Organizational Culture	People-first Culture	Learning Culture	Team-centric Culture	
Culture of Respect	Feedback Culture	Entrenched In Our Culture	Drives our Culture	
Deliberate about our Culture	Culture as an Intangible Force	Training Methodology that supports Culture	Our Awesome Culture	
Developing a Healthy Culture	Build a positive work Culture	We embrace a Learning Culture	Reinforce Culture	
Cultivate Culture	Protect our Culture	Phenomenal Culture	Culture Strategy	
Culture & Human Resource Dept.	Head of Culture and Human Resource	Culture Human Resource Committee of the Board	Culture is set by the Leadership	
Wholesome work Culture	Sub-culture	Culture impacts Training	Cultural components in Orientation	
Culture of Love throughout...	Culture where the greatness in us...	Changes need to inspire culture	Culture conditions us to always...	

Figure 28

Word Tree Analysis of 'LEARNING' - Social Capital Dimension

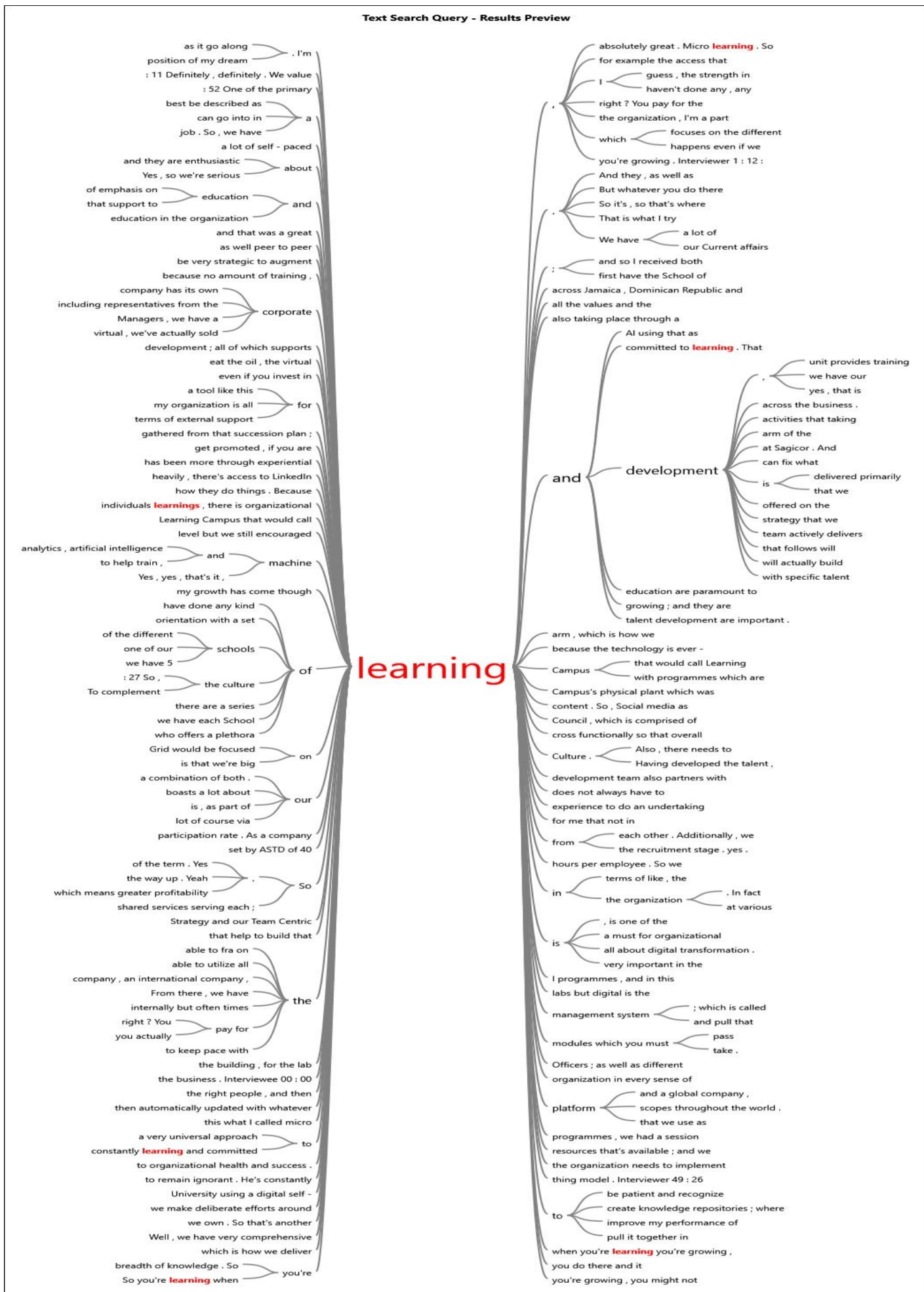


Table 15*'Learning' Word Grid- Social Capital Dimension*

'LEARNING'				
	Organizational Learning	Self-Paced Learning	Individual Learning	Micro Learning
	Learning Labs	Learning Grid	Learning Platform	Learning arm of the Company
	Keep up with the pace of Learning	Learning Participation Rates	Deliberate about Learning	Individual and Group Learning
	Machine Learning –Artificial Intelligence	Corporate Learning Campus	Learning Council – advises the Board	Learning Management System
	Plethora of Learning	A lot of Learning	We are Big on Learning	Learning Cross Functionally
	Continuous Learning because Technology is ever changing	When you're learning , you're growing	Learning for Organizational Health & Success	Start Learning at recruitment Stage
	Learning Culture to develop Talent	Learning & Development	Learning from each other	Automatically updates Learning
	Learning is all about Digital Transformation	Externally supported Learning	Learning & Development Strategies	Each School of Learning – Corporate University

Figure 29

Word Tree Analysis of 'Digital'-Organizational Capital Dimension

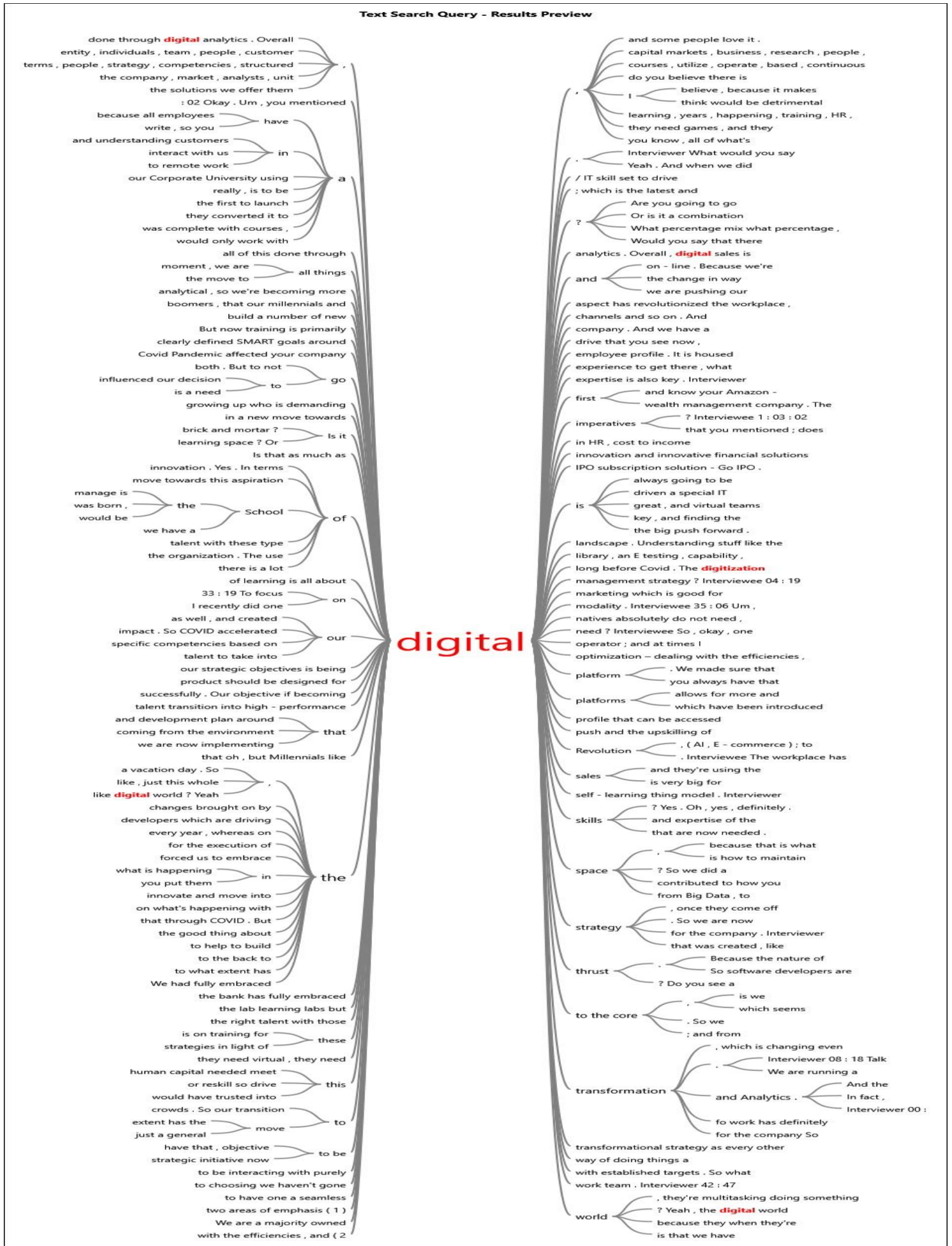


Table 16*'Digital' Word Grid - Organizational Capital Dimension*

'DIGITAL'				
	Digital Analytics	Digital Solutions	Digitally structured	the move to Digital
	Remote work with Digital...	All of this was done Digitally	Influenced our decision to go Digital	In a new move to go Digital
	Innovation... Yes Digital	Accelerated our Digital	Products designed for the Digital...	Specific competencies based on our Digital...
	Transform into High Performance Digital...	Changes brought on by Digital	Forced to Embrace Digital	For the Execution of our Digital
	Build a number of new Digital...	From Brick and Mortar to Digital...	Converted to Digital	New levels of Digital
	Strategic Initiative to be <i>Digital</i>	IT skills to drive Digital	Digital Re-imagination ...	Training on Digital
	Software developers driving the Digital...	We are now implementing a Digital	Remote work in Digital...	Understand the customers' Digital needs
	Digital System	Digital Learning	Digital Space	Digital Skills
	Digital Channels	Digital Imperatives	Digital Innovation	Digital Natives
	Digital to the Core	Digital Strategy	Digital Self Learning	Digital World

Table 17*'Strategy' Word Grid - Organizational Capital Dimension*

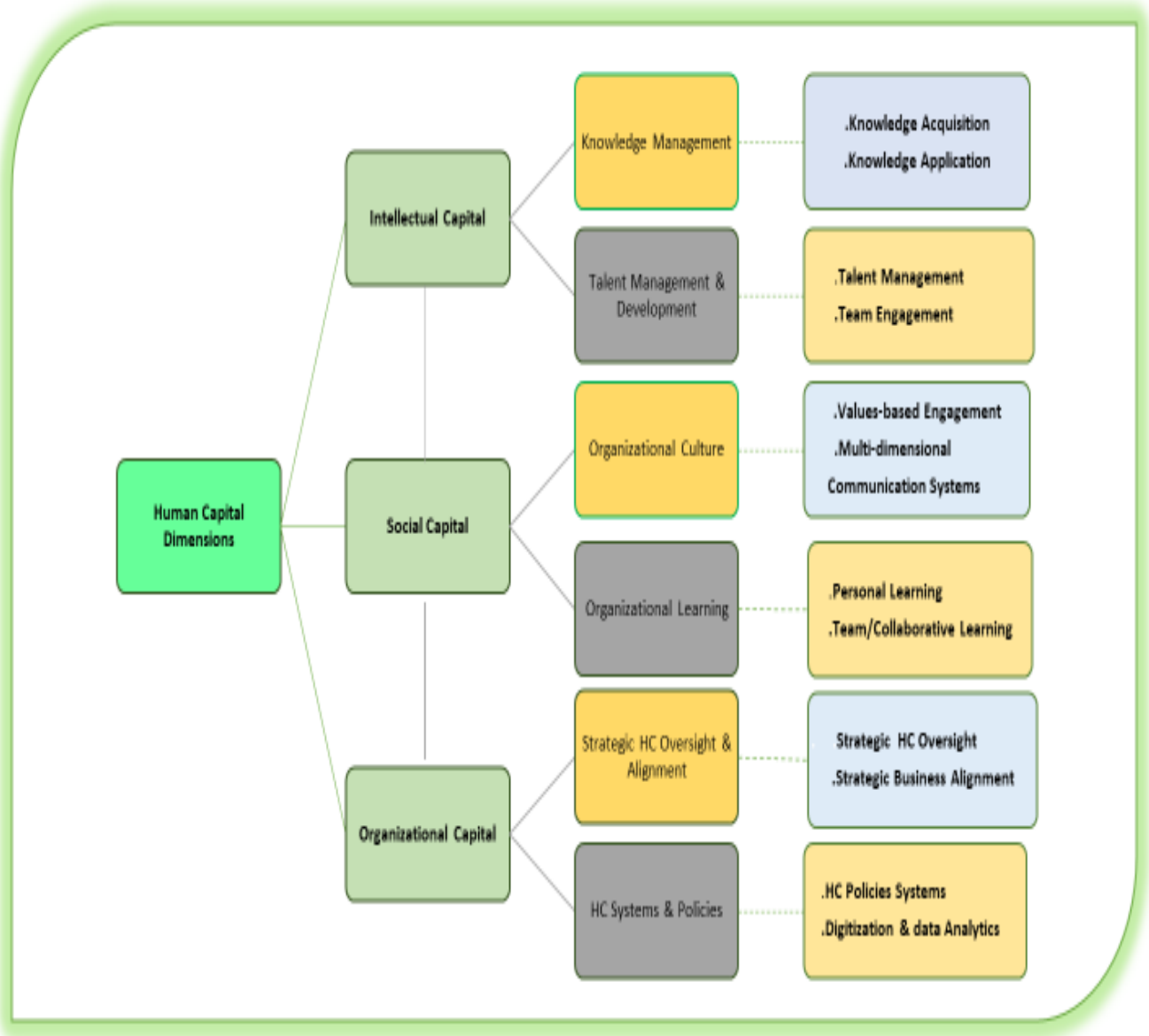
'STRATEGY'				
	Talent Development Strategy	Accelerated Digital Management Strategy	Learning & Development Strategy	Differentiated Strategy
	A lot of time communicating Strategy	Entrenched in our Culture and Strategy	Human Capital Development if key to our Differentiated Strategy	Period of Cascading the Strategy
	Developing and Articulating the Strategy	Ensure alignment between HR Strategies and Business Strategies	Everything is linked to Strategy	Make sure people understand the Strategy
	Key goals linked to Strategy	Key metric to drive strategy	Re-imagination Strategy	At the heart of Strategy
	Show Commitment to Strategy	Effective long-term Strategy	Craft Medium Term Strategy	Centralized Strategy function
	Developmental Plan around Strategy	Communicating Strategy in both Directions	Switch to Virtual Strategy	Distilled into Learning Strategies
	Recalibrate Strategy	Data Analytics Strategy	The successful execution of Strategy	A deliberate Strategy to guide

Mapping the the Data Analysis Findings based on Thematic Factors

Expressed diagrammatically, Figure 31 (below) is Concept Map displaying the key thematic findings of the study; effectively displaying the critical elements of HCD as identified from the study; and further extrapolating the key operational components as they exist within each of the three dimensions of HCD.

Importantly, the thematic factors identified in a given dimension act as a critical component which works integratively with the components in the other dimensions; in order to effectively leverage human capital towards a competitive advantage. This is effectively represented in the concept map below which not only depicted the thematic factors identified in each dimension; but also shows the relationship between them as part of an integrated HCD Framework emerging from the analysis of the data. Each thematic component and its application within and across cases are discussed extensively in the next chapter of the Study; where an element identified as being a component of one of the three dimensions is further examined across the cases; based on those key thematic factors which came out of the data analysis phase of this research.

Figure 31
Concept Map of Key Thematic Factors from Data Analyses of HC Dimensions



Conclusion Drawing Phase

Ultimately the Data Analysis for this study was conducted in a multi-level, multi-dimensional way based on the triangulated approach employed in the data sources and data analysis processes. Moreover, the chosen data analysis software (NVIVO) allowed for the Data Display aspect of the Analysis to be expressed in a multiplicity of way to assure soundness and reliability in the findings; form detailed text files and summary tables to various diagrams, charts, mind maps, concept maps, word clouds, word frequency tables, among others. The combination of which allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the findings in the current chapter as well as for conclusion drawing in Chapter five (5).

Chapter Five - Discussion of Findings

In Chapter four (4), the analysis of the data on Human Capital Development was conducted in a multi-level, multi-dimensional way using various tables, charts, maps to facilitate an in-depth qualitative analysis of the data; which was presented in both a narrative and diagrammatical form. The process included a meticulous word frequency analysis which was examined both qualitatively and quantitatively to determine frequency of occurrence of key themes and the associated weighting. This then allowed for the generation of various word clouds, word tree, word grids, charts etc., all of which ensured that the phenomenon of interest was thoroughly interrogated and examined. From this comprehensive analysis, the researcher was able to identify and distill the key themes which would form the basis of the Thematic Factor Analysis. This Thematic Factor analysis is further supported by the data generated and cross-referenced as Framework Matrices in NVIVO. This particular NVIVO analytical tool allowed for both in-case and cross-case analysis of the data collected across each coded theme. Importantly, two sets of framework matrices were generated, one from each data sources used in the study; that is, one for the Expert Interviews and one for the Focus Groups.

The Framework matrix displays in tabular format each participant's response vertically in the first column; and the major themes from the coding categories are displayed horizontally. The organization and presentation of the data in this format is especially useful, as it allows the researcher to efficiently cross reference the responses from each case, across the respective code themes or categories; thereby facilitation a deeper level of analysis from multiple vantage points.

Against this background, the purpose of Chapter Five is to:

- Identify the main themes emerging from the data analysis, which are the fundamental strategic pillars which are crucial to understanding how human capital is being leveraged

- Examine the key thematic factors coming from the main themes (mention in item one above); to understand how they are operationalized across the cases
- Draw conclusions based on the discussion of the findings in order to make appropriate recommendation for both industry and academia.

Identification and Discussion of Major Themes and Sub-themes

Identifying the Key HCD Themes, Sub-Themes and Thematic Factors

The findings from the data analysis done in the previous chapter revealed a multi-dimensional, multi-level set of themes from the Triangulated Word Frequency Analysis; which provide a comprehensive framework for deconstructing and expounding the critical components of Human Capital Development (HCD) from the cases under investigation. Moreover, with the identification of specific elements, as well as a determination of how those elements operate within each HC dimension, the researcher is able to synthesize the themes coming from the findings. The synthesizing of the themes allows for the development of a conceptual model of an Integrative Framework for assessing Human Capital Development in organizations seeking to achieve and maintain competitive advantage.

As can be expected in qualitative research, the data generated is quite large, and so to help the reader understand and digest the findings of the research, the discussion of findings in (Chapter 5) and subsequent recommendations in (Chapter 6) have been summarized in digestible tables (Tables 18 and 19 below), which the researcher believes are more relevant in the chapter than in the appendix. Following the table, a detail discussion ensues in which each Strategic Theme (ST) is identified and then dissected to explain how each strategy is operationalized as Operational Themes (OT) across each of the three (3) dimensions of human capital.

Table 18

Summary of Findings From - Multi-Sector Cross-case Analysis

Summary of Findings From Multi-Sector Cross-case Analysis			
Central Research Ques. (RQ): How is Human Capital being leveraged to improve value and competitiveness?			
HC Dimensions	RO1: To identify the strategies employed across the three dimensions of Human Capital.		RO2: To understand how Human Capital Development (HCD) is operationalized to improve HC Value and Competitiveness
	Broad Themes (Strategic Level)	Key Sub-Themes (ST) (Strategic Level)	Specific Thematic Factors (TF) (Operational Level)
INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL DIMENSION	Theme 1 Knowledge Management	ST-1 Knowledge Acquisition, Transfer & Application	OT-1 Knowledge Repository Systems OT-2 Corporate Universities OT-3 Knowledge Ambassadors
	Theme 2 Talent Management	ST-2 Strategic Recruitment	OT-4 Head-hunting OT-5 Employee Sub-contracting OT-6 Hired to Learn Model OT-7 Best Fit Models
		ST-3 Talent Attrition Management	OT-8 Talent Value Group Metrics OT-9 Talent Attrition Metrics
		ST-4 Succession Planning (SP)	OT-10 Succession Planning – Mission Critical Roles
	Theme 3 Talent Development & Engagement	ST-5 Training & Development	OT-11 High Talent Potentials OT-12 Emerging Talent OT-13 Training using International Benchmarks OT-14 Value-Based Training OT-15 Job Enrichment/Enlargement
		ST-6 Leadership Development	OT-16 Leadership Institute

		(Coaching/Mentorship)	OT-17 Future Leaders Programme OT-18 Pro-Millennial Programme
		ST-7 Team Engagement	OT-19 Team Engagement Units OT-20 Psycho-Social Engagement OT-21 Cultural Engagement OT-22 Pro-Millennial Engagement
SOCIAL CAPITAL DIMENSION	Theme 4 Organizational Culture	ST-8 Culture	OT-23 Culture as a way of being & doing OT-24 Culture of Innovation OT-25 Culture of Volunteerism & Social Engagement
		ST-9 Multi-dimensional Communication	OT-26 Vertical & Horizontal Communication OT-27 Organic Communication
		ST-9 Feedback Systems	OT-28 Systematic Feedback OT-29 Spontaneous Feedback
	Theme 5 Organizational Learning	ST-10 Personal Learning/ Mastery	OT-30 Educational Certification OT-31 Professional Certification OT-32 Personal Entrepreneurship
		ST-11 Team Learning	OT-33 Peer to Peer Learning OT-34 Team Workshops
		ST-12 Cross-functional Learning	OT-35 Collaborative Learning
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPITAL DIMENSION	Theme 6 Strategic HC Oversight & Alignment	ST13 Shared Vision	OT-36 Shared values, Ownership Mind-set
		ST-14 Strategic HC Oversight	OT-37 Corporate Governance Mechanisms
		ST-15 Strategic HC Alignment	OT-38 Aligning Business & HC Strategies
		ST-16 Cascading the Vision	OT-39 Cascading the Vision from Top Down
		ST-17 Documented HC Systems	OIT 40 Documented Policies and Procedures

	Theme 7 Strategic HC Systems	ST-18 Electronic HC Systems	OT-41 Digitization & Data Analytics
		ST-19 Performance Management (PM) Systems	OT-42 PM- Continuous Learning OT-43 PM – Digital Transformation OT-44 PM – People Development
		ST-20 Strategic HC Assessment	OT-45 HC Resource Audit / Learning & Development. Gap Analysis

Discussion of Strategic Themes, Sub-themes and Thematic Factors

Strategic Profile & Human Capital (HC) Philosophy

As a precursor to the discussion around these strategic themes and how they are operationalization within each dimension of HC, it is necessary that the organizational context of each case be first discussed; especially to assure the issue of transferability of the research findings to other settings. Consequently, a discussion will be had about the strategic profile of each company; as well as the companies' guiding philosophy towards human capital development.

The first important findings that reflects the homogeneity of the cases, is the fact that all the cases pursue a competitive strategy based on differentiation. Notwithstanding, the similarities of the type of generic strategy pursued by each company, there were noted differences in how the companies differentiated themselves from their competitors; that is, as it relates to the specific type of differentiated strategy pursued in each case. This is discussed in further detail below. Importantly, for the purpose of the discussion, the companies in the study will be referred to by their case codes, and respondents will be referred to using their participant codes; which were previously assigned in the data collection stage of project. The code names to be used for the five

(5) cases are as follows: (i) Case-N (Manufacturing), (ii) Case-U (Banking), (iii) Case-V (Banking), (iv) Case-W (Insurance) and (v) Case-Y (Telecommunications).

Case N – A Leader in Manufacturing & Distribution Sector

Case-N is the leading manufacturer and distributor of Tobacco products in Jamaica. The company has a strong brand presence based on its reputation for delivering superior value across all its product segments. According Case-N's annual report, for the 2021 fiscal year, the company generated net profits of \$J3.73 Billion Dollars; an increase of 4.6% over the year prior. The company has a total asset base of \$J5.07 Billion Dollars in comparison to \$J4.23 Billion Dollars in 2020. In remarking on the company's ability to consistently deliver value to its shareholders, the company's chairman stated that the company's success is based on "the ability of our organization to employ cutting edge practices... and the company's commitment to invest in our most valuable asset: our people (Case-N Annual Report, 2021).

In terms of the competitive strategy, this company pursued a differentiated strategy based on 'Premium Product Offerings'. Participant NH1 who is the Managing Director of the company explained that the company "differentiates based on the quality of our products; and maintaining high brand loyalty from our customers". Participant NL2 (Head of Human Resources), further explained that the company operates on an 'Excellency Framework' which makes investing in the human capital of the company a top priority. "We see the spend on people development as an investment, not just the spend in terms of benefits, but in terms of the processes, in terms of the tools and the systems that we develop for our employees to use, all of which is an investment in our employees." The company prides itself on being good corporate citizens; investing heavily in

education at the tertiary level; through its expansive scholarship programme which targets adult learners at the tertiary level.

Case-U – The Industry Leader in the Banking Sector

Case U is Jamaica's leading bank with roots dating all the way back to 1837. The company has been a trail-blazer in the banking sector; outperforming its competitors as the most profitable bank for consecutive years since 2006. As Jamaica's largest and most innovative service group, the company's assets were valued at over \$J1.9 Trillion at the end of 2021 financial year; and the company realized net profits in excess of \$J14 Billion. (The Jamaica Stock Exchange, 2022). The company has a strong regional presence and experienced growth in revenues in all its geographical segments over the prior year.

According to the company's published annual report for 2021, the bank's outstanding performance was recognized by the Global Business Review Magazine (2021), where the company was named 'Best Financial Group' in the Caribbean and 'Best performing bank in Jamaica'. Additionally, the company was also recognized by World Business Outlook; and received the coveted title as 'the Leading Financial Group in Jamaica'. In celebrating the company's continued outstanding performance, the company's chairman remarked that "Our results are quantitative representations of the hopes and dreams, manifesting the embodiment of our ultimate purpose of empowering people, unlocking dreams, building Communities (Case-U Annual Report, 2021). The company continues to fulfil its corporate social responsibility through its philanthropic arm, that has a focus on education at the primary, secondary and tertiary level.

The competitive strategy pursued by this company is one focused on innovation; the company prides itself on being first to employ the latest technology in banking and leads the

industry in terms of research and development. Participant US3 who operates as the V.P. Strategy & Research emphasized the company's focus on innovation, by stating, "Our entire strategy is built around innovation, and is people-driven. We depend on, and leverage heavily our human capital resources in order to have achieved the phenomenal success we have had and maintained over these many years. This is in terms of digital innovation and innovative financial solutions for our clients."

The point made by participant US3, about the company's innovation strategy being people-driven; was further supported by participant UH1, who is the Asst. General Manager for the company. She underscored the company's resolve around people-focused strategy and articulated the company's human capital philosophy which sees the 'spend' on human capital development as an investment. She explained that "in terms of how the organization views human capital, it is definitely not an expense. We don't see people in that way. We see people as integral to strategy execution, it can't be done, unless it's done through the people. That is our view on it. And you don't need to rely on a textbook to tell you that, you know, theory doesn't come to life, until people understand and execute it. How, you look at people kind of determines how you bring the strategy to life. So, you can you can copy at a business level some aspects of a competitive strategy; but you can't copy the unique separator; which undoubtedly is our people in terms of their commitment to the vision. It's the people in terms of how they execute. It's the people in terms of how we innovate; it's the people in terms of our fearlessness in the face of adversity, this can't be copied by any of our competitors"

Case-V – Banking- A leader in the Banking Sector

Case-V, is a standout bank in the financial sector, with an iconic brand image that is recognized as offering a ‘best-in-class service experience’ in the financial sector. Since its establishment in 1992, the bank has developed a niche-based leadership position and continues to perform outstandingly in the financial market. According to the company’s audited financial statements for 2021, the bank had a total asset base of \$J614 Million Dollars and realized net profits of \$J12 Billion Dollars. This represented a phenomenal growth rate of 56% over the previous year. The Group has fifteen (15) client facing companies; and has a regional footprint in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominican Republic. Interestingly, the company has a dynamic presence in the financial sector, and is seen as pioneers in money market business. Their unique approach of offering the ‘un-banked’ experience and their focus on creating ‘heart-to-heart connections with their clients has a created a never-before seen service phenomenon in Jamaica’s banking industry, that sets them apart from their competitors. One of the company’s mantras is ‘Standing for the Greatness of All’ and it does this through its core business, and in a more targeted way; through its philanthropic arm where it focuses on education and youth development in Jamaica.

As explained by their Group Executive Director, Culture and Human Resource (participant VH1),” We differentiate based on quality service; with superior client experience built on the company’s Vision of Love. So, the ‘Vision of Love’ is a value system that informs how we exist and operate as a company. We stand out in the market for providing high quality personalized experience that’s unlike anything else offered in banking. The success of our business model has been driven by our love for people both team members and client; we believe that if we take the very best care of our team members; they will take the best care of our

clients.” Participant VH1, stated that “we know that it is not the norm in the banking sector to be talking about a ‘Vision of Love’; we have skeptics who out rightly say they can’t understand it; but they see that it actually works; and spurs even greater interest in the company”.

In further illuminating the company’s strategy, Participant VS3 (Chief Strategy Officer) made this important point: “Our strategic differentiator is how do we interact with our clients? How do we have those partnership conversations with our clients to understand what are their goals and dreams and aspirations? So; we’re big on service; which is a people construct; which therefore drives our philosophy on human capital; and at the heart of this strategy is company’s human capital. As invest in the development of that human capital, the company is assured of success in its strategic objectives. Participant VS3 highlighted the fact that the philosophy of the company is evident even in the name given to people management arm of the company; which includes a strong focus on ‘culture’ and people development’. “So, the focus for us is really on development and growth of people, and it’s all about creating the right kind of organization culture; where the greatness of us as human beings will manifest and the experiencing of love just keeps on increasing. So, for this company, culture is at the core of all we do; in fact, the culture of this company is the key strategic tool in our toolkit. It is potent, although intangible and is synonymous with our brand and reputation; and is therefore a key differentiator between us and the competition.”

Case-W – The Industry Leader in the Insurance Industry

Case-W is the industry leader in Jamaica for life and health insurance, and is one of the oldest insurers in America, dating all the way back to 1840. The company operate locally, regionally as well as in the internationally and has the profit leader in the life and health industry

over the last decade. According to the company's audited financial statements published in its 2021 annual report, Case-W continued its outstanding performance to achieve its highest level of profitability in the company's history at end of 2021. The report further detailed that the company racked up net profit of \$17.4 Billion Dollars, representing an increase of 26% over the previous year. Additionally, the company experienced very high customer satisfaction ratings. According to the company's, Chairman in the 2021 Annual report "Our customer satisfaction score across the Group measured in a Net Promoter Score (NPS) was 45.9; which is in line with, or in many cases, above international benchmarks. The Chairman attributed the company's success to his team, whom he described as "a cohort of talented, committed and innovative team members, whose sheer determination is the prime reason for our success." Interestingly, the company considers 'giving back' to society as being a part of its DNA, where its philanthropic arm focuses heavily programmes and projects to support health and education. The company stages a signature 'Corporate Run' event, which is stable on the Jamaican calendar, and which has raised over \$50 Million Dollars for the public healthcare sector in Jamaica; and the largest event of its kind in the Caribbean, (Case-N Annual Report for 2021).

For Case-W, the company has pursued a differentiated strategy based on the premium products offerings; that's way ahead of its competitors in the life and health insurance sector. As declared by the company's Vice President of Human Resource (Participant WH1), "we differentiate based on the quality of our products and maintaining high brand loyalty from our customers. We are an innovative brand; we tend to be first movers in the market; when compared with our competitors. So, there's that first mover advantage that that we have. We focus a lot on the client experience at all our touch points. Our distribution footprint is also significant and we have significant economies of scale that allows us to offer more value-added products and

services to our clients. In developing our products and services, we make sure we do our research, because research drives the innovation in our product offerings. Our life insurance team are a different breed based on the investment we have made in their development; when compared with the competition. The team is extremely driven, knowledgeable and customer-centric. So, our talent strategy is definitely a differentiator.”

In terms of the company’s human capital philosophy, the Manager in charge of Learning, Development & Change Management (Participant WL2) explained the company’s commitment to its people. She explained that “One of the promises that Group HR makes to all team members is that this company will be a place for you to grow and learn. It’s one of four promises articulated in our HR policy; which we make from the get go. It is something we share with the team members at induction and beyond. Then, our activities that we do throughout the year are based on our belief that human capital investments bring value to the organization.”

Case-Y – The Industry Leader in the Telecommunications Industry

Case Y is the leading provider of telecommunication services in Jamaica and Caribbean; and has operations as far away as in the South Pacific Regions. Since its inception 21 years ago the company has been at the top of the ‘food chain in terms of mobile communication, Cable and Broadband services, moving ‘light years’ ahead of the competition in terms of market share and revenue. The company’s mobile services were first launched in Jamaica in 2001 and has a global operation in 25 markets globally. According to a JMMB 2021 Investor Update Report, the company had grossed total revenues of \$165 Billion Dollars, with gross profits of over \$127 Billion Dollars. The company is known for its philanthropic endeavours, and according to its

Foundation Annual Report in 2021, the company donated a whopping \$150 Million Dollars to its flagship areas of social development: health, education and special needs.

Case-Y pursues a strategy based on differentiation-based innovation. The company prides itself on the development of innovative solutions that satisfies and anticipates the customers' needs; consistently developing new innovative solution to keep the company ahead of its competitors. Participant YH1 who is the Chief Executive Officer for the company indicated that, "What differentiates us from the competition is innovation; undoubtedly in the types of products and services we offer. Another differentiator is our customer centricity, we are highly customer-focused, and not entity-focused. So, we try to spend a lot of time on what the customer wants or needs and innovate around it.

In terms of our philosophy on human capital, everything we do is centered on our team members; and we value highly their external experiences and draw on them as we seek to - innovate. We are highly people-focused and invest heavily in their professional and personal development. We do not see it as an expense, for sure, it is a worthwhile investment that pays off significantly for the company; keeping us leaps and bounds above the competition."

With the contextual frame set for each case, where both the companies' strategic profiles and philosophy on human capital development explained, the next step is move into the cross-case analysis where the data will be analyzed across the five (5) cases for each of the three (3) dimensions of HC: Intellectual Capital, Social Capital and Organizational Capital Dimensions.

Cross-Case Analysis of the Strategic Themes is each HC Dimension

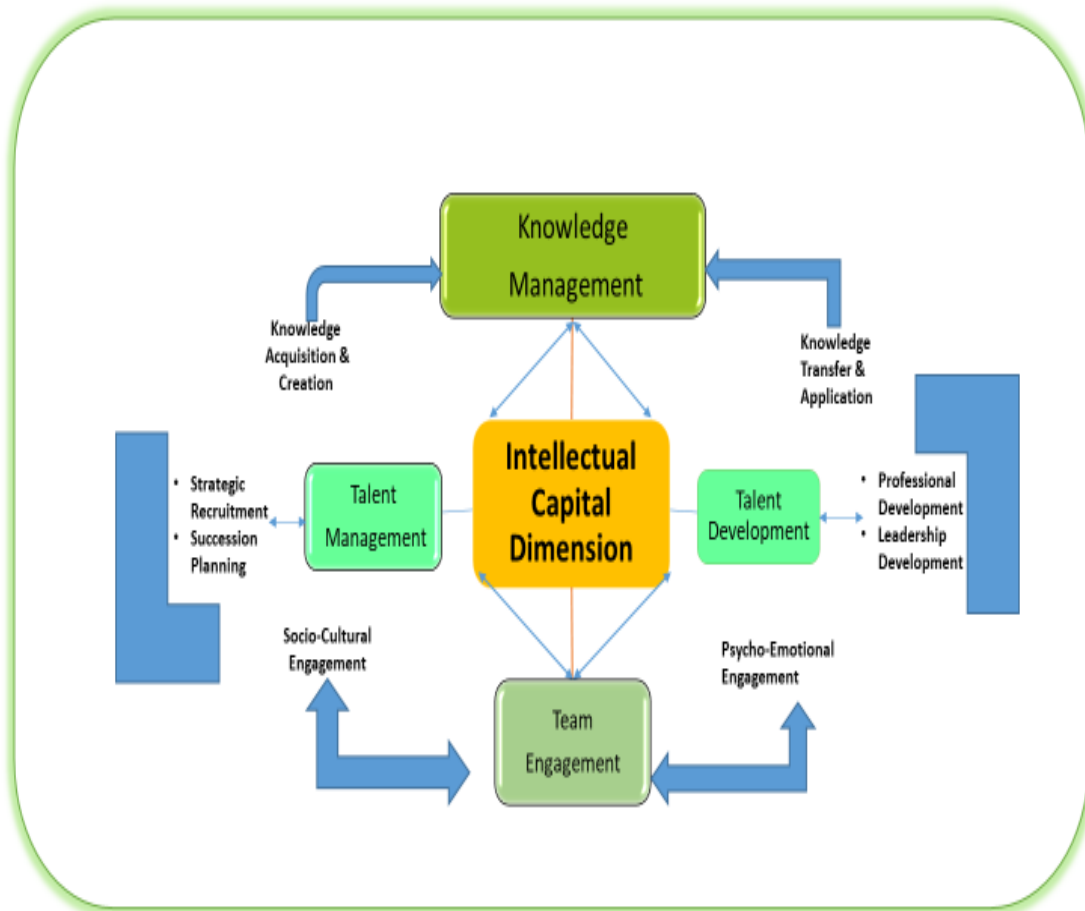
Intellectual Capital Dimension

The cross-case analysis of Intellectual Capital Dimension revealed a number critical initiatives undertaken by these companies which were pivotal to the competitive strength of the companies in the case study. As indicated by the findings of the Word Frequency Analysis, all of these initiatives centered around the concept of ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Talent’; more specifically, the management of knowledge and engagement of ‘Talent’. The Word Tree Analysis further distilled the concept of ‘Knowledge’ to identify specific strategic initiatives which were employed by these highly successful companies; and the findings identified initiatives relating to the creation of: Knowledge Repositories, the appointment of Knowledge Ambassadors, cultivating a Knowledge Culture, and knowledge development, inter alia. These initiatives were aimed at improving the organization’s stock and transfer of knowledge; and as theorized by Torres et al., (2018), these knowledge-based initiatives seek to leverage the stores of organizational knowledge in both people and databases and use it to improve the organization’s competitive performance.

When examined within the context of an Integrated HCD Framework, the findings showed that two broad Strategic Pillars (SP) were pursued by these companies to propel the Intellectual Capital Dimension of HCD in order to build and enhance Organizational Intelligence. These two pillars are (i) Knowledge Management and (ii) Talent Management. Figure 32 (below) illustrates how each pillar is deconstructed to further identify and explain the specific Strategic Initiatives (SI) which are the building blocks of each Strategic Pillar (SP).

Figure 32

A Conceptual Model of The Intellectual Capital Dimension of HCD



*Key Strategic Theme 1 – Knowledge Management***Strategic Theme (ST-1) - Knowledge Acquisition, Transfer & Application****Implementing a Knowledge Repository (OT-1)**

According to Kim et al., (2018), in managing knowledge organizations gather information from various sources which it stores analyzes and interprets and shares throughout the organization using special knowledge management tools. This practice was evident in all the cases, where each organization had a strong and deliberate focus on the acquisition of knowledge using various Learning Management Systems and Knowledge Repositories. Participant-WH1 (Insurance Industry) emphasized that his company's strategies are heavily dependent on the talent of the individuals within the company, and when they leave the organization, all their knowledge leaves with them, unless the company puts the relevant systems in place to manage knowledge so that it remains in the company. "As we go forward, the organization must continue to win, through knowledge retention and application to problem solving. An organization is not just the people because the people will come, and people will go. We need systems to manage the acquisition, retention and transfer of knowledge; and once this is place, there is no need to be scared of attrition." He went on to state that "within the next few months, we are going to complete work on what we call **The Sage Hub** which will be our **knowledge management system**. We are also actively working with an external consultant to ensure that we build a strong knowledge repository to allow for knowledge transfer, so that it becomes more engrained in our operations". This is in keeping with the point made by Ginting, (2020) who opined that knowledge management systems have the capacity to exploit knowledge-based resources while producing new knowledge.

Participants WH1 and WL2 both highlighted the creation the Sage Hub, which will serve as the organizations' repository of knowledge will be supported by Artificial Intelligence to make the system robust and responsive; allowing for both people to system transfer, as well as system to people transfer of knowledge. This two-way exchange of knowledge is recommended by Chen et al., (2017) and Wang and Wang, (2020); represents the pluralistic approach that organizations need to take to effectively tap into both tacit and explicit knowledge.

The concept of a knowledge repository was also present in Case-N, and is used to facilitate the acquisition and storage of knowledge resources. Participant (NL2) who is head of Human Resource indicated that the company actually has several systems that facilitate the management of knowledge. All of which feed into the main system which is called **The Grid**. "The Grid serves as our learning management system which is also connected through social media, specifically LinkedIn; so that once an employee does any kind of learning.... their LinkedIn profile is automatically updated with whatever learning activity has taken place. Additionally, the Grid serves as a learning management platform with host of training courses facilitated via the Intranet; and accessible by all categories and levels of staff; who can enroll on both general and specific training programmes with the support of the employee's line-manager," (Participant NH1).

Participant YL2 who operates as Learning and Development Manager for Case-Y made the point that for her company, "there is a central repository for managing knowledge; with information that is generic and available to all individuals, irrespective of your role, where you are in the company. There are various training sessions which are both applicable and relevant to

all areas of the organization, and so everybody can access them. Training materials are uploaded by both internal training facilitators and external training consultants. So that's available, and so **central knowledge repository**.

For case V, Participants VS3 confirmed that “the company has now implemented a knowledge repository system via the company’s newly enhanced **I-Shine HR Portal**; using a state-of-the-art Learning Management Information System (LMIS). This I-Shine HR Platform houses everything for the Corporate University, performance management, leave management among others. It serves as a central hub to manage knowledge for the organization.”

Case U- has a **hybrid model for its knowledge repository**, which includes both a physical library and an E-library equipped with the latest journal publications such as EBSCO as well as professional publications like Harvard Business Review. According to Participant-UL2, “this hybrid model existed pre COVID from as far back as 2004, but since COVID, we have really had a tremendous shift towards virtual, and now the company’s E-library provides a comprehensive set of services from learning labs, E-testing, to presentation modules, as well as mentorship and collaboration modules”.

Implementing a Corporate University (OT-2)

Developing a Corporate University Model aligned to the Company’s Business Structure

Another key strategic move made by the companies in the study was the move to establish Corporate Universities which would have the primary responsibility for learning and development. It is important to note that only one of the organizations in the case study had a

fully established university; however, all the cases represented in the study were aggressively moving on developing/enhancing their Corporate University, especially with the impetus given by the Covid-19 virus.

Case-U, was the organization that was most advanced in this area; and as explained by Participant UH1 who operates as the Assistant General Manager for the company, “We are actually pioneers in this area, being the first entity in Jamaica to have a Corporate University several years ago; and certainly, the first bank. It was the brainchild of one of our former Vice Presidents who spent a lot of time developing the model because learning is very important in the company; and company’s the structure demonstrates its strategic significance to the company’s success. **The L&D Framework of our Corporate University is embedded in the Organization’s structure, such that we have 5 Schools of Learning.** First have the School of Banking Applications and Risk Management. The second one would be The School of Client Relationship Management. Third would be the School of Digital Transformation and Analytics; and the four is the Institute of Leadership and Organization Development; and the fifth one would be the School of Wealth Management, which focuses on sales.” WS3 continued by explaining that the company’s Corporate University offers a variety of training development, certification at various levels in both hard and soft skills and then manages the knowledge coming from that in centralized repository to ensure that it is organized, coded and effectively stored and retrieved. The establishment of a Corporate University would arguably be one of the most efficient and effective ways to manage knowledge assets, with its attending systems and procedure, as described by Chandra, (2019). In order to be effective, an organization’s knowledge management system is to be managed in a controlled way; with the appropriate

coding and mapping procedures to allow for optimal relationship between people and information (Chandra, 2019).

Implementing a Corporate University using Partnerships Model

For Company V, they are now in the process of setting up a Corporate University to drive the knowledge management initiatives through the company and build out of a very universal approach to learning across Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago where the company operates. The model although new to the company is aimed at streamlining learning and development to ensure its strategic link with the company's business and corporate strategies, our approach is a using a **Partnership Model based on digital learning**. Participant VH1 who operates as the Group Head of Culture and Human Development explained that "our company has now invested in relevant software to facilitate self-paced learning on a wide range of materials". Additionally, we are working on a game changing external partnership, which give us access to 70,000 accredited courses and uses social media as a learning tool. So, all the team members can pursue internationally accredited courses, in both Spanish and French; which is of strategic importance as expand across the Caribbean to countries which are non-English speaking. Hanif et al., (2020), knowledge management systems require a systematic approach to ensure the effective flow of data and information to the right people at the right time; and the establishment of corporate universities which systematically offer locally and internally accredited course that's aligned to the company's strategies; will enhance organizational performance.

Appointing Knowledge Ambassadors (OT-3)

In one of the cases (Case-W), the organization became even more deliberate about the transfer of knowledge and created **Knowledge Ambassador** who champion the movement and application of knowledge throughout the organization. The company's Head of Learning, Development and Change Management (WL2) expounded on the concept as follows: "We choose the method of designating Knowledge Ambassadors; and by so doing we selected over **120 people leaders** who were trained in specific areas and then returned to their different business units. Essentially, we used the knowledge that they've gained from Dale Carnegie model to transfer that knowledge to both people and systems. They are equipped with a whole booklet to guide them in doing activities which are to be implemented to facilitate the transfer the knowledge. So essentially, it's a train the trainer model of sort." The transfer of knowledge is an important part of knowledge management and includes implementing strategies to facilitate the development and deployment of knowledge assets based on strategic needs and priorities (Kim, 2000).

Key Strategic Theme 2 - Talent Management & Engagement

Strategic Theme (ST-2)-Strategic Recruitment

Strategic recruitment was another common thread through all the cases, each company had very sophisticated methods for recruiting talent, especially in certain specialized skill areas where the expertise needed are linked to key strategic drivers for the company's competitiveness. All participants in the cross-case analysis spoke directly or hinted to a 'Talent War'; for certain scarce people resources; especially in the field of information technology which is key in

propelling the digital transformation strategies which each company is pursuing. Consequently, the organizations utilize a wide mix of innovative recruitment strategies which are discussed below.

Strategic Recruitment using Headhunters and Employee Sub-contracting (OT- 4 & 5)

Participant WHI explained the strategic nature of Case-U's recruitment process stating; "we don't post ads, we do strategic recruiting through hired headhunters to find the most talent people resources. Where we can't find resources, we buy resources. At times, we may also use an augmented employment; where person **bring in resources under a sub-contract**. For example, an employee may have a company that does software development, so we will hire from the employee's company under a sub-contract to meet a specific talent need. Additionally, we have innovative recruitment strategies linked to our long-term business strategies that center around the creation and building of talent".

Strategic Recruiting for firm-specific Expertise - (Hired to Learn Model) (OT-6)

The increased competition for critical talent in the industry and the scarcity of that talent to drive the company's continued digital transformation was given as the main reason for Case-U's innovative approach to recruitment; especially because its competitive differentiator in the banking industry is Innovation. Participant UH1 stated that "we have proactively changed the face of recruiting; where we have persons that we've hired and their sole job is to learn, so that they can drive our '**Digital to the Core Strategy**'. They do nothing else but to learn how to be software developers. We pay and train them to learn to be a Software Developers, they are fully devoted learners who do nothing else but pay attention to being a developer. The company is moving at cutting edge speed here, leap years ahead of the competition; and we are doing so

through innovative strategic recruitment and talent development. For our special team of developers; which are driving the digital strategy, once they come off that Talent Development Program, which is done in partnership with the University of the West Indies (UWI), for that first year, they're monitored quarterly, to see how well they integrate to fill that expert resource gap that exists. This allows us to each year, provide the business with a set of resources that are way ahead of the competition, fully competent in front and back-end development and data analytics and in quality assurance. These are key areas of internal strategic investments, where we spend a lot of money on people resources. We keep developing them, devoting them to the business strategy. As they come up the curve, we release more of these resources that we're buying externally, and we keep doing that until we feel we have a comfortable enough portion of those resources; with specific expertise from the labour market that we own. This allows us to build up our knowledge management stores and drives the intellectual capital capacity of the organization; which has been key to helping us remain in the number one position in banking over these many years.” This very innovative approach taken by Case-U significantly enhances knowledge creation and application which can be leveraged to improve competitive performance in a very dynamic market place. As explained by Ashish et al., (nd), when a market shifts technologies proliferate and in order for companies to success are those which constantly create and use new knowledge. As is done with Case-U. where they buy utilize innovation approaches to identify talent with critical knowledge or they use Hire to Learn Models to organically grow critical talent, the company continues to come up with innovative ways to harness and reconfigure knowledge to achieve strategic objectives (Oltra, 2021).

This point was underscored by Participant US3 – who is the Vice President of Strategy & Research for the company explained that “there's currently massive competition for talent and there is an inadequate pool of talent resources; and most of the time to find Information Technology (IT) talent is extremely hard. So, a lot of the time what you end up hiring is inexperienced talent and you actually pay for the learning, right? You pay for the learning in terms of like, the bugs that are in the system that they develop this work on them having to fix it and do a lot of rework and stuff like that. We used to spend a lot of time fixing bugs. So, we have moved in another direction where the talent management becomes more complex and crucial; it's not just about finding the right talent potential with the right qualification; it's about developing that **talent to develop firm-specific expertise**. With this in mind, a big part of the company's winning formula is the combination of both talent development and also hiring the right talents to build up expertise in key strategic areas. She explained that “one of the things that we've done in terms of strategic talent recruitment and development, or have been doing over the last three years is that we've launched an **Analyst Initiative** that is intended to take university graduates straight out of school, and whether they've done a masters or a first degree, we aim to identify the top of the top students in the areas that are relevant for our business. No experience required, they start out in, in our research unit, where search is really a very broad-based, because its capital markets research. So, we teach them a really broad base of skills that they need to move into other areas. So here, they work to hone their skills, developing their skills in the areas of equity, valuation, equity analysis, economic analysis, fixed income analysis, and credit analysis, among other areas critical to us having a competitive edge in banking; and then that is intended to be a freed-up pool of talent for the rest of the business”.

In addition to the innovative approach to sourcing talent, Case-U also has an extensive recruitment process which includes an intensive orientation period which over **the first 50 to 70 days of employment**. New recruitee must pass a series of learning modules to determine best fit determination of best fit before the hiring process to be finalized.

This same approach is used by Case Y for strategic recruitment for firm specific expertise. Participant YH1 indicated that for her company, there are “several graduate recruitment programmes targeted at university graduates from they are in their final year with specific IT competencies which are critical to the organizations core business in telecommunications. The recruitment begins from their final year and then allows them to transition into full fledge employees of the company as they develop their talent for firm specificity. This allows us to manage and grow that talent and ensure that it develops in the desired way in order to push the company’s technology strategy.”

Strategic Recruitment – Best Fit Models (OT-7)

Best Fit Model- Service Mindset

Although in the same banking sector of Case U who competes on Innovation, Case V has differentiated niche in the market and competes on Service Excellence as its key strategic differentiator. Hence the importance of creating and maintaining a particularly defined service culture and finding employee who possess that service culture mindset to ensure a fit for the organization. Therefore, recruiting talent for the organization was not just about the qualification that the persons have or their technical experience they possess, but was more about finding a best fit between the recruitees and the organization in terms of their **service mindset culture** and customer orientation of the company. Participant VH1- explained that “based on where the recruitee’s mindset is centered and where are they are on their life journey; as a company we ask

the question: Is there an alignment between the recruitee's way-of-thinking and our company's way of being? We pull out all the stops drive the culture, and reinforce the culture...because the service culture is the underbelly of this organization and what gives us, a competitive edge; and a niche in the banking industry that we are only ones capable of filling. This is important because if we do the recruitment right, to find the right people, then the learning and development that follows will complete the process and keep us ahead of the competition.”

Best fit Model -Knowledge Excellence

For Case-W, the company competes on differentiated strategy based on premium product offerings, in the Insurance Industry, the approach to recruitment is about attracting the brightest minds who embody the passion and fervor for people-focused insurance solutions to ensure that the company remains number one in the insurance sector as it has been several consecutive years. Participant WH1 affirmed his company's focus on people; indicated that they want to offer our people the best insurance solutions. “So, our or recruiting process is strenuous, the testing is strenuous for both Intelligence Quotient and Psychometrics; as we want to have bright people on team. Therefore, we select carefully and we bring in the best; and by doing that, first of all we believe half our battle is won in terms of building a great company and differentiating ourselves; because no amount of training, learning and development can fix what bad recruiting did not catch”.

Strategic Theme (ST-3) Talent Attrition Management

Talent Value Group Metrics (OT - 8)

Organizations are fluid, people come and go but organizations cannot afford to have valuable knowledge leave the organization. Talent Retention Metrics is crucial monitoring tool

to help to maintain low turnover rates. Participant UL2 explained that her organization maintains a talent attrition threshold which they aim not to exceed. She indicated that the company employs specific human capital metrics which are aggressively monitored to ensure that generally turnover is low; especially for employees with firm-specific knowledge and expertise tied to the company's strategic goals. "We have gone even further to develop a **Talent Value Group**, which is those employees that are deemed as high value as they say, in terms of the actual value they deliver to the organization, and we will look at their propensity for leaving. Fortunately for us, the score was low; which means there is a very low probability that key team members making up this Talent Value Group would leave; and a lot of work has been done over the years to make sure that the score remains low." The use of metrics to measure the value contributed to the organization by various high-performance individuals/groups is endorsed by the Human Capital Management Institute, (Schwarz, 2019).

Talent Attrition Metrics (OT - 9)

This another type of metric which can be used to monitor and measure the rate at which certain key employees separate from the company. According to Rawley and Gup (2009), and Frigo and Ubelhart (2015), the use of talent attrition metrics is now a strategic imperative for leading companies, one such talent attrition metric is expressed as a Talent Quotient in North America. According to Participant YL2 "Talent retention is critical issue for her company, as a consequence talent attrition is monitored at the both departmental and group HR level. "Each Manager has a responsibility to monitor talent attrition within their department, so for example, if I have too many technical persons leaving or software developers or engineers with critical skill-sets that hard skill set to find, then we have to ask ourselves why? So, we actually do detail exit interviews with individuals to find out why they're leaving. Is it simply because you just

want to try something new? Or is it because we could have done something differently internally. We have to drive the conversations, so that we have a sense of what's happening with our talent. It's actually monitored very closely using various metrics; because if key talent is leaving the organization, that's a red flag that has to be addressed immediately from the team engagement level to get feedback from the staff to see what needs to be done to change course. The aim is to have talent retention at its highest; and keep the turnover rate of key talent low.”

Strategic Theme (ST-4) - Undertaking Succession Planning

Succession Planning – Mission Critical Roles (OT - 10)

Populova and Mokros (2007), point to the sharing and transfer of knowledge as involving the systematic flow of data and information; leading to the transfer of abilities, skills and expertise between individuals in the organization. As a key initiative to ensure that people to people transfer of knowledge occurs is succession planning. Participant WS3 explained that for her company employees who are close to retirement have to go through a period of planned knowledge transfer from the soon to be retiree to a leadership prospect in the company, who are mentored and coached to bring that successor up to a certain level to assume future leadership roles. She explained that “as a company, when we talk about succession planning, we're talking building up of high potential talent. So, at least two years before they go on retirement, there's an active discussion around, all aspects of their portfolio ...and there is an appreciation and commitment to get this transfer of knowledge done to ensure that executives are being understudied and prospects are being trained. There is also a strong emphasis on ensuring that things are properly documented so that the transition is smooth. We make sure we are building a

strong bench, so that when somebody goes, there's somebody from the bench that can step in, and run it.”

Participant YH1 also explained that her company takes succession planning as a key initiative to ensure the transfer of knowledge, pointing out that “For each department, the manager is actually mandated to provide succession planning for key roles’ including identifying individuals from different teams that have the potential to do well in specified areas that drive business competitiveness. Based on the data gathered from that succession plan; the Learning and Development Department will actually build out a training plan; which will stipulate the targeted training sessions that these are necessary for these key roles. This is to ensure optimal knowledge retention within the organization even when senior members leave.” The retention of knowledge occurs the more knowledge is shared and applied through collaborative work behaviours and a culture of knowledge sharing (Halisa et al., 2021; Gupta and Singh, 2017).

A similar position was explained by Participant NL2 in regards to his company’s policy around succession management, especially for the company’s mission critical positions, which are the most impactful on the organization. “Every year, we have an exercise where we review that the talent in the organization using a 360-degree approach. And then you're categorized based on your expertise based on how long you've been in the company, how long you've been in that position and then you're attached to say, what is it that you need for further development, if you are ready to move to a lateral position, or if you will be ready for a promotion in then the near future, in the medium term. This gives you gives you access to a talent pool that is constantly being renewed. Therefore, if it is that something unexpected happens. You will

always have this data to inform who would be the next best person. So, both succession planning and career pathing is much easier.

Key Strategic Theme 3 – Talent Development & Management

Strategic Theme (ST-5) -Training & Development

Training – to Create the Employee of Choice

In explaining the high level of importance that the company places on people development, Participant WL2 stated “Everything we do, we have people in mind; so, while other companies want to be the Employer of Choice, we feel you that if we have the best people, whether it's the best people in sales and operations in risk, in compliance wherever if we have the best people, we will have the best company. So, we are big on people development to create that Employee of Choice. Our company wants to build team members of choice; and that is done through our effective talent management strategies. We are very proactive when it comes to that. We have somebody hired as a **Talent Management Officer**, whose focus is to look across the group, sit with the executives, and try to find out what are the critical roles and who are the people we cannot afford to lose; and what talent development initiatives we should pursue.”

Specialized Certification to develop High Talent Potentials (OT-11)

Participant WL2 expounded on the point of talent development to emphasize that the company has a very ‘handsome’ training budget; and so, the company is reaching out to its **critical talent across** the group to identify areas where professional development and certification can be done. As opined by Fareed et al., (2016), knowledge cannot be fully

leveraged unless there is a focus on the development and empowering of employees. Participant WL2, went on to explain that, “the aim this year is to train up to 2,600 people to make them high potentials; which will be done in increments of 150 at a time in a special talent management programme directly linked to the company’s business strategy.” The alignment talent development initiatives to the company’s business performance are a necessity for improved competitive performance; as it serves to regenerate and grow new knowledge to effectively respond to the competitive forces in the environment (Lopez, 2005)

Training for Emerging Talent (OT-12)

For Case Y, Participant YH1 explained about the importance of developing high talent potentials especially in certain technical competencies. “Not only do focus on developing our employees to adapt to the ever-changing market place but we have to remain focused on our people, if we are to remain competitively superior. In terms of the team and the skill set, their expertise and competencies are crucial resource to the company and critical to our success. This is especially the case for certain areas of the company’s operations like our highly specialized technical teams in software developing, data warehousing, business intelligence, all which demand mission-critical expertise as we are a telecommunications company. Hence our focus on training for emerging talent. They might not necessarily be an expert in their area, but they have great potential and they are enthusiastic about learning and growing; and they are committed to the job. So, for this group of talent potentials, we focus on up-skilling those individuals to make them more effective and functional in their current roles, to build expertise and develop new competencies. Having an expert team of data analysts to drive business intelligence is key to remaining competitive; and we ensure that do strategic recruitment and we develop the talent in area of Data Analytics.”

Training and Development Standards International Benchmarks (OT-13)

For Case U, Participant- UL2 elucidated that training is done based on a benchmark standard from the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD), which requires 40 learning hours per employee. “So, we focus a lot on different groups and building capabilities in those groups, and urging employees to learn more as well as we outlined competency models and career paths for different roles and show individuals what courses can help them to develop those particular competencies. It’s like a pathway for promotion improvement in organization, and then if there are gaps that individuals have, we will point them to the courses that will help them to improve to fill those knowledge gaps.

Value Based Training - Service Culture (OT-14)

Participant VH1, explained that for Case V, the company does an extensive array of training focused on different areas, some are mandatory based on the service-centered nature of the business. “After orientation we have an initiative called ‘The company Way’, which is, a whole day affair, where we sit down and look at the thinking behind the company’s ‘Vision of Love’. It's awesome. ‘The company way’ means living a values-based life and being your best self, so that you are manifesting your greatness. Another key area of training is on Client Partnership, which everybody has to do. Whether you're on the front line or back office, no matter what area of the company you work in, because all team members have to know how to partner with their internal clients, and give them the kind of service that is expected, even if they don’t deal directly with external partners. And once we are we are serving our team members well, then they're better in a better position to serve our clients well.”

Job Enrichment & Enlargement (OT-15)

Cross Training – Growing Across and Up

Job enrichment and enlargement activities were also employed by the organizations in the study. According to Participant WH1, Job Enrichment and Enlargement are key to talent development. “So, our philosophy is, if we can't grow you up, let's grow you across. We give you a breadth of knowledge, so, when you're learning you're growing, you might not be promoted but if you are learning, you're growing for future opportunities. Some people might find that they start out with us in an account but they went and they did some IT studies because they want to career change; if there's a position in another part of the company; that suits them, well we support them to make the transition into their desired choice.”

Job Rotation for Talent Development

NL2 – “Having done our 360-Reviews, we would have the talent categorized based on expertise and we would be able to see the various developmental needs of the talent pool within the company. At this point an assessment is made of the persons who would be interested in moving into a lateral position, this is done through Job rotation which can be done within the local arm of the company or any of our international branches. This is used as a preparation tool for promotion in the near future in the medium term”.

Strategic Theme (ST-6) - Leadership Development through Coaching and Mentoring

Another important strategic initiative which came out of the cross-case analysis on the Intellectual Capital Dimension was the foster of leadership coaching and mentorship; and this

was common in all the cases studied. Through leadership development coaching and mentorship there is development of talent through knowledge transfer and application. Various approaches were taken in the cases studies, these are discussed below:

Establishing a Leadership Institute for Coaching & Mentorship (OT-16)

For case U, a full coaching framework was developed which facilitates knowledge transfer through peer-to-peer learning “The coaching framework is formalized through our Institute of leadership, where we train persons to be mentors and coaches. Importantly, we have two such programmes in the leadership school that are accredited by the University Council of Jamaica. We also have a mentorship program. That's a volunteer programme and your line manager is actually not allowed to be your mentor; because already you would get some amounts of coaching and mentoring from your line manager.”

Implementing a Future Leaders Mentorship Programme (OT-17)

Case Y, also emphasized the emphasis placed on coaching and mentorship as a tool to facilitate knowledge transfer. Participant YH1 who operates as the Chief Executive Officer indicated that the company undertakes coaching and mentorship formally and informally as a way to support the growth and development of talent across the group; and to support the company's succession plan. She explained that being the telecommunications industry, there is a heavy reliance on the skills and expertise of people to drive innovation. “So, we have to build up enterprise specific expertise and competence over time, and we have to ensure that the knowledge that rests with our more senior members are transferred to our younger members; so that there is continuity and a reduction in knowledge loss, when persons retire or separate from the company. For this reason, leadership coaching and mentorship is critical for us; which is why

we have a formal mentorship system, but also we make it a part of our everyday culture in a more organic way. If I look at myself, for example, and how far I've come; from a junior position when I started at the company to now Chief Executive Officer. This growth came to a great extent from the interaction that I had with my senior leaders in the past and their ability to see that I had a particular potential even before I could see it. And they would just challenge me to take on new roles, even when I struggled to wrap my head around a concept, but they knew I could do it. They believed in me and so I was able to do great things because of our culture of mentorship”

Developing a Pro-Millennial Mentorship Programme (OT-18)

In addition to Succession Planning initiatives with specific knowledge management components for the employees nearing retirement, **Case-W**, also targeted initiatives for the younger employees who are newer to world of work. The company has developed a Pro-Millennial Mentorship Society; which is used to facilitate the two-way transfer of knowledge from the older to the younger members of the team but reciprocally from the younger to the older. “The company pulls on the more seasoned experts from rom the industry (within and without the company), who come in and do group mentoring. This “two-way transfer of knowledge from the more experienced to the juniors and back from the more tech-savvy juniors to the more traditional workers ensures that the organization remains strategic about how it manages knowledge in a dynamic environment. Especially since, 55% of the company are millennials, the transfer of knowledge is an absolute necessity, (Participant WH1). Organizations should aim to foster a culture learning, where knowledge sharing is promoted between individuals and groups especially since people might not voluntarily share knowledge (Gupta and Singh 2017).

Strategic Theme (ST-7) Team Engagement

Effective engagement of the talent requires creating various touch points for employees to have meaningful interaction and opportunities for continuous learning on various levels within the organization, (Hanh and Choi, 2019). Team Engagement is important to improve productivity, retain talent and support learning and development; and team engagement activities featured very prominently in all the cases, because of the organization's big focus on human capital development. Among the team engagement initiatives pursued were: the establishment of Team Engagement Unit to champion the engagement activities throughout the organizations, these activities included social activities, volunteerism, activities focused on the emotional and mental wellbeing of team members; activities to build/enhance organizational culture and specific engagement activities that specific for the different demographics in the organizations.

Establishing a Team Engagement Unit (OT-19)

Participant WH1 stressed his organization's commitment to maintaining a happy and productive team. He stated that "To demonstrate our commitment to engaging and connecting with our team members, we have a team in place that focuses only on team experience. Yes, they want to know that the team is engaged and happy; because happy cows give better milk. But more than anything else, they want to know that the team is productive".

Team Engagement for Emotional & Mental Well-being (OT-20)

One of the key activities which the companies engaged in, especially in light of the pandemic was specific SV3 indicate that their companies had multiple initiatives focused solely on the emotional and mental well-being of their team members. “We solicited their view to hear what they are interested in talking about, what areas of support were needed and then we create opportunities of persons to share in small groups of their peers, one on one and in large settings where a professional would be engaged with certain expertise to speak on a particularly areas of interest.

Team Engagement through Cultural Engagement Activities (OT-21)**Team Engagement to Foster People Focused Culture**

Participant WS3 explained that her company launched a team engagement initiative aimed at redefining the organization’s culture as a **‘People First Culture’**. “Team members were asked to identify somebody in their unit who lives the ‘People First Culture’ and that person would be recognized. In one instance, someone wrote in and asked that a particular employee with a disability who has a great attitude be recognized; and that person was gifted with a motor car.”

The approach of a People First Culture through team Engagement was also present in Case V, and was quite expansive. Participant VS3 indicated that, the company conducted team engagement workshops to engage employees across the various Caribbean territories so that they could learn from each other about the various cultures. “By learning from each other, we can truly live out our mantra: one group, one client, and one experience. And after going through the

exercise, we realized we have a much more in common. It's about the people; and we do we get best from our team members, and everything that we do, we do it with the team member's best interests at heart. So, the same way we expect the team on the frontline to treat the clients that is we treat team members we serve, we think about them. I mean, we do our best to really put our team members first when it comes on to training and development; and when it comes on to their well-being."

Team Engagement through Social Activities

For Case-N, Participant NH1 made the point that "you can have the best strategy, but if you don't have the team momentum to be able to execute that strategy, it will fail. That's why it's so important that people understand, embrace and are aligned to the strategy. Employees need to feel a part of something bigger than themselves, and reward and recognition is a key component of everything we do. By building rapport, team members are more willing to share more openly and honestly. We celebrate the wins and we learn from the failures and we do it together. Celebrating individual and team accomplishments, we do it in simple yet authentic ways and our team members appreciate it and look forward to these activities."

Participant WS3 shared that her company (Case-W) had units for team engagement and that they worked closely with the L&D to put on a number of social activities, parties, performance shows and socials to keep the staff upbeat. Some would be done strategically in the middle of the work day, as team members worked online during the pandemic... I mean, we never stopped partying during the pandemic because we were doing online parties at 2:00pm during the day we'd hear that we should stop working engagement team is coming with a party and they have well-known entertainers and artistes ready to perform. By the end of the session the team is energized and

you will find team members as result are working late enjoying their work. Even in the pandemic, productivity is at its highest even in the on-line environment”.

Talent Engagement for the Generations (OT-22)

Another talent engagement initiative that was developed for Case-W was an initiative to get the different generations to engage with each other. Participant WL2 explained that “with the millennials especially Gen Z, it got a little difficult as the older generations couldn't understand their work ethics and the younger folks would complain that the older team members don't support them, they didn't believe that the more mature workers respected the way they worked in a sense. So the company decided to bridge the gap by establishing a Professional Millennial Mentorship Society, where the more seasoned employees would mentor the millennials; and in the process, we experienced Reverse Mentorship where the younger team members get to share their tech savvy experiences with the older team members; but first, we had to reach the hearts of the more mature team members to let them realize that listen, the millennials are not coming in to replace you; and it has worked beautifully and the two groups are learning and growing together.”

Social Capital Dimension

Figure 33

Conceptual Model Social Capital Dimension of HCD



The cross-case analysis of the social capital dimension revealed two key themes which emerged as being the core elements of social capital which contribute to the organization's competitiveness. Theme (i) Organizational Culture and Theme (ii) Organizational Learning; both of which occurs as knowledge is generated through people-to-people interaction to form social networks with norms, shared values and goals, (Fuel et al., 2017; Sohel-Uz-Zaman et al., 2019). These two themes (organizational Culture and Organizational Learning) formed the main strategic pillars used by these companies in the case study for the building of social capital; with several strategic initiatives emerging from each strategic pillar. For Organizational Culture, there findings revealed specific initiatives focused on: building a positive work culture, fostering social engagement; building a culture driven by multi-dimensional communication, fostering a culture of innovation and creativity. For organizational learning the strategic initiatives which emerged were Personal Learning/Mastery. Team: Learning and Cross-Functional Learning. The findings of the analysis at the Social Capital Dimension are discussed in detail below.

Key Strategic Theme 4 - Organizational Culture

Strategic Initiative (SI-8) – Culture as way of being and doing

Culture by its very nature is an abstract concept that can be easily underestimated in terms of impact on how organizations operate. However, organizational culture is a critical component to understanding how social capital is built and maintained in any organization; and is even more critical to the creation of the organizational context that promulgates learning (Gil et al, 2019); with opportunities for employees to new knowledge to effectively the leveraging of intellectual capital towards improved performance, (Hanh and Choi, 2019). In this study,

organizational culture was a key feature across the cases in the study, with each company having one or more deliberate initiatives around creating a specific kind of work culture. There were varying approaches taken to develop organizational culture depending on the strategic goal of the company. Key focal points to drive organizational culture, included: Culture as a way of Being and Doing, Culture reinforced by Leadership and Organizational Structure, taking a Values Based-Approach to Culture, Culture of Innovation and Entrepreneurships, and A Culture of Volunteerism and Social Engagement. Additionally, the building of culture included having multi-dimensional communication and strong feedback systems. Importantly, although all the cases had a focus on culture in various ways, there is one stand-out company (Case-V) that has taken the approach to culture on a much deeper level; and has created its whole brand strategy around that culture.

Culture reinforced by leadership and organizational structure

For Case-V, Culture was considered to be one of the most important drivers to the organization's success, especially since the company differentiates based on Service Culture Excellence. Consequently, the company puts a lot of effort into building and protecting its culture which it sees as being the most iconic part of its brand. As explained by Participant VS3 "We are therefore deliberate in the recruitment and selection process, as we try to find talent not just with certain expertise, but with thinking that's closer aligned what this organization stands for and where we are in the journey, because when you join the team, it's more than a job, it's your life, a reality built on love and service excellence that built into the culture of the organization. Our orientation is also very, detailed and we are quite intentional about entrenching in our culture to our new recruits; we have to help them unlearn their old culture

and relearn our culture. All of this is done because of the strategic significance of culture to our company's success. So, a lot of work is done to ensure that we protect that culture. and we do give new recruits the opportunity to opt out if the culture does not resonate with them. We believe in equity where we are all on a first name basis; and sometime this doesn't resonate with some people, who want a more hierarchical structure and reporting relationship. The organization operates in a more organic manner, with a flat structure especially for communication and decision making. The style of leadership is participatory and there is great effort on consensus building and mutual respect; with the same level of respect being accorded to the head of the bank as given to the security guard, which all operate on a first name basis. This maintains a healthy work culture and people can feel free to share with each other without reference to title and rank. In fact, the company has been designated as one of the '**Great Places to Work**' and received Regional Recognition for our Jamaica and Dominican Republic operations; and this framework spurs our team members to go above and beyond in the execution of the jobs. Garvin, (2008) makes the important link between leadership, structure and culture; highlighting that leadership sets the tone of the organizational culture." Hanh and Choi, (2019) reinforced this point by indicating that when employees are motivated by their leaders, they will go above and beyond the call of duty, beyond the limits of their contractual obligations to perform, even if they are not rewarded.

In further explaining how the organizational structure re-enforces the culture, Participant VH1 indicated that "as the Group Head for Culture and Human Development; we have a whole department whose job is maintain that culture of love throughout the organization; so that our team members live out that value system of love. We re-enforce the vision daily as carry out our

daily activities; because the leaders of the organization live it out, our team members do the same. Culture for us is natural, organic and not forced.” Gil et al, (2019) and Hanh and Choi, (2019) highlight the importance of authentic leadership to drive culture to create the context for learning and growth; and further opine that it’s the organic structure that best facilitate a culture of openness to change.

A Values Based Approach to Culture (OT-23)

Culture is described by Johnston and Hawke, (2002) as the existence of values, attitudes and practices which drive organizational learning. The values-based approach to culture was found heavily in Case-V, and according to Participant VH1, our value system, based on our core ‘Vision of Love’ and our ways of doing things are radically different from all other companies in the banking industry. In the original mission statement developed by the founder; it articulates a desire for team members to achieve complete harmony with the Holy Spirit; and for good to be derived from every interaction; which is the value system that is the company was birthed out of. Participant VS3, explained further that “as a company we believe in the greatness of people and the human spirit. Therefore, that if people become more aware of self, and others and understand how our thinking shapes our action, then we will get better results. Therefore, the Vision of Love is a declaration as we seek to align our thoughts or behaviours to create a positive work culture; that spurs on productivity and organizational growth. For us, culture is our key strategic differentiator and we have worked hard to create a competitive niche in this area.”

Culture of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OT-24)

Zahedi and Ashtar, (2020) purport that in order to remain competitive, organizations need to place great emphasis on idea generation and organizational creativity to create new products

and services...further indicating that innovation was critical to organizational survival and growth. So, while Case-V was able to build a successful differentiating strategy based on its culture, Case-U's strategic focus is innovation. With innovation as the strategic differentiator, the organization was understandable intentional about building a culture that is driven by innovation and entrepreneurship. As pointed out by Participant UH1, "culture is often seen as a touchy-feely subject matter, but for us, it's more than just that; when we think of culture, we think of the infrastructure of the organization. Our whole culture is centered being innovative and making constant technological improvements, as one of our main strategic pillars in being Digital to Core; and that digital transformation is pegged on innovation and continuous improvements. In fact, we just went through something that was major in terms of changing our organization's culture, or the company's mindset around our digital strategy. The aim was to further entrench our culture of innovation while reshaping our mindset going forward towards innovation, creativity and new thinking. Within the group of companies, from the divisional level right down to the individual level, 'innovation' is now structured as part of your key responsibility areas; and is monitored in each person's performance evaluation. Staff are encouraged and generously rewarded to come up with new ideas each quarter and these ideas are then evaluated; and were deemed feasible are projectized for implementation. We want creativity and innovation to be the hallmark of all we do.

The same approach is taken by Case-Y, which also has a strong culture of innovation and idea-creation. Albrecht, (2003) asserts that innovativeness is dependent on the culture of the organization; organizations need to cultivate and appetite for change. According to Participant YH1, the company has a strong culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, and change. We love

when our team members come up with new ideas and approaches, and managers will normally support the team member and encourage them to document their suggestions and include how they believe the Manager can support a new idea and often times, we actually we bring it on board. it's also very informal as well, just person seeing what's happening around and working with different teams, and they just give their own ideas. And so, because of that you find a lot of persons are willing to share ideas and walk through the process of getting them executed; and that has worked very well for us. From the perspective as CEO, the success of the entity and its ability to stay ahead of the competition and that means finding the right balance of innovation, and organizational commitment. This organizational commitment is built as team members engage in the creative process, and feel know that their ideas matter. It's embedded in the culture of the organization, and is vital, because I've seen over the years that if you have expertise and low commitment to the organization; then you do not get the optimal results. So, in the wider environment that we work in, we have an open-door policy, so that team members can share their ideas. That's the general approach of all the entities within this group. It is at its core of the organization's culture.

Participant YH1, also added that her company “developed Innovation Incubators, where persons have the opportunity to be able to be a part of a team that is purely responsible for innovation and change; essentially coming up with ideas. And then those ideas are developed as Business Cases, to see whether or not they make sense, if they are feasible, financially, is it something that is lucrative for the business, etc., and then if it is, then there are discussions around the level of investments required, and so on. It moved through a process from incubator

to life, built on the ideas, creativity and ingenuity of the people in the organization.”

Culture as Strategy

Interestingly for (Case-V), culture was the actual strategy used to differentiate the company from its competitors. This approach has been provided the company with great success over the years; and they have developed an iconic brand which allowed them to carve out a niche in the market based the company’s ‘Vision of Love’ used to drive its service culture excellence framework. As explained the Group Head of Culture and Human Development, “the company is built around a people focused service culture that is based on the belief that is greatness in all human beings. As such, and the company works incredibly hard to ensure that this of service culture based on the organization’s Vision of Love permeates the organization at all levels; and is felt by our team members and our customers. It is synonymous with the brand. It is for this reason that, we determined that best name for our HR department was Culture and Human Development, as it better represented how we see the people management function in the organization. As a bank that differentiates based on service quality, our Brand is one of our primary resources for competitive advantage. In most organizations the brand holder is usually the Marketing Head. Not so for our company, the brand holder is actually our Head of Culture and Human Development. You will not find this in another financial institution. This because the brand is who we are; it’s the people in organization. Based on the culture of the organization which is ironically different than any other in the banking industry. Unquestionably we are the only bank in Jamaica; which offer customers the ‘unbanked experience’ where your service representative knows your name and you can sit with and have a conversation with someone who genuinely cares about your well-being.”

A Culture of Volunteerism & Social Engagement (OT-25)

For Case-W, the culture of the organization is driven by consistent team engagement through social activities within the organization, where team members are just encouraged to have fun even in the work day, from concerts to parties to special guest performances to games and we have now transcended all of those to virtual since the pandemic. Participant WS3 describes the culture as being “so phenomenal...there is so much focus placed on developing a healthy work culture. We spend a lot of time working together and playing together, just having fun”. Beyond that social engagement transcend the organization into the community to the staging of largest non-profit run/walk event in the Caribbean to benefit education and health across the country. For a company with 2,500 team members, we have a huge volunteerism culture, there are hundreds of team members who work behind the scene for the company Charity Run, because they believe in it, because the company believes in it.” (Participant VS3).

Strategic Theme (ST-9) Multi-Dimensional Communication

As mentioned in the previous discussion around culture, communication was critical element in the creating a positive work culture for these organizations. Communication features highly in all organizations as vehicle for creating and maintaining this positive work culture. Across all cases, the flow of communication was emphasized and focus on its multi-dimensional and multi-directional characteristics. In the former a variety of media is used to communicate to include both formal and informal systems; while in the case of the latter, communication flows both bottom-up and top-down.

Vertical & Horizontal Communication (OT-26)

Draft, (2016) speaks of the value of having a more organic structure characterized by multi-directional communication, and a more horizontal approach to decision making. According to Participant VH1, for Case-V, “the organization communicates both vertically and horizontally and every meeting, large or small, we speak from this Vision of Love, so that it’s re-enforced in all that we do. Our organizational structure is relatively flat, and so we communicate through the teams in a participatory way to get buy-in across the organization effortlessly. Every single meeting, an extract is read from this vision of love. So, this is what organization uses at the start of every single interaction to remind us why we're here, why we're doing this at all, ultimately, where we want to go to get better. So, it is entrenched at every opportunity. Communication is a key emphasis in protecting the culture of the organization, and so the organization builds a whole calendar of activities aimed at building, enhancing and re-enforcing the organization’s cultural identity.”

Organic Communication (OT-27)

Organic communication according to Draft, (2016) flows naturally in many directions, there is an open to share and organizational learning is easier. The organization should value the sharing knowledge to encourage growth in employees even to challenge the status quo through change-making entrepreneurship (Valamis, 2020). With this in mind, Case-Y as a technology company encourages organic communication to facilitate the consistent flow of new ideas. Participant YL2, explained that in her organization “the culture allows for communication to flow in every direction and at all levels, because great ideas can come from anywhere in the company; and we are all about innovation and idea creation. So, we have all sorts of team

meeting on a regular basis, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually; both virtually and face to face; and we allow for free-flowing communication; and if someone doesn't want to voice certain things in a meeting form, they can approach any team lead informally to share their views. We believe that creativity from the team comes as the team bonds and clarifies the process, that's when team synergy is at its best. This entity is built on entrepreneurship, and so because of that you find a lot of persons are willing to share ideas and walk through the process of getting them executed. We value the team's opinion and input and we believe a more organic structure is best for us." This perspective is supported by Gil et al, (2019) who opined that it is the organic structure that is more suited for facilitating a culture of learning and innovation.

Strategic Theme (ST-9) Feedback Systems

For all the cases, there were both formal and informal feedback systems that which helped to reinforce the cultural context of the organizations. Gil et al, (2019) recommends that organizations pursue multi-tiered feedback systems. Hanh and Choi, (2019) theorize that where organizational leadership strives to create a shared-vision and values feedback and input, there is continuous learning takes place, creating an organizational culture where knowledge grows and performance is improved. With this in mind, a variety of initiatives were pursued to facilitate feedback on multiple levels, with significant similarities across the cases. In terms of formal feedback system, these included Town Hall Meetings, employee engagement survey, 360-Degree feedback survey, Employer Workplace Surveys and Learning and Development Impact Surveys, among others. Importantly, surveys were one of the most widely used feedback method in all the case. These formal feedback mechanisms are used to provide important data which the organizations use to development team engagement activities and training and development

interventions. The more informal feedback approaches include: leaders open door policy, conflict resolution feedback, idea generation feedback, among others. The more informal approaches help to promote a culture of togetherness, respect, sharing and goodwill. The two sets of feedback systems are discussed below, systematic and spontaneous.

Systematic Feedback (OT-28)

Town Hall Meetings

For organization N, the use of frequent town hall meetings is used to supplement the usual departmental meetings. According to Participant NH1, “we encourage feedback and we welcome it, and as the Managing Director, I have to be very deliberate about it, so, we have Town Hall sessions every two months, to give team members a chance to share their views. The aim is to consistently reinforce the importance of feedback in order maintain a positive work culture. This leads to better performance in company because we have a consistent way of doing things, a culture that has proven to be beneficial to the company. So much so, that we still operated at an optimal level during COVID. What was important, was to ensure that we still maintain contact and engaged our team members throughout the pandemic.

Employee Engagement Surveys

Participant NL2 further explained that “our company also has a formal mechanism, called a, Your Voice Survey, that is done anonymously, where employees get to share, how they feel about the organization and the leader; and whether they're proud to work for the company. Whether they feel they understand the vision, etcetera. All those things are captured to really get a pulse of how the organization is performing from a people standpoint. Additionally, we have an employee engagement survey that happens every two years. And then it is benchmarked

against global standards and also benchmark against the previous surveys done for the company. This gives insight into what our employees are looking for, what are their needs and wants.”

Similarly, Participant VS3, explained that her company also had a system of using employee engagement surveys. “We have also established a Team Support Services Unit which is mandated to support teams across the organization by looking at the feedback from the engagement survey. This includes looking as at feedback re competencies and compensation, to see where the organization stacks in the market and to build out a plan of action.”

360-Degree Feedback Survey

According to Participant VS3, for Case-V, “the organization likes to know how team members feel and wants to hear from them. So, we get the formal feedback through the 360-degree engagement surveys; which includes a feedback tool called ‘The Leadership Circle’ that allows for feedback to the leadership. If something's not working, as the leadership, we need to have a conversation about how we can make it better. This fosters a sense of ownership that is unreal amongst our team members; but this is what we want, intrinsically motivated people; who are pursuing their purpose with an ownership mindset.”

Regional Workplace Survey

For Case V, the company has a long tradition of participating in the Great Place to Work Survey; which is offered by a company that does engagement surveys across the world.

Participant VH1, explained that “ours was done by the Latin American arm of that company. She

indicated that “the data from the survey will help to build out our Family Success Model, which speaks to having the right person in the right role. And we boil it down to our team member value proposition, which is our promise to our team members that we will provide a great place for them to work, learn and grow together” (Participant VH1).

Learning and Development Impact Survey

Participant WH1 explained that “for a lot of the courses that we do will post course feedback or scores. If a team member for example, enrolls in a process reengineering course, six months later, we assess to see what techniques learned from business process reengineering which have been implemented, and the Head of Department is asked to assess whether or not the up-skilled employee is adding value based on specific area of learning/development. If the answer is no, they will need another learning intervention. So, feedback is important to the learning process and we get good feedback from all involved in the learning process”.

Feedback for Continuous Improvements

Ferreira et al, (2020) and Wang and Ahmed, (2003) theorized that continuous improvements is critical to creating an organizational learning culture that drives innovation, improved efficiency and sustained performance. Participant VL2 explained that another channel for formal feedback is through a standard called the Continuous Improvement Process (CPI); aimed at assessing problem situations and coming with a solution to solve the problem through continuous improvements. This usually occur when someone or team makes a mistake. As an organization, our first aim is not to throw blame, although some one will have to take responsibility; Our aim is to find the truth of the situation and to solve the problem at hand. The

process calls for reflection and assessment of self and the situation; and we actually deliver a personal development training to help team members to understand this process. We would normally start by asking what went well? then we then we will then we ask, what can we do to make it better? And in a safe controlled way, we ask what did not go well and how did I contribute? And finally, how can we make it better. This assessment process usually yields good results in resolving issues with clients or team members.

Feedback Surveys for Specific Demographics

For Case-W, surveys are done to target specific demographics within the company, so that interventions can also be targeted and responsive to the needs of those demographic groups. As explained by Participant WL2, “we use a variety of surveys. Apart from our group learning and development surveys for the different people leaders, we have surveys for the Pro-millennial group, we have surveys which target the ladies alone, a group we call "Totally Her". So, all women are in that group, and we can canvas them to see what are your training needs. We also have a group for the men which we call "Rated-M". So, the men also we do specific surveys, so that we can understand what their needs are. The company survey widely to capture the views and needs of all team members.”

Spontaneous Feedback (OT-29)

Leaders Open-door Policy

For Case N, Participant NH1 stated that “key for me as the head of the company is feedback, and having an open-door policy. We seek feedback from people because when you value their opinions and show them respect, they then have a vested interest in company doing

well. We do our best to create relaxed settings where people feel comfortable, and will share and bond. We ask for new ideas, people get to share their career ambitions, their goals etc. You've had you had scenarios where team members have shared their views about an alternate strategic direction, and we welcome it and give serious consideration to it. It doesn't mean that it will be implemented; but it may just be.

Participant YH1 explained that throughout the group of companies, we have an open-door policy, It's at its core of the organization's culture. Additionally, we have been deliberate about creating a culture where team members are encouraged to share views ideas and just give feedback in general as well as in more formal way via feedback systems. Feedback is very important to us as we believe that each team member brings a value perceptive that ought to be considered. For example, they might be in a department that is responsible for a particular functionality within the group; and from their vantage point, hey might see something that is lacking, or they might see something that can be done differently to yield a better result. We encourage team members to chat with us and share their thoughts with their team manager. Based on the culture of the organization, managers will normally support the team member and encourage them document their suggestions and include how they believe the Manager can support this new idea or approach; and often times, we actually bring it on board. Overall, we value the team's opinion to help us reflect on what went well and what didn't go so well in the prior year.

E-Platform for Idea Generating Feedback

For Organization U, spontaneous feedback was less about open-door discussions with the leadership team and more about spontaneous feedback about new ideas facilitated mostly

electronically using the e-platform. Participant UL2 explained that to encourage spontaneous feedback, we have a virtual board via an on-line portal; where employees can go and submit ideas of varied sorts.

Conflict Resolution Feedback Systems

As explained by participant VH1 – “One of our unique feedback systems is called ‘Clean-up’ and it is a beautiful feedback process used for conflict resolution. Where there are differences of opinions, perspectives or if there is an offence, we have created a process that allows team members to talk, share, confront and resolve the issue at hand, all done in ‘love’. It’s all about having hard conversations in our everyday interactions, but it really is lovely and necessary. We foster a culture that allows you to always express yourself, freely, that’s what we aim for and that’s what we work towards. While we hold team members accountable, we also strive for restoration of relationship when there is hurt. So as the Culture team, once we are aware of any relational challenges, we’ll do our best to build bridges and restore relationships. We even have internal campaigns where we push this kind of message, as a way to protect the culture. As we grow and expand, that becomes harder and so we have to be even more deliberate. So, we do a training catered around this called ‘Having Bold Conversations’ which is training to encourage team members not fear the ‘Clean-up’ process, but to use this channel to share where there are hurts or disappointments; with a view to healing and moving on in love, because that’s the company’s way. That’s our culture!”

Key Strategic Theme 5 – Organizational Learning

Having conducted the cross-case analysis, organizational learning manifested in all cases and worked synchronously with organizational culture. Overall, the companies displaying a culture of learning, where learning is embedded in their operations at all levels in very similar ways. The main approaches to organizational learning allowed for both the professional and personal development of expertise and competence, (Raudeliuene et al, 2020), and was operationalized through initiatives around: Personal Learning, Team Learning and Cross Functional collaborative learning. The combination of which allows for the development of development of both non-declarative and declarative knowledge to improve business effectiveness and long-term sustainability (Kump et al, 2015). This three-pronged approach is theorized to give a more comprehensive approach learning, where the cumulative learning at both the individual and team level is accounted for (Hyland and Matlay, 1997).

Strategic Theme (ST-10) Personal Learning/Mastery

According to Kakapour et al (2019), personal learning should be encouraged as a natural part of the work culture; and Gil et al, (2019 makes the point that individuals should be encouraged to take personal responsibility for their learning.

Development through Professional Certification (OT-31)

All cases, had a strong strategic focus on the personal and professional development of the talent as a critical component for the building and enhancing the knowledge capabilities in each company. For Case-W, Participant WL2 explained that “the company assists with tertiary studies in general; and is willing to pay 50% for specialized certification; and when the team

member successful completes the course of study, the company will reimburse the team member up to 50% of what was spent as incentive. Additionally, we offer multiple training certification in leadership, as a way to foster leadership development at all levels within the company. One such initiative is the training programme is in Resilience in Leadership; which became even more important with the 2020 pandemic, we recognize that we needed to pivot our leadership and how they manage our people. We set up a training with Dale Carnegie and we provided resiliency training for over 300 people leaders. Then we did the McQuaig test to assess the psychological profile of our leaders. Participant WL2 added that where the company recognizes that leadership gaps fall, they train-up to upskills talent with the skills to fill those gaps; facilitating both personal and professional development.

Participant NL2 pointed out that for Case N, “learning and education are paramount to us, so we support our employees in any formal studies they undertake and we support their children too from the primary level to the tertiary level, tuition, books, uniforms etc. For many of frontline employees we have a lot of strong talent, but unfortunately, they don't have University level education. So, we want to support them fully if they desire to continue their education. So, as we build up the talent pool by up-skilling, we aim to have enough talent that we can ‘cherry-pick’ based on your performance to find the best talent. In fact, based on the success of our talent development programme here in Jamaica, we have been exporting talent to regions of the world where the company operates.”

As it relates to learning for personal mastery, Participant UL2 indicated that her organization has included continuous learning as a performance indicator; and is actually scored

based on a specific pre-set metric. “We have amended our performance evaluation process to include a performance criterion for ‘continuous learning’. All employees are required to do at least two courses during the financial year to improve personal mastery and support continuous learning. Professional certification to improve expertise and mastery is offered through our Corporate University that offers a variety of training development certification at various levels and then manages the knowledge coming from those learning initiatives in centralized repository.

According to Participant WH1, Case-W” has a culture of learning in both the core of the business and in also how the company operates. “Learning is a part of who we are and what we do. So, each department must have a learning and development goal as part of their plan. While outward expressions of learning vary from individual to individual, the organization as a whole value learning; it is at its core. That is why ‘Sage Hub’ as a knowledge management platform is also another major strategic move for us, because we are trying to make sure that the organization learns, we've helped countless people to learn and develop and their actions have caused the company to win. The organization is therefore committed to learning and building out expertise through learning by indicating that his company upfronts the cost for any professional certification necessary to show mastery of your field of endeavour. “We believe people must put skin in the game, so you then pay a portion of that back, to show you investment in your own personal development. We encourage our employees to get the relevant professional certification because that knowledge is their personal possession; and although the organization will benefit, you're not going to leave your learning and certification behind when you leave the company, it's yours for life.”

Participant NL2 explained that as a way to improve the rate of learning for personal development amongst a particular group within the company; the company recently introduced 'A 4-minute training programme' done via the mobile phone. "This course is aimed at our frontline sales team, who will not have access to a computer to really train while they are on the road selling; but they can take a 4-minute break to attend the mobile training via their phone. They do it 4 minutes every other day; until they meet a particular learning target. It has been a phenomenal success and we have been able to increase the number persons who are successfully completing their training in the designated time."

For Case V, the company believes in fully supporting the developing of its team members and according to Participant VL2, "invest heavily in training as critical strategic driver; so that team members have the highest-level knowledge are ranked among the best. We provide financial support, social and emotional support for team members who wish to pursue further studies. As the team members grow, the company grows too, and in the end, we have great talent that's sought after across the industry. That is why a lot of these companies try to poach our team members, because they don't invest in their team members, the way we do".

Development through Personal Entrepreneurship (OT-32)

Participant UL2 indicated that her company (Case-U) also has encourages personal development through entrepreneurship. "We have several in-house competitions to encourage innovation to reward employees for innovative ideas, spark innovative ideas. To encourage spontaneous feedback, we have a virtual board (a portal) where employees can go and submit

ideas. Our whole culture is centered on improving and being innovative and that helps to develop the whole person”.

A similar initiative exists with Case-V, where they offer support to team members who have their business as way to foster personal and professional development; as long as the business is not competing with the company. Also, if somebody leaves the company and start their own business the company also supports them in this regard. “This is because, as a accompany we are interested in development of the whole person,” (Participant VL2). Case-W, also supports employee entrepreneurship, and as pointed out by Participant WL2, “the company also has a programme that allows employees to take on special projects and be compensated separately because we want to encourage team members to grow in their entrepreneurial endeavours.” Importantly, the focus on entrepreneurship as part of the organization’s value system is a key characteristic of learning organizations; where risk-taking and error making are viewed positively to drive innovation and competitiveness (Milbratz et al, 2020).

Strategic Theme (ST-11) Team Learning

Peer to Peer Learning (OT-33)

For Case-U, the company has very specific learning initiatives at the team level aimed at developing a particular set of expertise needed for strategy execution. Wang and Ahmed, (2003) stress the importance of collaborative teamwork and as being critical to building a learning culture. Participant US3 explained that the company is very deliberate about learning and went to state that, “At the departmental level, the we have our Current Affairs Learning session; which is done on a weekly basis. In those session, team members share about the trends and developments

in the financial markets and so on, and it's an opportunity for the analysts to discuss and learn from each other in a team setting. Another team learning initiative what we call our Bytes of knowledge series which is a peer-to-peer learning session; which is also done weekly, but in this session, we look at more technical issues and analysis around specific topics. We talk about what we're currently doing and gaps that may exist in the knowledge-base. For Knowledge-bytes sessions team members have the responsibility of conducting research, creating a content outline, then coming back and teach the rest of the team.”

Team Workshops (OT-34)

Participant VS3 explained that for Case V, the company conducted a series of Team Engagement Workshops to facilitate peer to peer learning, across the various Caribbean territories where the company is located. The aim was for us to learn about and from each other about the various cultures that exists in our various locations. So, by learning from each other we can truly have one group, one client, and one experience. And after going through the exercise, we realized we have a much more commonality and the synergies even across territories have been great. This concept of learning from and with each other is what Chpani et al, (2012) describe as ‘Heart’; which refers to the spirit of co-operation at various levels of the organization; and willingness to extend oneself towards a common set of organizational goals.

For Case N, Participant NL2 explained that the company puts a high degree focus on learning. “We identify learning gaps, based on the company’s strategic direction, and market trends and the performance appraisal process, then professional training programme are built out

based on that gap. As a company, we try foresee learning need of specific teams and then we build out and deliver training in those areas.

Strategic Theme (ST-12) Cross-functional Learning

Collaborative Learning (OT-35)

For Case U, cross-functional learning was also a feature of how the organization learns. Cross functional learning is done to facilitate a broadening technical knowledge from resident experts within the organization. “We invite persons from other units to present on things that are going on in their units; and to update us on new product developments or new initiatives. Learning cross-functionally helps to build some synergies, and foster relationship growth in the process.”

Participant YL2 indicated that for Case Y, the organization’s culture is all about learning; both formally and informally. Cross-functional learning takes place on a consistent basis; as away sharing ideas from different teams and finding new ways of doing things or solving old problem. “Based on our culture, we are not intimidated by learning because the leadership is always learning; and learning is what we are about; so if you plan to stay here in this company; then learning is a must and is in every facet of life in this company.”

Learning in Generational Groupings

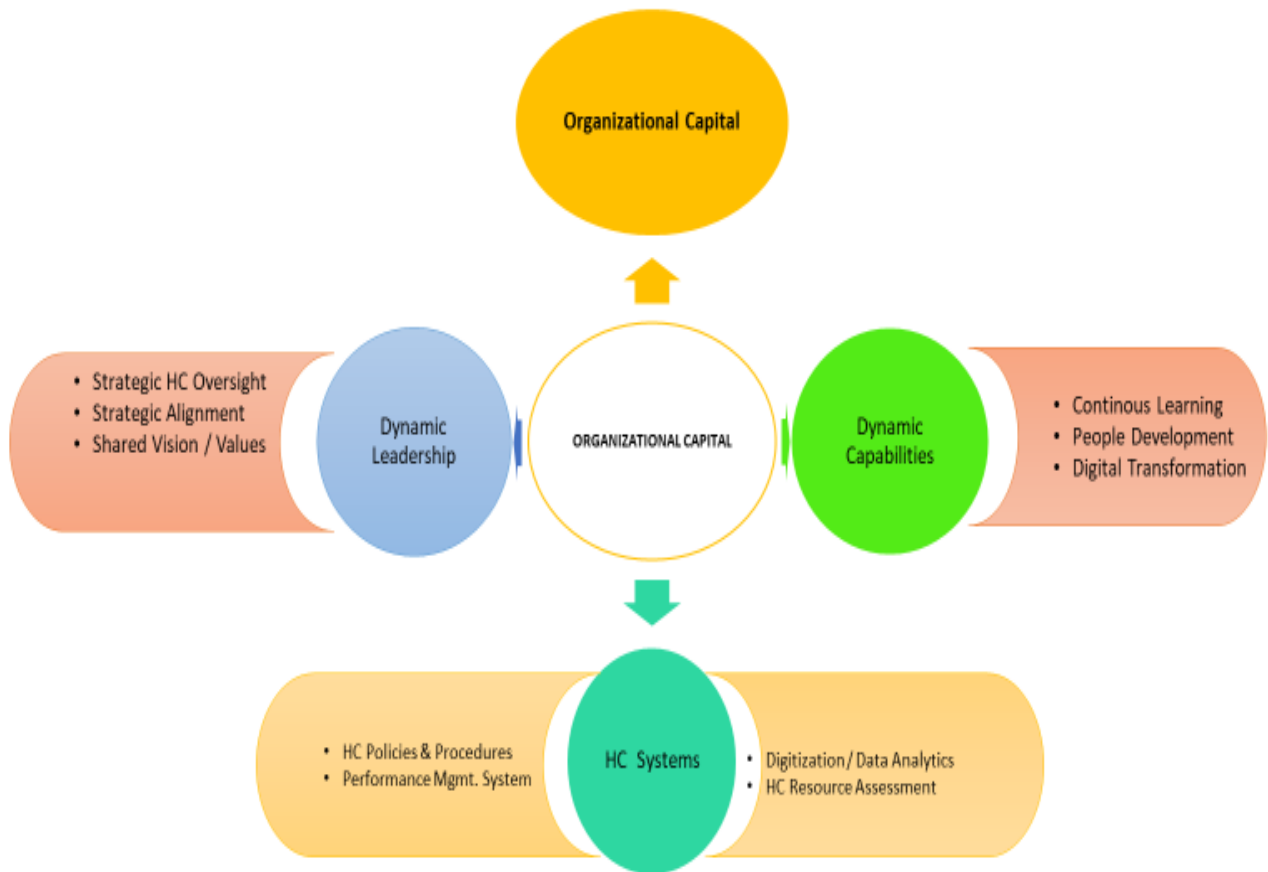
Participant WL2 highlighted a special set of collaborative learning initiatives which sought to bring a greater connect across the different generations in the workforce. “The training was entitled ‘Generations at Work’ the presentations resonated with the various age demographics who could relate to the material being presented and now developed a new

perspective and better understanding of lenses through which a particular generation viewed issues and address problems. It creates a sort of bonding across the generations and person began to appreciate that persons were more alike than they thought irrespective of age; the differences came more in relation to how the different generations are cultured. So, it's not that the person is necessarily different, its often time that they're cultured differently; and you can't just employ them for one year expect them to become a Gen Z, or to become a Gen X or a traditionalist; because they value different things and they bring a different perspective to the organization that's quite important. These sessions were a success and built new synergies and camaraderie.” The bonding that experienced ad employees share with each other, learn from and appreciate each other creates new levels of co-operation and synergies which drives efficiency and improves performance, (Chopani et al, 2012).

Organizational Capital Dimension

Figure 34

A Conceptual Model of Organizational Capital Dimension of HCD.



Having fully analyzed the first two dimensions of Human Capital Development (Intellectual capital and social capital) using both in-case and cross-case analysis, several strategic initiatives were discussed emerging from the main strategic pillars identified in each dimension. Therefore, the final step at this point is to examine how the third dimension of HCD, Organizational Capital is operationalized in the cases being studied. Against this background, the major strategic elements which were found from the analysis on organizational capital dimension

were: **(i) strategic oversight and alignment, (ii) strategic HC systems and policies**, these two strategic pillars are discussed in detail in the ensuing paragraphs.

Key Strategic Theme 6 - Strategic HC Oversight & Alignment

Strategic Theme (ST-13) – Shared Vision and Values

The first element in the Organizational Capital dimension that was revealed in the findings of the cross-case study is ‘Shared Vision and Values’. Undoubtedly, one of the keys to being able to effectively leverage human capital in any organization is the presence of shared values between those who are the strategic leads and the rest of the organization who execute strategies. In all cases, there was a deliberate approach to articulating the companies’ vision in a way that organization as a whole connects with, understands and owns that vision. This point was made by Hanh and Choi, (2019) who emphasized the importance of having leadership articulating a shared vision and values where employees have access to discuss matters of interest to them. According Hanh and Choi, (2019), this affects performance positively.

Developing an Ownership Mindset (OT-36)

In explaining the approach taken by Case V and the commitment and passion which drives its value system, Participant VH1 stated, “we are working to get better and better at living this Vision of Love’, and so we had to have those conversations to make sure that every time we were looking at a strategic decision, we make sure that we take a holistic approach that is consistent with our vision of love. We have to make sure that people to make the right connection between what we do and the principles we stand for. This vision of love means that it’s never just about making money, it’s also about to making sure that the team members follow

their dreams and are able to live their dream, whether it's inside or outside the company; because we are supposed to positively impact our community. It is really centered on team members; and as leaders of the bank, we take this vision of love seriously and our team members will hold me as the leader accountable for sure; and the leaders are expected to live out that walk of love daily. So, a key competence we want to work on is the 'Ownership Mindset'. It starts with owning your life? Yes. Owning your family, then you own your role, your contribution? It acknowledges it honors the person. And then the company fits into that. This approach is fully approved at the level of the Board. It's all about shared responsibility; hence our emphasis on Ownership.”

Wheelen and Hunger, (2018) stress the importance of leaders not only articulating the vision but nourishing it to ensure that employees understand and connect with the organization's vision. Albrecht continues with point by adding the notion 'Shared Fate' which is theorized as being necessary for successful strategy execution. With this in mind, Participant NH1, highlighted the level of importance his organization places on effectively communicating the vision and getting the buy-in and commitment from employees. “As the leader of the organization, it's important that my team understands the vision and shares the values and ethos which guide the organization. So, team members are encouraged to share in the envisioning process; and even challenge the vision; we welcome it because everyone is on equal footing, there is mutual respect irrespective of title. Additionally, you have to spend more time and effort, just to make sure their role and its importance to the strategy. So, key for me as the head of the company is feedback about any aspect of our strategy. We seek feedback from people because when you value their opinions and show them respect, they then have a vested interest in company doing well. If things remain only transactional, then yes, they will do their work for

the most part because they get paid on the 25th of every month; but you get a whole different level of output from team members when they truly believe in the company. As CEO, I make sure to travel to various locations across the island so that I can share with, observe work alongside the teams in those locations. By building rapport, team members are more willing to share more openly and honestly. We celebrate the wins and we learn from the failures and we do it together.

For organization Y, participant YL2 explained that her company spends a lot of time sharing the company's vision for the future and they go further to ask our team members to be a part of that vision sharing. "We want what are their thoughts and the company and themselves and where the direction they would like the company to go in the future. We actually encourage them to share their most creative ideas with us because we value entrepreneurship and new thinking; and then together, the leadership and team do our situational analysis to scope out what's happening outside of our specific region to be able to come up with our plans for the future. This really creates a sense of ownership and buy-in; so team members don't see it as the leadership's vision that being thrust upon them, instead they see it as their vision; the one they help craft and the one they believe in.

Strategic Theme (ST-15) Strategic HC Alignment

Alignment between Human Capital Strategies and Business Strategies (OT-38)

Consistent factor that was present in analysis of all cases was the clear existence of strategic oversight of human capital issues at the highest level of the organization and deliberate alignment between human capital strategies and the business strategies of the companies.

Importantly, alignment and congruence are critical issues so that employee can have a better understanding of how and where they fit into the bigger picture of the organization's vision. With alignment from the corporate level, to the business levels of strategies, to the functional level where strategy is executed; alignment is of the utmost importance (Wheelen and Hunger, 2018). It is only where there is full alignment that employees have a full understanding of their roles and functions and synergies are created in the achievement organizational goals (Albrecht and Wang, 2003).

According to participant UH1 for Case U, although in principle strategy is set at the executive level of the organization, the company is very intentional to ensure that the entire leadership team from all the business units play a significant part in the process of setting and refining the vision. This ensures that the company has unity of purpose and intentionality in determining its strategic vision for the future and the main strategic objectives. Additionally, the strategic process is developed to ensure that there is alignment between the executive and business levels of the organization. With a clear understanding of vision and key strategic objectives, the entire leadership caucus works to actively engage and communicate the strategic vision to all members of the team; ensuring that broken and well understood at the functional level. "For example, as the strategic objectives have to be broken in two ways. Firstly, so that persons understand what each level means, why we have that level and its importance, and how we plan to execute it. Also on the other side, we have to focus on alignment from the business level strategic objectives with each job aligns to it. We may even end up dropping a few objectives because they no longer align, some we may have to refine to ensure alignment and then some we have to create to push the strategic vision forward. We have to make sure there is a

fit.” Alignment for Case-U is therefore of great priority; and strategic alignment is reinforced in the organization’s structure.

For Case V, the process of alignment starts with having the strategic process centralized in the organizational structure. According to Participant VS3, “strategy is centralized, and we have a designated department for strategic management which operates at the group level, and then we have spokes within the group hub; as well as spokes at the country level. Additionally, we have smaller Strategy Offices in each country; but the group is responsible for standardized templates, frameworks, methodology, to ensure full alignment throughout the entire group; at the various country level.” Participant VS3, further explained that as a company human capital oversight is taken extremely seriously. She made the point that there is a specific board committee is responsible for governance around the people matters. “Human capital related matters are discussed at each board meeting and is fully aligned in business strategy, because it’s all about finding, developing and retaining the best talent to deliver superior service to clients; especially our strategic niche is all centered on service excellence; all of which based on people. So, Human capital strategies form part of our core and so it is monitored carefully at the board level. In addition to monthly board meeting where human capital matters are discussed on a monthly basis, we also have an annual board meeting which focuses solely on issues surrounding human capital. At this level, we analyze data surrounding people management and talent management trends and strategies, as well as compensation; especially we do a lot of engagement studies which gives us data which provides insight into what’s happening with our teams. So the group board itself gets the opportunity to, to interact with the people as crafts the strategies to keep the company competitive.”

In terms of organization Y, Participant YH1 explained the importance of strategic alignment to her company and that much emphasis is placed on ensuring that there is a direct relationship between the business strategies of the company and its human capital strategies. She explained that “at the beginning of the year, we ensure that we fully aligned from the board level all the way down to the functional level. A lot of time is spent communicating and getting feedback from team members at various levels. Some things we’ll agree to disagree on but we try to ensure that the individuals know where they fit, why objectives are needed, although not all will agree, some things have to just agree to disagree on because they must be, because we have to do it. And then there are things that we have to do because it adds value. But we sit and have these discussion sessions to ensure people understand the mission and where we are going. Additionally, we have a very involved board, and strategies concerning people and talent management is something that is constant at the level of the Board; and it is constant at the senior management, in fact all levels. People learning and development is very much a part of our board mandate, as well as talent management, making sure that we attract and retain the persons with the critical expertise is of the utmost importance to the Board.”

Strategic Theme (ST-16) Cascading the Vision

In emphasizing the importance of having a shared vision where there is organizational buy-in at all levels, Participant UH1 stressed her company’s perspective indicating that “we have found as a company that the strategy works best when it’s cascaded. So, at the senior level, you may come up with the greatest plan, but if the frontline person doesn’t understand it, and doesn’t understand where they fit into it, there’s always going to be a disconnect and the strategy will be

lopsided. So if you run surveys in those organizations, you will find persons saying, I don't know why I'm doing what I'm doing, and I don't know where it fits. While if you take the cascade approach, people will understand where they fit. And they'll understand why it's important for me to meet deadlines and how it affects another department and the company's business activities, so cascading is very important to the execution of strategy.”

Participant WS3, explained that her organization has a strong tradition where the coordination and communication of strategy is concerned. The communication process is multi-layered and involves, meetings, workshops and retreats and a careful process of cascading the strategic objectives, from the executive level down through the various business lines. “What would happen is that we would coordinate our strategic retreats, with each area of the business represented and the divisional head would lead the charge to walk through the plan and the process with the team itself; explaining what is the plan of action for the year under strategic plan, so that it cascades from corporate to the business Units and then to the department level. HR activities in the company are inextricably linked with business strategy, because HR must be meeting the business needs; and the business meeting HRs need; that's the strategic nexus between the two; and we are not traditionally HR, we are strategic HR.

Participant NH1 explained that for his company group strategy is communicated in both directions vertically and horizontally based on the company's fervent beliefs that in order to be effective, information on strategy needs to be cascaded down throughout the company. “So, the process starts from our global headquarters but the process also requires feeding up from below so that team members at all level give input. As the CEO, I am the driver of the vehicle but

everybody contributes towards that journey because it's important that our team members understand that they have a role to play in ensuring the vehicle goes in the right direction. So we work hard to ensure that everyone understands the vision; we do several workshops so people understand, how they can support the vision from the bottom up.

Overall, there was an overwhelming consensus on the importance of strategic alignment and oversight. The alignment of business strategies with human capital strategies was considered an absolute imperative to the successful execution of strategy, especially in a dynamic environment where companies have to an agile but effective response in order to remain competitively strong. The issue of board oversight for human capital development was fundamental, and was a significant feature in all the organizations in the case study.

Key Strategic Theme 7 - Strategic HC Systems

Strategic Theme (ST-17) Documented Policies & Procedures

Documented Policies & Procedures (OT-40)

Khedhaouria and Jamal, (2015) theorize that in order to build organizational intelligence, there needs to be the integration and synthesis systems and procedures to improve efficiency and performance. Through documented systems, quality improvements can be made to provide value-added service and products for customers (Sayyadi, 2019). Having done the cross case-analysis, it was not surprising that for companies that perform at this high level, all has extensive documentation of policies, standard operating procedures and processes. In fact, all the organizations had a culture of creating and maintaining documentation at the executive, business and operational levels and in multiple modalities in terms of physical documents and electronic

data bases including data repositories for collecting and retracing all sorts human capital and strategy informing data; used for data analytics, forecasting, predicting and developing strategies to drive competitiveness. As these are publicly listed companies on the Jamaica Stock Exchange, there is great emphasis on record keeping and public reporting; which engrain in the DNA of these high-performance companies.

Participant UH1 explained her organization has extensive policies on all matter relating to human capital; including significant human capital development policies and procedures which facilitate the organization getting its corporate university to achieve full university accreditation by the University Council of Jamaica; the island's highest accreditation body. "We are the only company in Jamaica who has its learning arm registered as a registered tertiary institution with fully accredited programs of study. We also have a candidate handbook, which governs how you, candidate employee interacts with all the programs offered, it covers things like plagiarism, in academic integrity, etc. Our organization has a broad policy on learning and development as well" Participant UL2 went on to state that organization has a culture of learning that is undergirded by the company's educational policy which documents our approach to continuous learning, our hiring and training methodology; as well as the organization's performance evaluation methodology.

Participant NL2 emphasized that her company ensure that there are adequately documented polices procedures which drive human capital development in the organization; which the provides the framework for learning and development in the organization. Even though the organization encourages freedom through responsibility encourage steam members to

see themselves as owners of their learning; there is a full policy framework that support all that we do.

Strategic Theme (ST-18) Electronic HC Systems

Digitization & Data Analytics (OT-41)

According to Milbratz et al, (2020) in order for companies to remain competitive, they must stay on the cutting edge of innovation. Technological advancements are the game changers for companies who want to stay ahead. This is critical importance to build organizational intelligence in a rapidly changing business environment, Awamleh and Ertugan, (2021). Against this background the push got digital transformation and the use of technology was a common thread throughout the cases; with one company (Cases-Y and U) leading the way; having advanced his digital transformation and technological development significantly ahead of their competitors. This is understandable as both Case Y and Case-U pursue a differentiated strategy-based innovation, so their appetite for change and the agility of their response to technological advancements are quite noteworthy.

Participant YH1 explained this point for Case Y, which is a telecommunications company “we are all things digital; which means we utilize the latest and greatest in digitization and data analytics. In fact, our there is an entire learning and development plan centers around that digital strategy for the company. No one can debate that the move to digital has revolutionized the workplace, from how we communicate to how we execute work. As a global company, communication across different regions and different markets is now effortless and the digital transformation for work has definitely improved productivity. Also, data analytics is critical to what we do in every area of the business, whether its revenue targets, customer usage

or customer experience; or various HR metrics used to track performance etc; data analytics is used to drive business intelligence. Business intelligence is critical part how we make decision. We have a set team that mines or extracts data; and then do rigorous analysis and modeling to provide us with information every sphere of the business.” Participant YH1 went to emphasized that the ability to have accurate data that can be manipulated and extrapolated is big part of how her company knows what to expect in the market based on trends from customers, suppliers, competitors etc. “Whether its data on how many customers we have, how many customers we’ve lost? How many new ones did we get? What is the customer doing at a particular time of day? Which service Are they interacting with? What do we need to do differently with a particular service to get more customers? How does this translate to revenue? How many customers are calling in about a product or service, whether they call it good or bad? We mine, analyze and track that data for business intelligence and decision making. So, we analyze everything when it comes on to the business, from revenue to customer, to staff. The data analytics allows for the organization to learn about itself, and how it is customers, its products and services are performing; therefore, it can always stay ahead of the competition by anticipating the needs of the customer and being first movers. So yes, we are very much a learning entity that relies heavily on data analytics. Very much an entity that is revolved around technology and what is happening in the digital space from Big Data, to Artificial Intelligence to Machine Learning” (Participant YH1).

For Case V, their digital transformation did not move at the pace of Case Y or U; but was significantly accelerated in light of Covid 19 pandemic. Participant VS3, explained that the company was just about to launch its digital transformation strategy when Covid 19 hit, the new imperative from the pandemic caused the company to completely revamp their original strategy

as part of the company's Re-imagination Strategy. "We knew the world was never going to be the same again, so we had to re-imagine how we think of the world in order to be able to be successful in that world? But at the same time, remain consistent with who we are. So what we did was to add, new defined clearly defined SMART goals around digital with established specific targets. Additionally, we have a technology spin off company called innovate Ten-X. It was formed from our Chief Information Technology Officer, left and created this company and we are an equity partner in this company. The company drives a lot of the innovation for the company. And so we, we asked them to support us in documenting what we call 'The Bank of the Future' from the eyes of the client'. We followed up new client journey mapping to look at how does the client want to interact with us in a digital space? Then we looked at the learning gaps and started to build out the training interventions to fill those gaps. We did a whole series of workshops, seminars, session with staff at all levels and our innovation partner. So, we are now in the process of implementing our re-imagined digital strategy which will propel us leaps and bounds in terms of our competitiveness."

Case-W, is also going through a period of strategic transformation driven by innovation. In explaining the company's push towards digital transformation and heavy reliance on data analytics, Participant WS3 explained "that there has been an increased drive around the use of data analytics in the company over the last two, three years. So now in HR, we use some fundamental metrics such as HR ROI, so based on the HR ROI, we can see the impact on revenue. If for example, we can show that the impact on revenue is six times what we are paying in salary, then by all means come, then we can certainly proceed with hire, irrespective of the salary. The data is key us determining the budget to support people resource allocation. So, on our strategic plan this year for HR, there is a strong focus specifically on data analytics software;

and on learning and skills improvement. The aim is to ensure that we have more data analytics and digital skills and expertise within the company; even if those skills are not related to the job that someone is hired in. The use of HR metrics through data analytics to improve business intelligence is highlighted by Frigo and Uebelhart, (2015); who emphasize the significant benefit of HC data analytics to improve human capital stewardship through the measurement, management and predicting of business performance.

Participant WH1, went on to explain his organization had two areas of strategic emphasis, (i) digital optimization - dealing with the inefficiencies, (ii) digital transformations, which mean changing both our business model and identifying new revenue streams. Key to the success of this strategy is sourcing the right talent to take on our digital thrust; and software developers are in critical need. So, we have developed an Innovation Team that's leading the charge for the company. To this end, one of the new initiatives is a partnership with the University of Technology, Jamaica to develop an Innovation Lab in its School of Computing and Information Technology. So, the projects that the students are working on in the lab; will be incorporated into the business. Additionally, we're looking to see whether we should do a start-up and form a company with the prototypes developed by the students can be transitioned to the company based on its need, then we could look at building out an internship programme for these students as part of the talent recruitment pool to support this process and drive innovation within the company. Overall, we have an extensive plan in place to upskill or reskill so drive this digital transformation of the company." The issue of finding the right talent with the knowledge to make the drive performance is an important one (Yuliansyah, 2021), and therefore being able to effectively allocate human capital resources towards strategic ends is an important move that affects competitiveness, (Sayyadi, 2019).

For Case N, Participant NL2 explained her company has proactively using data analytics to drive business decisions, especially as it relates to external data on market trends and product consumption. The company also uses a lot internal data on employee perception as well various performance metrics which provides valuable insights for predicting and planning for human capital resources “We have strived to be as best as possible to be innovators, so we do our research, we are definitely proactive; always looking to where we can branch off into the next new thing or what changes are the market dictating. Then, we try to foresee what that learning needs might be, based on the direction of the company”. In terms of digitization, the company has invested heavily in a system-wide upgrade to its learning platform; where courses can be accessed from mobile devices as way to reach the many sales staff who are always on the move and who do not have personal computers. Participant NL2 went on share “There will always be room for improvement. There will always be a way you can do things better and opportunities listen to what persons are saying and then use that information to guide decision making; and that’s what we did to offer a digital upgrade to our learning platform; and I think that's a lot of persons are appreciative of access to the platforms on their phones instead of the traditional mode; so how we do ‘learning’ in organization has definitely shifted from more traditional to digital.” This move to embrace technology in an even bigger way and to pursue a digital transformation that is critical if organizations are to not just survive, but thrive and prosper (Zahedi and Ashtar, 2020).

Strategic Theme (ST-19) Performance Management Systems

According to Albrecht, (2003), performance is a matter that concerns everyone, because each employee has a role to play in achieving the organization’s goals. For the cases studies, a

vital control mechanism present in all cases studied was Performance Management Systems; which are used to not only measure performance to but also reinforce learning and development objectives across each organization. From the cross-case analysis, performance management was used (among other things) to drive continuous improvements, push digital transformation and to facilitate people development; as discussed below:

Performance management to drive continuous learning (OT-42)

Participant UL2 indicated that for Case U, they have taken even greater steps to segment and improve how their performance management system measure and monitors learning in the organization. She stated “we have recently made some amendments to our performance evaluation process to include that a **score for continuous learning**, which at the base, requires each person to do at least two courses during the financial year to support continuous learning. Participant US3 added that the company has infused learning in all management roles requires; “there is a learning element to the appraisal instrument with specific weightings for personal and team learning; because we need to ensure their team members also maintain continuous learning and they are held accountable for this in the performance evaluation process. Continuous learning is necessary to keep the organization competitive. As highlighted by Cepeda-Carrion et al, (2017), the performance difference between firms is primarily due primarily to resource capabilities. Therefore, firms have to continuously engage and improve their human capital resource to build organizational capabilities and distinctive competencies. These continuous improvements, will give firms a competitive edge in the market (Darabos and Dvorski, 2014).

Performance Management to drive Digital Transformation (OT-43)

According to Participant UL2, the company's performance evaluation process is used to indicate the types of interventions that have to be implemented to sure up the skills of team members. Therefore, "certain performance metrics are used to track the rate at which persons are you completing designated learning courses, so that we determine what adjustments need to make sure that especially our mission critical talent transition into high-performance digital work team. Another important thing is that organization uses benchmarks based on international standards which requires each person achieving about 40 hours of learning per year; as well as a metric called a Net Promoter Score, which we pay attention at the organizational level to as well and use it measure whether the organization is achieving its learning goals. The use of Human Capital metrics to measure performance is a standard is a principle being adopted by organization of varying types and size the world over. The Human Capital Management Institute (HCMI) has identified well over six hundred (600) human capital metrics that can be used to measure performance and drive organizational intelligence, (Schwarz, 2019).

Performance management for people Development (OT-44)

Brynjolfsson et al, (2014) made the important point that the most valuable resource that organizations now possess in this current digital society, is not ordinary labour or capital; its instead the people within the organizations with their ideas, expertise and innovation. So, organizations need to ensure that part of how it measures organizational performance is pegged to the rate at which critical human capital resource is being developed with the requisite skills to successfully execute strategy.

For Case-W, participant WL2; made the point that a key part of its performance management system development of people leaders is for them to ensure the development of those they lead; highlighting that leaders in the have a role to develop the people under their charge; and so its build this in the appraisal process, so they get measured on it. This is the case too for organization Y, Participant YH1 indicated that over the years, her company has implemented a robust performance management system to drive learning and development as well as succession planning. “That performance management process helps to identify persons who are doing well, those with leadership potential; as well as persons that might need to exit the organization because they're not doing so well; and they have not responded with to learning and development interventions over time. In the same way, the performance systems identifies our very high performers, the standout persons who are performing exceptionally well in their areas. They shine and the company recognizes, rewards and promotes them. So, this performance management strategy is used to drive learning and development across the organization.”

Linking HC performance metrics to Drive Financial Performance

For Case V, Participant VH1 explained that the high importance placed on the people element within the organization; and how this is managed in the organization's performance management system. She explained that the people strategies around client experience and the team member engagement are weighted as heavily as the company's financial targets such as return on equity, operational efficiency, etc., and both are measured and monitored closely in the performance evaluation process. Fortunately for us, based on our strategy to invest heavily in team member engagement and used that to drive the client experience we have been seeing consistently high performance; and our people are really owning ‘the Vision of Love’, on which

the company stands; operating inside of their areas of strength and pursuing their purpose; and as a company we win as a result. The approach is supported by Wuttaphan, (2017) and Mayo, (2012) who purport that the human capital metrics ought to be assessed in conjunction with other financial metrics to get a more comprehensive understanding of how the human capital of a company is performing in achieving overarching strategic targets.

Strategic Theme (ST-20) Strategic HC Assessment

HC Resource Audit & L & D Gap Analysis (OT-45)

Key to execution of strategy is having the right talent in the organization with the right competencies and expertise to execute strategy. Interestingly, all case in the study in varying degrees engage in conducting resource audits to determine if the organization has the right talent as well as learning and development gap analyses to determine if existing talent has the requisite skills and expertise needed to successful execute specific strategies.

HC Resource Audit & L&D gap analysis for Business Intelligence

For Case U, Participant UH1 explained that the company undertakes an enterprise-wide Gap Analysis of the Learning Needs just before the start of each financial year. From the data collected the company is able to analyze the data and distill what are the suite of courses/ interventions that will be provided to the business for the entire year. The data may reveal a knowledge gap, or a gap based a new idea and/or challenge for which some learning solutions are needed. “The HC Resource Audit is critical when the company is launching a business link a particular business strategy. Every business case would include not just the financial resources need; but also, the people resources needed; that is, whether or not we need to hire talent based

on the business case. For example, when we were launching our Alternative Investments business strategy, we knew right away that we didn't have that talent internally to drive the project and that we would need to conduct strategic recruiting. Additionally, coming out of our L&D skills audit we would have also identified specific courses which individuals must do in order to support that business strategy; and all of that data had to include in the business case for the company to determine if it should proceed and how it should proceed.”

According to Participant VS3, the HC Resource Audit is a vital tool especially for certain mission-critical positions; including leadership posts. She explained that “in order to execute their re-imagination strategy the company had to ensure that they had the right leadership in place, because this new strategy would be moving the company into uncharted waters, and so an assessment was needed to see if the company had the right leadership talent to successfully execute this new strategy. “The resource audit was done using the 360-Degree evaluation approach; and was conducted by our Culture and Human Development team; which is what we call our Human Resources Division. This was necessary because it doesn't make sense that we're trying to implement this strategy if we don't have the right expertise to drive it. So, we had to start with evaluating whether or not we had the right people, otherwise, the result will be attrition and of course we would not meet this new strategic target.”

Participant VH1, explained also that for the Learning and Development gap analysis, “we collect this data as part of our SWOT analysis; when we look at our internal strengths and weakness. We used engagement type questions like: Do you feel equipped and empowered to be able to execute on strategy, etc. So, we utilize that information as well as actual gaps that come

out of our team member engagement surveys along with other data from our situational analysis to determine our L&D needs to drive the design of the strategy. The data from our last survey pointed to a need to focus on Change Management. And as you can imagine, absence we were planning to implement new strategies, this essentially means that we are actually designing change. And so based on that data, we became more deliberate and more proactive around change management, we actually created a whole Change Management Unit so led by a senior position as Senior, Change Management Manager because we recognized that as gap which needed to be filled in order for our new strategic thrust of re-imagining the company is concerned.”

For Case N, Participant NL2 indicated that the company uses HC Resource Audits and learning and development gap analysis to build out training programmes. The data is also undergirded by data from the appraisal process as well as market trends. She explained that “a lot of what we do is determined based on the trends from data, especially for employee data. For example, how many persons are requesting funding for further education, or many persons are interested in learning about a particular area of the business”.

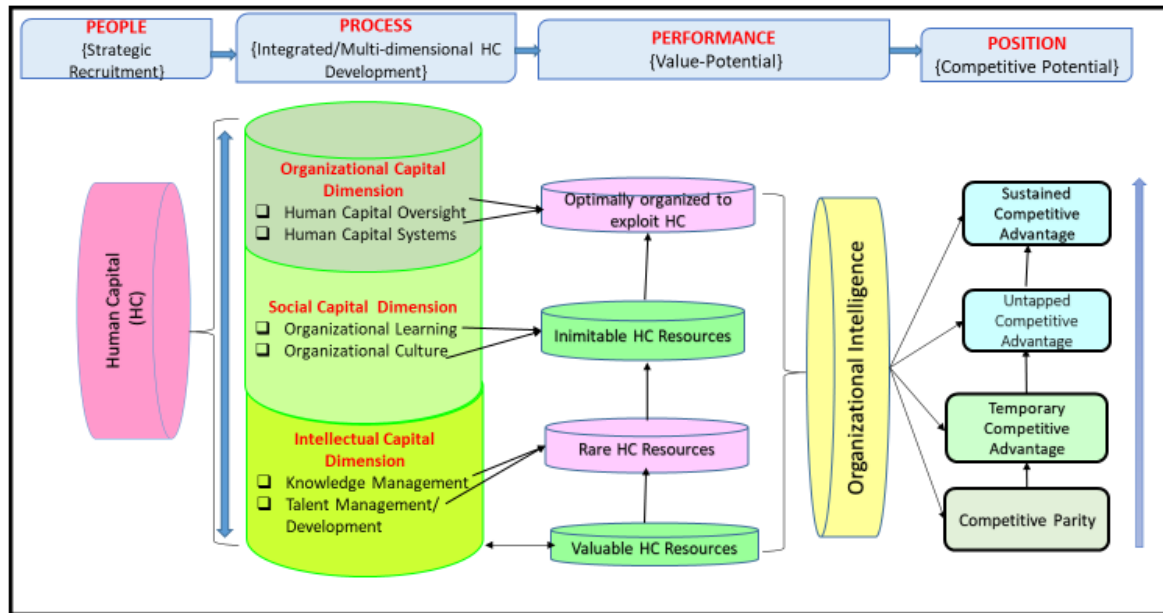
As explained by Participant YH1, for case Y, an assessment is carried out to determine what are the knowledge gaps, or new areas of learning needed based on a strategic imperative; and then it formulates a learning and development plan accordingly. “The workplace has been changing dramatically and it’s not only in terms of technological advancements; our company’s strategy is to ensure that its employees are being developed to adapt to the changing marketplace. So last year alone, we had over 300 employees; which went through intense learning and development based specific strategic needs of the company. They were then channeled through

promotion in critical rolls where certain resource gaps existed. The HC resource audit allowed to identify the talent needed to move the company forward.”

Summary

Figure 35

An Integrated Human Capital Development Model for Competitive Advanatge



Overall, the findings of the study revealed that Human Capital (HC) is indeed a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon. Therefore, in order to determine how it can be optimally developed and leveraged; a multi-dimensional integrative approach is needed. The complexities of Human Capital come from the fact humans are complex beings, each with specific knowledge, talents, and experiences at the individual level. Therefore, the ability of an organization to transform those individual capabilities into distinctive competencies; that can be strategically leveraged, requires a systematic approach to Human Capital Development that will serve to build-up and capitalize on the value-potential of HC resources. Figure 35 (above) depicts the multi-dimensional nature of HC, demonstrating that HC operates in three (3) distinct but related

dimensions: (i) Intellectual Capital Dimension, (ii) Social Capital Dimension and (iii) Organizational Capital Dimension.

Furthermore, the findings from the study suggest that greater value-potential is achieved as each dimension is effectively engaged. This engagement occurs as HC resources are placed through a series of value-added developmental processes that targets each dimension to improve the value, rarity and inimitability of those HC resources. This value-added developmental process builds Organizational Intelligence; which then positions organizations to better leverage these highly valuable HC resources; towards achieving and maintaining a sustained competitive advantage. Ultimately, the model theorizes that the strategic human capital development operates in four (4) stages; namely: (i) People, (ii) Process, (iii) Performance and (iv) Position:

Stage 1: People – At this stage, organizations engage in **Strategic Recruitment** to identify, attract and retain the right people, with the right talent, to create the right job fit; based on the organization's strategic objectives.

Stage 2: Process – Having employed and deployed the right people within the organization, with the right qualification, experience and skills, the next step is to strategically build and enhance the capacity of those 'people' resources. This is done by engaging the human capital resources of the organization through a series of developmental processes, that systematically targets each dimension of HC as follows:

- **Development of the IC Dimension** – implementing Knowledge Management and Talent Development processes, that are dually focused on the implicit and explicit knowledge that reside within the organization. Thereby, ensuring a building-up of the organization's

knowledge stores; as well as its knowledge flow, to aid in problem-solving, innovation and entrepreneurship.

- **Development of the SC Dimension** –creating a Learning Organization, where a culture of learning is embedded in the organization’s DNA. The focus therefore, is on the socio-cultural context of the organization; which places much emphasis on the well-being (social, emotional and personal) of employees in their place of work. This culture of learning is driven by a value-system that embraces change, knowledge-sharing, mistake making, growth; and even encourages employees to challenge the status-quo.
- **Development of the OC Dimension** – building the institutionalized knowledge of an organization, by ensuring the effective two-way transfer of knowledge from people to systems and from systems to people. This is done through documented policies and procedures, databases, electronic systems, etc. Additionally, strategic leadership plays a vital role in building organization capital; by providing HC oversight at the highest level and ensuring that there is strategic alignment between the organization’s business strategy and HC strategy.

Stage 3: Performance –As each of the three dimensions of human capital is engaged, the value-potential of the organization’s HC resources increase; and the organization’s strategic performance is improved. Specifically, as HC is developed at the Intellectual Capital level, the resource becomes more rare because of its firm-specificity; which comes through the building of organizational expertise. Additionally, as Social Capital is developed, the human capital

resources become so socially-complexed and culturally specific that it becomes increasingly difficult for competitors to imitate. Finally, as Organizational Capital is developed, Organizationally Intelligence increases which is evident as the organization develops distinctive competencies and dynamic capabilities; which then becomes a source of competitive advantage.

Stage 4: Position

Drawing on Barney's (2002) VRIO Framework theory, the potential for an organization to improve the competitive positioning of its HC resources, is strengthened as the HC developmental process builds these resources; moving them from just being valuable, to also being rare, to further becoming inimitable; and finally, to where the company is well organized to leverage those resources. This provides a base for organizations to strive towards moving from competitive parity, to competitive advantage, to ultimately achieving a sustained competitive advantage in the long-run.

Chapter Six – Recommendations and Conclusion

Having fully interrogated the dimensions of HC to gain a comprehensive understanding of how HC can be successfully leveraged within organizations, the researcher proposes the followings set of recommendations. These recommendations are presented in a tabular format as an Integrative HCD Framework; which prescribes specific strategic initiatives to appropriately target each dimension of HC. The findings of the research suggests that this an optimal way of leveraging the value from an organization’s HC resources that are not just valuable, but also rare and difficult to imitate by competitors.

Strategic and Operational Recommendations

Table 19

Integrated Human Capital Development Framework for Competitive Advantage

INTEGRATED HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE		
Resource Based View- VRIO Assessment Framework	RQ1: To identify the strategic approaches employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital	RO2: To evaluate how Human Capital Development is operationalized to improve the HC value towards greater competitiveness
	STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS (SR)	OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS (OR)
VALUE & RARITY	INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL DIMENSION – VALUE & RARITY	
	The focus in this dimension is on enhancing/developing the value and rarity of Intellectual Capital Resources , through talent management and talent development strategies. This will allow the organization to build firm-specific human capital resources with core competencies and dynamic capabilities that are unique to the organization.	

	<p>SR1. Pursue HCD strategies using an integrated approach which combines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ knowledge and talent management strategies to engage at the Intellectual Capital Dimension ✚ organizational culture and learning strategies to engage at the Social Capital Dimension; ✚ HC systems and policies to engage at the Organization Capital Dimension. 	<p>OR1. Develop/Adopt an Integrated HC Policy Framework (with attending SOP's and Process Flows) which addresses each dimension of HC as a key strategic tool in the organization's toolbox:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ I.C. Dimension - Knowledge Mgmt. & Talent Management ✚ S.C. Dimension - Org. Learning & Org. Culture Strategies ✚ O.C. Dimension - HC Systems & Policies
<p>VALUE & RARITY</p>	<p>SR2. Develop Knowledge Management strategies to focus on both tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge; with specific emphasis on tacit knowledge as way to pull on that internal expertise, skills and creativity which lies latent in people, for the purpose of entrepreneurship, innovation and problem solving.</p>	<p>OR2. Explicit Knowledge Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Recruit top quality talent with the requisite educational qualifications ✚ Support Continous Education Programmes to equip employees with specialist qualification and certification <p>OR3. Tacit Knowledge Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Appoint Knowledge Ambassadors to champion knowledge acquisition and sharing across the organization ✚ Implement Peer to Peer Knowledge Sharing sessions as a routinized part of the organization's operations ✚ Create Cross-functional Problem-Solving / Idea Creation Teams to allow for the application of knowledge to solve organizational problems ✚ Implement Individual/Team Innovating and Entrepreneurship Competitions ✚ Implement Mentorship/Shadowing Programmes ✚ Implement A Robust Succession Planning Programme to ensure the transfer of knowledge from seasoned professional to high talent potentials

VALUE & RARITY	<p>SR3. Establish a Corporate University with the strategic responsible for organizational development knowledge-based learning initiatives based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Core business Practices ✚ Strategic Goals ✚ Industry Learning Gaps ✚ Technology Imperatives 	<p>OR4. Design, structure and focus of the Corporate University so that there is alignment between the main strategic pillars of the organizations and training and developmental programmes being offered, for example learning could be focused around key strategic pillars such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Leadership Development ✚ Culture – Values & Norms ✚ Digital Transformation ✚ Customer Centricity
VALUE & RARITY	<p>SR4. Employ a mix of strategies to balance stock and flow of knowledge throughout the organization by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Creating an environment that values the development of new knowledge-stores ✚ Encouraging team members to make regular contributions of knowledge data ✚ Encourage team members to make regular withdrawals to aid with problem solving and decision-making in the organization. 	<p>OR5. Implement a central repository for knowledge, (knowledge hub) hosted on a Learning Management Information System (LMIS); that allows for effective storage and easy retrieval of knowledge data. This multi-faceted knowledge hub should among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Host project data on project successes and failures as way to facility organizational learning in an experiential way ✚ Host expert data from the brightest and best professionals in specific fields of strategic endeavour for the company ✚ Develop internal initiatives to encourage High Potential Talent to contribute to the wider body of knowledge in their community of practice including professional Journal publications, business magazines, conferences, workshops, webinars etc. ✚ Host a comprehensive library system (virtual and/or physical); with the required subscription to the best academic databases

<p>VALUE & RARITY</p>	<p>SR5. Pursue a combination of talent development strategies to achieve knowledge ambidexterity, so that the organization is equipped to exploit its existing knowledge stores; as well as to explore new knowledge.</p> <p>The former aims to have the organization leverage the value of the HC resource it currently possesses, while the latter aims to build an agile response to the acquisition of new knowledge for strategic purposes.</p>	<p>OR6. Implement a strategically directed set of training initiatives to target the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ High Potential Talent Group ✚ Emerging Talent Group ✚ High Performance Talent Group ✚ Mission Critical Talent Group ✚ Organization’s Values-based capacity ✚ Organization’s Orientation towards Customer centricity <p>TR7. Implement developmental Initiatives to build firm specific competencies thru’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Promotion Pathway Initiatives to groom and prepare talent for key roles ✚ Job Enrichment Initiatives – collaborative work engagements ✚ Job Enlargement Initiatives -widen the scope of responsibilities <p>TR8. Create opportunities for knowledge to be shared thru’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Innovation projects and Competition ✚ idea-creation Sessions/Teams ✚ Inter and Intra Team Learning sessions
<p>VALUE & RARITY</p>	<p>SR6. Implement Team Engagement Strategies to build the cultural and social complexity of the human capital resources.</p>	<p>OR9. Establish a Team Engagement Unit with a designated Team Lead to manage all team engagement activities which should include but is not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Psycho-social activities ✚ Culture building activities ✚ Personal Development activities ✚ Coaching and Mentorship <p>OR.10 Conduct Engagement Activities for specific employee demographics, for example.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Male ✚ Female ✚ Millennials ✚ Divorcees ✚ Parents

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">INIMITABILITY</p>	<p>SOCIAL CAPITAL DIMENSION – INIMITABILITY</p> <p>The focus in this dimension is on creating a social context of knowledge and learning for the development of Inimitable Human Capital resources that are socially-complexed and culturally-specific; resources which competitors will have great difficulty imitating because of its complexed uniqueness.</p>	
	<p>SR7. Create and support collaborative social networks built on the shared values of the organization; to foster trust building and the strengthening of social capital.</p> <p>The aim is to create a culture that builds organizational citizenship, which will keep the rate of movement of key human capital resources out of the organization, low.</p>	<p>OR11. Implement the following team engagement initiatives that are specifically focused on building social capital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Implement Team Building Programme aimed at fostering ‘Espir de Corp’, unity of purpose and an ‘ownership mindset. ✚ Implement social programmes developed purposefully for fun engagements, entertainment and bonding at both the team and organizational levels ✚ Implement Programmes focused on building a positive, enabling work culture where employees feel that they have an opportunity to grow and thrive personally and professionally.
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">INIMITABILITY</p>	<p>SR8. Utilize technology enabled systems to track the rate of movement of talent within and without the organization,</p> <p>This is especially important since it is worker who ultimately owns the intellectual capital and when they leave the organization that intellectual capital leaves with them.</p>	<p>OR12. Implement specific HC performance measures to track the staff satisfaction and perception; which specific analyses around mission-critical Talent Value Groups; for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Employee Satisfaction Rates ✚ Talent Value Metrics ✚ Talent Attrition Metrics
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">INIMITABILITY</p>	<p>SR9. Implement multi-tiered feedback systems to get valuable employee data on how employees feel about the organization, what’s is perceived as going well and what is not.</p>	<p>OR13. Conduct annual / bi-annual surveys, and use data for decision-making and forecasting about the likely movement of talent inside and outside the organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Employee Perception Surveys ✚ Employee Engagement Surveys ✚ Surveys across multiple demographics: departmental, generations, position levels, etc.

<p>INIMITABILITY</p>	<p>SR10. Expand feedback systems to include analysis of qualitative data from various social media platforms to indicate how customers and talent potentials perceive the company in terms of brand, employer profile, perception of products and services.</p>	<p>OR14. Conduct formal social media surveys to understand how the company’s brand is perceived as an Employer of Choice.</p> <p>OR15. Utilize informal qualitative data from company’s social media page where general feedback is left about the company’s products and services.</p> <p>OR16. Create systematic and on-going points of contact with employees at all levels; to allow for the free flow of information both formal and informal to build rapport and connection between the leadership core and the rest of the organization through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Meetings ✚ Workshops ✚ Webinars/ Seminars ✚ Social activities
<p>INIMITABILITY</p>	<p>SR11. Strive to create an authentic leadership culture that cultivates and actively demonstrates the company’s articulated value system; which should among other things, include values that build organizational citizenship and reduce talent attrition such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Respect ✚ Recognition ✚ Reward. 	<p>OR17. Cultivate an organizational culture built on values such as Respect, Recognition and Reward:</p> <p>Respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Demonstrable display of mutual respect, reciprocity and compassion by the leadership ✚ Demonstrable display of positive behaviour characterized by cultural and situational intelligence <p>Recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Celebrate successes great and small ✚ Acknowledge the meeting and exceeding pre-set targets ✚ Acknowledge behaviour that personifies organization’s values ✚ Celebrate significant employee milestones <p>Reward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Implement reward systems linked to monetary compensation and benefits ✚ Provide/Improve promotion pathways

INIMITABILITY	<p>SR12. Strive to create a learning organization with the indelible characteristics of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Change-making leadership ✚ Capacity building ✚ Creativity 	<p>OR18. Foster an organizational culture that works to build and enhance its development as a learning organization, thru’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Change-making leadership - Dynamic Capabilities to embrace and exploit technological advancements ✚ Capacity building – multi-dimensional learning (Personal Mastery/ Team Learning/Cross-functional Learning) ✚ Creativity – Learning through mistake making and entrepreneurship
ORGANIZATION	<p>ORGANIZATIONAL CAPITAL DIMENSION- Organizing Intelligently</p> <p>The focus in this dimension is on organizing intelligently to leverage the Valuable, Rare and Inimitable Human Capital Resources through the development of a comprehensive set of HC policies and technology-enabled HC systems which fully exploit the intellectual and social capital potential of the organization towards achieving competitive superiority.</p>	
	<p>SR13. Engage in organization-wide Strategic Visioning, to develop a sense of shared fate and unity of purpose.</p>	<p>OR19. Conduct Strategic Visioning Sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Feedback Sessions on strategy formulation ✚ Cross-sectional, multi-level representation ✚ Cascading sessions to ensure that employees at all levels understand and believe in the vision
	<p>SR14. Maintain strategic alignment between business strategies and HC strategies to ensure that the organization attracts, develops and retain the best talent for strategy execution.</p>	<p>OR20. Conduct Resources Audits as a precursor to strategy formulation. The Data gathered will determine whether the organization has the requisite talent with the expertise need to execute particular sets of strategy.</p> <p>Conduct Learning and Development Gap Analysis to proactively track critical knowledge gaps that need to be filled; to ensure that the organization’s intellectual capital is being improved at the required rate based on benchmark standards set for strategic goal attainment.</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>SR15. Define and designate High Value employees into key strategic categories, and monitor attrition rate and promotion rates using designated metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ High Potentials ✚ Top-Performers ✚ Mission Critical 	<p>OR21. Monitor and report at the level of the Board of Directors data on the performance and movement of three key categories of employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ High Potentials – Emerging Talent with consistently high-performance scores ✚ Top Performers – employees who achieve and exceed goals across multiple categories ✚ Mission Critical Employees – Expert talent with distinctive competencies needed for the execution of strategy
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>SR16. Pursue strategic recruitment to identify, and on-board the best talent in the market; that possess the knowledge skills and abilities (KSAs) needed for the organizational strategic direction.</p>	<p>OR22. Employ a mix of tactics to facilitate strategic recruitment of the best talent for the organization’s needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Headhunting – to identify specialist talent via all media including social media ✚ Employee Sub-Contracting – where specific expertise are scarce and can be provided by a firm owned by an employee ✚ Hired to Learn Models – focused on engaging emergent talent at the University level or new graduates; with the potential to develop scarce and sought-after expertise; where their role in the organization is learn the latest technology to drive strategic success. ✚ Best Fit Models – Hiring only where talent meets the socio-cultural profile of the organization
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>SR17. Align Performance Management Systems to re-enforce the culture of learning, idea-creation and innovation; with specific performance metrics and rewards systems linked to the key strategic initiatives being pursued by the company</p>	<p>OR23. Utilize established performance metrics as well as new benchmarks to measure performance against pre-set strategic targets; and create multi-tiered performance reward scheme based on the basic frame below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Goal Exceeded ✚ Goal Achieved ✚ Goal almost Achieved ✚ Goal not met

ORGANIZATION	<p>SR18. Improve business intelligence thru digitization and Human Capital Analytics</p> <p>Monitor and report HC metrics at the board level and analyze HC metrics in tandem with FC metrics.</p>	<p>OR24. Implement a suite of HC metrics using appropriate international benchmarks to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ International Standards Organization (ISO) recommended HC metrics (see website www.) ✚ Talent Quotient™ (TQ™ - Aon Hewitt) -to predict the rate at which top performing, high value talent is likely to leave the organization. ✚ Talent Attrition Metrics – monitor attrition rates of high value groups to determine how well the organization is doing at retaining its most expert talent. ✚ High Talent Group Metrics - The top quartile of employees based on percentage pay progression over multiple years. ✚ Retention Risks Score – the probability of an employee voluntarily leaving the company within a specified time.
ORGANIZATION	<p>SR.19 Build organizational memory through the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to store data on various organizational experiences, both success and failures as part of the organizational learning process; and allow for purposeful accessibility and contributions to be made to the system.</p>	<p>OR25. Invest in the required technology to enhance organizational intelligence. These systems should include but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ HR system with HR Dashboard reporting systems ✚ Learning Management System (LMIS) ✚ Data Analytics Software
	<p>SR20. Utilize data analytics to as a way to improve efficiency and performance; and to determine the net impact of specific categories of HC resources.</p>	<p>OR26. Monitor and reduce organizational slack, which is the difference between Gross Human Capital Resources and Actual Human Capital resources engaged; using the relevant HC data analytics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Employee Productivity Index ✚ Work Quality Rate ✚ Work Efficiency Rate

	<p>SR21 Identify and define a set of key intelligibilities which are necessary for the organization to grow competitively; then use this organizational intelligence to build dynamic capabilities to drive competitiveness</p>	<p>OR27. Develop and Implement plan of action as part of the wider strategic plan, improve dynamic capabilities of the organization (Teece et al, 1997).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Absorptive Capabilities – to recognize value of knowledge as HC, to acquire it use it in a way that is transformative in the business’ operations using (HCD strategies) ✚ Adaptive Capabilities – to identify and exploit new opportunities, strategic flexibility to respond to market and customer needs to achieve better competitive positioning ✚ Innovative Capabilities – to pursue new product development, market innovation, new processes, new technology to existing processes
	<p>SR22. Utilize the Balanced Scorecard Methodology (Kaplan and Norton, 1996), as a strategic tool to integratively manage and monitor the value of Human Capital to the financial performance of the organization</p>	<p>OR28. Utilize Strategy maps to show the strategic link between Human Capital Management and Finance; to improve the monitoring and reporting of HC value in terms both financial and non-financial returns; using integrated HC analytics.</p>
	<p>SR.23 Adopt seven guiding principles to shift how human capital is valued and reported based on the Asset Accounting Framework presented by the World Economic Forum and Willis Towers Watson (WEF, 2020)</p>	<p>OR28. Pivot organization from traditional perspective of HRM to Strategic HCD based on seven guiding principles from the WEF HCD Accounting Framework. (See website at https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/why-we-need-a-new-human-capital-accounting-framework-and-how-to-get-there/)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ From Profit to Purpose ✚ From Corporate Policy to Social Responsibility ✚ From Stand-alone to Ecosystem ✚ From Employee and jobs to People, work and skills ✚ From Workforce as an expense to Workforce as an asset ✚ From backward-looking financial metrics to Forward Looking Value Metrics ✚ From Short-term financial reporting to Generational reporting

Critical Assessment of Research Questions

Having thoroughly interrogated the concept of Human Capital and Human Capital Development in the review literature, executed a qualitative research design to explore the phenomenon of interest, analyzed and discussed the data, and presented the findings; the penultimate step before writing the conclusion is determining whether the key research questions have been answered and ultimately if the research objectives have been met. The title of this research is '*Leveraging Human Capital for Organizational Competitiveness, A Multi- Case Analysis of Successful Jamaican Companies*'. The central research question is: *How is Human Capital being strategically leveraged to improve Organizational Competitiveness, in a select set of top-performing Jamaican Companies?* Therefore, to critically assess if the research questions have been answered, an assessment will be done of each research question; to ultimately determine if the research objectives have been met.

RO1. To identify the strategic approaches employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital.

RQ1. What strategic approaches have been employed to improve HC value in each dimension of Human Capital (HC)?

RQ1 has been clearly answered by firstly conceptualizing the meaning of human capital within an organizational context. The findings reveal that the concept of Human Capital is significantly complexed; and therefore, it needs to be examined in an integrated, multi-dimensional way. Secondly, when the multi-dimensionality of HC was examined and it was determined that human capital operated in three (3) distinct but related dimensions: (i)

Intellectual Capital Dimension, (ii) Social Capital Dimension and (iii) Organizational Capital Dimension. A conceptual model was offered in figure 35 (above) to diagrammatically demonstrate the dimensions of Human Capital.

It is important to note that by dissecting the construct of Human Capital, the researcher was able to more pointedly explore each dimension with an organizational context to identify the strategic approaches used in each dimension. The extensive analysis (Word Frequency, Word Tree, Word Grid Analyses) of the qualitative data allowed for the clear pattern recognition of the main strategic themes which emerged; which further allowed for a thematic factor analysis to be done based on the key themes identified. These strategic themes were examined using a cross-case analytical approach to distill a key set of strategies which have been successfully employed across the cases to leverage human capital towards improved value. A total of twenty (20) Human Capital Development strategies were identified are presented in Table 19 (above) entitled ‘Summary of Findings from Cross-case Analysis; columns 2 and 3 states the broad strategic approach employed in each HC dimension and also lists the specific strategies pursued. Additionally, a detailed discussion follows on in Chapter 5 on the strategies identified. Against this background, research question one (RQ1) has been answered and the research objective (RO1) met.

RO2. To evaluate how Human Capital Development is operationalized to improve the HC value towards greater competitiveness.

RQ2. How are the Human Capital Development (HCD) strategies operationalized to improve HC value towards greater competitiveness?

Having determined from the Literature Review (Chapter 2) that the leveraging of Human Capital is best achieved through Human Capital Development to improve Value, Rarity and Inimitability; the second research question needed to understand how human capital development was being operationalized to improve value and competitiveness. The research has clearly identified that each dimension of human capital needs to be engaged in order to see that improvement in value, rarity and inimitability. Therefore, the afore-mentioned strategies identified to answer RQ1, were further dissected to identify and evaluate the operational initiatives aligned to the broader strategies which were undertaken to leverage human capital towards greater organizational competitiveness; based on the findings from the Literature review which indicated that the competitive of a company increases as human capital resources increase in value along the Resource Based VRIO Framework assessment. See figure 35 (above), which gives a diagrammatical representation of how engagement of the three dimensions of HC increases value-potential and moves along the levels of the VRIO Framework.

The Operational Initiatives identified as the findings relating to RQ2 are systematically listed in column 4 of table 19 (above); to show their alignment to a specific strategy, the value improvement along the VRIO framework and the dimension within which the HC activity is being operationalized. A total of forty-five (45) operational initiatives were identified linked to the twenty (20) strategies previously mentioned in RQ1. These operational initiatives were examined using a cross-case analysis, and are discussed in detail Chapter 5. Therefore, based on the analysis conducted and findings presented in Chapter 5 in both descriptive and tabular format, RQ 2 has been fully answered; because the findings show how the strategies were operationalized in to forty-five (45) specific operational activities. Additionally, the findings showed, which activities added value, rarity and inimitability to HC, as well as which activities

allowed the organizations to intelligently organize itself to leverage these valuable HC resources towards competitiveness. Having answered the research question, the research objective has also been met.

RO3. To identify a framework for Human Capital Development (HCD), which can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness.

RQ3. How can Human Capital Development be modelled into a framework that can be practically applied to improve organizational competitiveness?

Finally, in answering RQ3, the researcher has developed an Integrated Human Capital Development (HCD) Framework which pulls all the major findings together to offer a comprehensive suite of strategic and operational recommendations. This framework is to serve as a management tool in the conceptualizing of strategic initiatives and their relations operational activities which will ultimately serve as Human Capital Development Strategic Plan. This plan acts as a 'blue print' or guide in helping organizations understand the how effectively engage the complex phenomenon that is human capital and how to translate that engagement into practical activities which can be implemented to leverage the value of those Human Capital resources in an optimal way.

Table 19 (above) outlines twenty-three (23) strategic recommendations in column two (2) and twenty-eight (28) operational activities in column three (3) which can be adapted to meet organizational specificity; and developed into SMART strategic objectives that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. A model of an Integrated HCD Framework is also depicted diagrammatically in figure 35 (above) to show the dimension within which HC operates, the VRIO Framework for assessing HC Value, and the implication for competitiveness

from competitive parity all the way to competitive superiority. With both the Integrated HC Framework and Model, RQ3 has been answered and the research objective met.

Having answered all three research questions and achieving the research objectives, the researcher has concomitantly answered the central research question of how Human Capital can be strategically leveraged to improve Organizational Competitiveness. In the Conclusion section, the researcher will summarize the findings of the research questions to bring this research to a close.

Conclusion

The findings from the previous chapters indicate that the five companies in this study all employed a differentiated strategy; which has set them apart as market leaders in their respective industries. Although the type of differentiated strategy differed amongst the companies (innovation, service quality, premium product), there was commonality in the underlying organizational philosophy which essentially viewed Human Capital as the most valuable asset that each organization possessed; and the one with the greatest potential determine strategic success. Consequently, all the companies have an internally-focused view on strategy; where each company has centered its external strategic pursuits on its most valuable internal resource, Human Capital. In order to effectively exploit the many opportunities in the environment while mitigating the threats, these companies have strategically work to build-up those human capital resources, so that they are able to create distinctive competencies and dynamic capabilities in order to agilely respond to the competitive forces in their respective industries. This strategic approach is quite noteworthy, because many companies are resource-rich with valuable human capital resources; but unfortunately, those resources have not been transformed into distinctive

competencies. This occurs where companies do not have the organizational intelligence which comes from the synergic integration of Intellectual, Social Capital and Organizational Capital. Therefore, as soon as the company's rivals are able to acquire similar resources or imitate certain competencies, the rarity is lost, and so too is their competitive edge.

More specifically, for organizations pursuing a differentiated strategy who desire to achieve long-term competitive advantage, success will be greatly determined by whether organizations adopt a holistic approach to Human Capital Development (HCD), that is both systematic and integrative. Interestingly, the findings of this study reveal that an Integrative HCD Framework that effectively incorporates the three dimensions of Human Capital (HC) to generate distinctive competencies (intellectual and social capital) as well as dynamic capabilities (organizational Capital), is a strategic imperative. While one cannot argue that traditional tangible resources can create value, one must also contend with the plethora of studies and the findings of this study, which have converged on the point that, sustained competitive advantage is achieved primarily through unique bundles of intangible HC resources that are dynamic and complex. Additionally, the company must be organized intelligently in order to leverage those HC resource to achieve and maintain pace-setting competitive advantage.

In conclusion, there can be very little debate about the fact that, the people resources of an organization in the form of Human Capital (HC) are a potential source of competitive advantage. Moreover, the findings from this multi-case study into how human capital can be leveraged for organizational competitiveness have re-affirmed the position that, this potential is not realized unless each dimension of an organization's HC resource is effectively engaged; and unless specific HCD strategies are pursued to build HC value. This building of value occurs when companies put HC resources through a series of value-added developmental processes to

improve value, rarity and inimitability, which concomitantly improves organizational intelligence. Finally, it is this organizational intelligence that will then allow the organization to effectively leverage these high-value HC resources to move organizations beyond just having a competitive advantage towards achieving competitive superiority.

Research Contributions - Academia, Industry and Society

Contribution to Academia- Adding to the Body of Literature on HC Development

Research in the field of Human Capital Development is a widely popular area of study. However, while previous research has examined HC to identify its components and sub-components, this research goes further to identify a specific set of developmental processes that can build the value-potential of HC resources, as a source of competitive advantage. Importantly, the research offers new insights into the strategic imperatives of HC development by taking an integrative approach to its examination. By using an integrative approach, the study interrogated the multi-dimensional nature of HC to determine how it can be operationalized; further demonstrating how HC development of each dimension adds a different level of competitive value.

Moreover, the study was carried out within the context of Jamaican industries which has its own nuances. Unfortunately, very little research has been done on the topic of human capital development within the context of Caribbean small island states like Jamaica. This research aims to address this gap as well. To this end, the study offers unique insights based on its contextualization; and the findings and recommendation of the study have transferability to other Caribbean organizations.

Contribution to Academia- Filling Existing Gaps in the Literature

The research findings offer an Integrated Human Capital Development (HCD) Model, as a first step towards theory building for future research. This theoretical model was developed to deal with specific gaps in existing literature, which did not address how each dimension of Human Capital affects organizational competitiveness from an internal resource perspective. The Integrated HCD Model outlines a four (4) step developmental process that that can build the value-potential of HC resources towards greater competitiveness. Additionally, the research makes a distinct contribution as it relates to organizational applicability; by demonstrating how strategic HCD engagement can be aligned and cascaded into specific operational activities. Essentially, providing a new perspective to a not-so-new' issue; as a way to assess the value-added benefits which can be derived from human capital development.

The researcher intends to publish the completed research in a highly respected peer-reviewed journal within her field of study. At this stage, consideration is being given to 'The International Journal of Human Resource Development and Management. Already the researcher has been afforded the opportunity to engage in academic discourse, publish aspects of her research in a peer-reviewed journal and presented at academic conferences as follows:

- **Conference Presentation** - University of Sunderland's (UK) Academic Conference – September 2022
- **Conference Presentation** - University of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Jamaica – September 2022
- **Journal Publication** - 'The Market: International Journal of Business' (Cyprus Centre for Business Research, Cyprus Institute of Marketing) – May, 2022.
- **Invited to Present** at University of Sunderland Faculty Conference - Faculty of Business, Law and Tourism Conference – September 2020.

- **Invited to publish** an article from my doctoral research in Volume 1 in the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC's) Journal of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Technology (JIET) - March 2023.

Industry Contribution

An Industry Blue Print

The Integrated Human Capital Development Framework which forms part of the findings of this study offer a conceptual model which will serve as a 'blue print' for developing strategies to effectively leverage HC resources to drive organizational competitiveness in a practical sense. The research findings presented in the Integrated HCD Framework have been broken down into practical set of strategic and operational recommendations that effectively pulls on each dimension of human capital; to allow for optimal value achievement. Importantly, the framework provides a plan of action that outlines the main HC pillars to drive goal attainment at the strategic business level; as well as the operational initiatives which serve as the tactical moves to support the strategic HC goals.

A Strategic Management Tool

Companies will be able to draw on the research findings and use them to guide the development of effective HC strategies using the recommendations as a Strategic HC Checklist. This strategic tool can be used to guide organizations as they seek to build value in their Human Capital towards competitiveness. The Strategic HC Checklist is particularly helpful to individual businesses which need to take a new approach in order to agilely respond the global imperatives of a knowledge economy. The findings of the study provide, among other things, a summary of

best practices, international benchmarks from leading organizations and new ideas for improving human capital value and competitiveness.

Societal Contribution

Beyond the theoretical and industry contributions, this research has the potential to contribute to the wider society; in two main ways: (i) to advance the discourse around new approaches to Human Capital Development and (ii) to lead in the development of Human Capital Development policy beyond just industry to a more macro-economic level.

Advancing the Discourse around Human Capital Development

The research findings provide a sound foundation to advance the growing discourse around Human Capital Development; and offer new frames of reference for understanding the issue at the organizational level and beyond. Through presentations at conferences, workshops, seminars, webinars and written publications, the researcher will have the opportunity to fan the flames of Human Capital development country-wide; and to serve as a thought-leader; championing the very important conversation about the value of people resources in organizations.

Providing a base for Policy Development

At the macro-economic level, Jamaica has positioned human capital development a key strategic driver in the country's Vision 2030 plan for economic development. This is largely due to the fact that Jamaica's own competitive advantage comes from its strategic differentiators which come from the intangibles such as its culture, brand and tourism services; and it is now on

a strategic quest to build a robust ICT industry centered around the knowledge-economy. All of these goals are driven strategically by the country's human capital resources. Therefore, the findings of this research lay a sound foundation to explore the issue from the macro-economic level and build out an appropriate policy framework, based on its broader societal implications.

Post Doctorial Research

Having completed this doctoral research into how Human Capital can be leveraged for organizational competitiveness; and having gone through copious amounts of research data around this subject area, the researcher believes that there are many other possibilities for future research. A few of these possible research areas are outlined below:

A focal area of this research is Human Capital Development for competitive advantage; and the current research effort focuses on companies using a differentiated competitive strategy. However, there is the opportunity to expand the research to investigate the same issue of human capital development; but within the context of successful companies pursuing a Cost Leader strategy. This would widen the applicability of findings in industry and would provide a framework for operationalizing human capital development within a different context in industry.

The current study focused on the senior tier of the organizations; specifically executive leadership and middle management. However, further studies could be conducted using the same conceptual framework for this study; but focusing on the lower levels of organization at the

departmental level. That would bring a perspective on the subject area that could possibly illuminate the research from a different vantage point. The findings of which, would add another layer of understanding into human capital development.

Further research could also be undertaken using a completely different methodological approach; where a quantitative research design could be used instead of a qualitative design. The difference in methodological approach would produce interesting findings; as it could test causality especially as it related to the issues of HC value and financial performance; which is a nexus which can naturally be drawn to the current research effort based on the current focus on HC value.

Overall, the researcher intends to pursue further research in one or more of the above-captioned research areas; as this is a way to make a vital contribution to building of the body of knowledge on human capital theory in organizations. Moreover, the prospects of future research mean the ability to contribute to the development of theory and practical models with applicability for industry; especially within the context of the Caribbean and other similar jurisdictions.

Reflections on Researcher Doctorial Journey

There is an old Chinese proverb which states ‘A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step;’ and as I reflect on my own journey through this doctoral programme, I can certainly attest to the fact that often times, all I was able to take was just one step to keep me moving; as I worked towards the goal of completion. Truly! the journey has been a challenging yet fulfilling one, a journey characterized by many highs and lows, ebbs and flows; but what an absolutely awesome feeling to look back at your accomplishments; knowing that your hard work and

dedication has finally paid off. Have I thought about giving up in the process? Oh yes, many times...but I pressed onwards and upwards despite how I felt; and instead chose to draw on that indomitable spirit of resilience that comes from my faith; confidently believing that “He who began this good work in me; will bring it to completion...” and clinging dearly to the words of Sir Winston Churchill, “Never give up on something you can’t go a day without thinking about”.

Giving up was therefore not an option, despite the challenges and they were many. I lost loved ones; I have close family members who are struggling with ill-health; I experienced significant challenges at work as my organization struggled to cope with the issues around the Covid 19 pandemic. Of course, there are also the usual responsibilities of being a wife, mother and daughter; and the ever-constant work demands that come from having a senior role as an Administrative Director at my place of work. At times, it was like I was on a roller coaster ride, with no end in sight. One of my greatest set-backs came in 2020. The year before (2019), I had applied for and was promised tuition support and paid leave of absence to complete the research phase of my studies; but owing to the issues coming from the Covid-19 pandemic, my place of work was no longer able to honour that commitment. So, in 2020, I found myself in quite a ‘pickle’, both in terms of meeting my financial obligations and finding a way to balance the demands of my programme of study while working full-time. At that time, it seemed like the obstacles were insurmountable. I found myself wondering if it was worth the personal and financial sacrifice that it would require for me to complete this programme. In fact, I would often times have to remind myself of why I wanted to pursue this doctorate in the first place; but no sooner I would remember my dream of being thought-leader and professional speaker on issues of business and societal importance; and my desire to move full-time into academia and to offer consultancy services in different areas of industry. At that point, things became clearer to me,

because nothing good comes without sacrifice; and I was used to making tough life decisions. So despite the obstacles, I knew that giving up was not an option; because this Doctorial programme would serve as my launching pad for me to pursue these dreams and aspirations.

Needless to say, I found renewed energy and strength from my community of family and friends, and I made the changes I needed to as hard as they were. This included liquidating some assets to cover the financial gap; and taking a temporary leave from several of the associations and professional bodies on which I served; so that outside of close family and work, I focus completely on my studies. It wasn't long after that I once again picked up momentum and was back on track. I feel so blessed to have a loving and supportive husband and daughter, and I must express profound gratitude to my research supervisor Dr. Derek Watson who has been constant source of motivation and guidance throughout this entire process. His wise council on managing my time, developing a programme plan and weekly schedule; as well as penciling in both study time and family time were priceless pieces of advice. His responsiveness and demonstrable dedication to my development made all the difference; especially as an international student who is pursuing the programme through distance education.

As I reflect on when I started the programme in 2019, to where I am today, I am astounded by the growth that has taken place. The learning has been tremendous. I can safely say that I am now a subject matter expert on a wide array of issues on human capital development. I have been afforded opportunities to publish aspects of my research, to share my research at conferences and participate in rich exchanges with other graduate students at the University of Sunderland. I've grown significantly from the very knowledgeable faculty members and responsive support team; who helped me to navigate this journey. One of my greatest knowledge gains occurred from the serendipitous learning that came from understanding

clearly what research philosophy was really about and; being able to have a deeper understanding of what my own philosophical beliefs were concerning research, and how that worldview shaped the methodology ultimately chosen for my thesis. I also learnt more about reflexivity in research and its importance even as broader life skill, which I will no doubt call upon as I continue on my professional journey.

I am also very pleased that I got to learn how to use a new software (NVIVO) for qualitative research and with help of Dr. Mark Proctor; was able to develop a level of proficiency that I am very proud of. My local research supervisor, Dr. Anne Crick was also a source of inspiration and her guidance especially when it came to the data collection phase, where I had to deal with securing these high placed executives for in Jamaica to be a part of my expert sample. Suffice to say, I benefitted also from the networking opportunities which came out of this experience.

Overall, the learning and growth opportunities have been many, and I have already began reaping the rewards of my efforts with no doubt greater rewards to come in the future. My pursuit of a Doctorate in Business Administration from the University of Sunderland has made me more resolute about my passion for knowledge and learning, which I will continue to do in the school of life; because as a life-long learner, I believe wholeheartedly, that true growth comes only when one continues to learn beyond the boundaries of what has already mastered.

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Appendix A – Interview Instrument**The University of Sunderland****Doctorate in Business Administration****Expert Interview– Executive Leadership**

Participant's Code _____ Participant's Title _____

Interviewer's Name _____ Date _____

Instructions:

The following open-ended questions have been formulated to gain an understanding of your professional perspective on the role that human capital plays to your organization's success; and how human capital is being leveraged strategically to improve your organization's competitiveness.

Please answer the questions candidly and to the best of your ability.

Organizational Background

1. What is your organizations' value proposition and how does it distinguish itself from its competitors?
2. Describe the areas of competitive strengths (dynamic capabilities) for your organization? To what extent are these dynamic capabilities driven by the development of your organization's HC resources?
3. Is your organization best described as (i) Change-making - Proactive) or (ii) and Analyzing - Responsive or (iii) and Status-quo keeping - Reactive? Explain your answer.
4. What is the Human Resource Philosophy of the organization: Is human capital development viewed as an investment or as an expense?

Intellectual Capital

5. Describe the organization's approach to HCD; as it relates to how L&D is represented in the organizations structure (level, authority and size)? Is there a formal department, with specific roles and functions?
6. Does your company have a Corporate University as a part of its internal structure or does it pursue external partnership with an Institution to provide L&D services? Is your organization's L&D model (i) Brick & Mortar, (ii) E-Portal or (iii) Blended?
7. Does the organization have a formal Knowledge Management system to include a repository of data (hard & soft)?
8. Are there specific policies and procedures; which govern how the KM system works?
What techniques are utilized to encourage the transfer of knowledge from:
 - People to systems
 - System to people
 - people to people
9. Is Learning & Development required for all levels of staff? Are there areas of emphasis based specific strategic focus?

Social Capital

10. Describe the approach used in developing and articulating the strategic vision and mission of the organization; to achieve maximum buy-in by employees at all levels?
11. Would you describe your organization as having a culture of learning; and if so, what techniques are used to encourage continuous learning?
12. How does the organization's leadership work to encourage systematic and spontaneous feedback as a function of organizational and individual learning?
13. What approach is utilized to generate 'Shared-Fate' (unity of purpose) and team spirit across the organization?

Organizational Intelligence

14. Is talent strategy and human capital oversight discussed at the board level? If so, is there support at the board level for the strategic investments in human capital development?
15. Does the organization have a talent strategy for attracting, improving and retaining high performance talent?
16. Does the organization employ Human Capital Analytics (specific HR metrics and indices) to inform decision making and predict business performance? Name a few key metrics?

Talent Quotient? The ratio of pivotal employees joining or leaving the firm – relative to all the employees joining or leaving.

17. Are you seeing a need for a shift/re-focus in strategic priorities to embrace more targeted HCD strategies to meet the demands of a technology-driven digital world characterized by: AI, IOT, Big Data?

Appendix B – Focus Group Instrument

Research Title: Leveraging Human Capital for Organizational Competitiveness: A Multi-Sector Case Study in Jamaica.

Interviewer's Name _____

Research Assistant's Name _____

Date _____

Instructions:

The following open-ended questions have been formulated to gain an understanding of your professional perspective on the role that human capital plays in organizational success; and how human capital can be leveraged strategically to improve competitiveness.

The discussion will be free-flowing; you are encouraged to share your thoughts openly and honestly.

Intellectual Capital

1. Think back to when you first started in your current position, would you say that you have grown professionally in your work life?
2. Are there specific competencies/expertise that you have develop, based on your professional growth?
3. To what extent are these competencies driven by your willingness to embrace learning? Would you describe yourself has having an appetite for learning?
4. Does your organization support learning and development? Should organizations view the spend on people development (training, learning) as an:
 - (i) Expense – cost to the organization that is to be recovered/controlled
 - (ii) Investment – with return that will bring future returns

Organizational Capital

5. When an organization emphasizes learning and development; and builds-up certain expertise/dynamic capabilities; do you believe that it will positively affect the company's competitiveness. If so, share some ways that the company might be positively affected.
6. Should there be training and development for all levels of staff; and with specific training/learning focus based on the strategic direction of the company?
7. From your experience, what would be some benefits of having a Knowledge Management System to allow for the Transfer of Knowledge:
 - People to systems, System to people, People to people
8. Do you believe it is necessary for organization to have a talent strategy (to recruit/develop/maintain), especially when considering succession planning and the demands of the new digital economy? Share your thoughts.
9. How important is it for an organization to utilize HR Data Analytics in strategic decision making?

Social Capital

10. How important is it for organizations to foster/encourage a culture of continuous learning?
11. Why do you think, is it important for leaders to encourage employee feedback, both systematic and spontaneous?
12. Do you believe that the people resources (human capital) bring specific strategic value to organizations?

Appendix C – Interview Protocols**The University of Sunderland****Doctorate in Business Administration****Protocol- Expert Interview**

Participant's Code _____ Participant's Title _____

Interviewer's Name _____ Date _____

Stages	Item No.	Protocol Details	Remarks
Pre-Interview	1.	Make contact with participants, share background and purpose of the study and formally invite them to be a part of the study	
	2.	Inform participants about all ethical provisions of the study for: confidentiality, anonymity, data security (storage, retrieval and disposal etc.)	
	3.	Obtain written consent from each participant; including specific consent for them to be recorded via Zoom	
Interview Introduction	4.	Introduce myself and thank the participant for agreeing to be a part of the study	
	5.	Introduce the study: brief background, purpose and use of findings; and assign	

		participant with his/her unique identification number: alpha-numeric code linked to the organization and sequence of the participant interview	
	7.	Explain the benefits/significance of the study to both businesses and academia	
	8.	Explain the selection criteria used to select the participant for the study, and the overall interview process, including expected time span for the interview	
	9.	Reassure participants that highest ethical standards will be maintained throughout the entire research process	
	10.	Ask Participants to share any concerns or ask questions which they may have before moving into the next phase of the interview	
During the Interview	11.	Transition from introductory stage to actual interview using ice-breaker question to ease into the more focused questions based on the central research questions	

	12.	Continue with facilitation of discussion segment using guided question based on the central research question: How Human Capital is being leveraged for competitive advantage. Questions will flow from the 5 sub-themes of the research.	
	13.	Include probing questions to allow the participant to clarify or elaborate based on the response given to questions asked; and re-direct questions if participants stray away from the question asked	
	14.	Include memoing technique to take notes in the form of key phrases at strategic points in the interview; paying attention to and making notes on the body language, verbal cues and the researcher's general impressions of the process.	
Interview Conclusion	15.	After completing pre-set questions and probes, ask participants if there are any other comments that he/she would like to add before the	

		interview is wrapped up.	
	16.	Inform participant that the recorded session will be transcribed and a written transcript prepared for participants to review and validate	
	17.	Thank the participant for his/her participation in the research effort.	
Post Interview	18.	Observe the established protocols by the University for the storage of data, electronically; including labelling, indexing and password protection; as well as shredding of hard copies.	
	19.	Move into the Data Analysis phase of the research.	

Appendix D – Focus Group Protocol

The University of Sunderland Doctorate in Business Administration Protocol- Focus Group Session

Participant's Code _____ Participant's Title _____

Interviewer's Name _____ Date _____

Stages	Item No.	Protocol Details	Remarks
Pre-Session	1.	Make contact participants, share background and purpose of the study and formally invite them to be a part of the study in the Focus Group Session	
	2.	Inform participants about all ethical provisions of the study for: confidentiality, anonymity, data security (storage, retrieval and disposal etc.)	
	3.	Obtain written consent from each participant; including specific consent for them to be recorded via Zoom	
In-Session Introduction	4.	Introduce myself and my research assistant and thank the participant for agreeing to be a part of the study	

	5.	Introduce the study: brief background, purpose and use of findings; and assign participant with his/her unique identification number: alpha-numeric code	
	7.	Outline the Ground Rules for the Focus Group session, so as to set the tone and feel of the session, and to manage the expectations of the participants; as way to encourage full participation	
	8.	Explain the selection criteria used to select the participant and the overall process which will be followed for the session, including expected time span	
	9.	Reassure participants that highest ethical standards will be maintained throughout the entire research process	
	10.	Ask participants to introduce themselves	
	11.	Ask Participants to share any concerns or ask questions which they may have before moving into the discussion phase	
During the Session	12.	Transition from introductory	

		<p>stage to the discussion segment, using an open-ended ice-breaker question. The aim is to allow the participants to be at ease with each other and encourage persons to speak freely but respectfully as a way to ensure the quality of the session.</p>	
	13.	<p>Continue with open-ended semi-structure questions around Central Research Question: How Human Capital is being leveraged for competitive advantage. Questions will flow from the 5 sub-themes of the research.</p>	
	14.	<p>Include probing questions to allow the participant to clarify or elaborate based on the response given to questions asked.</p>	
	15.	<p>Include memoing technique to take notes in the form of key phrases at strategic points in the session; paying attention to and making notes on the body language, verbal cues and the researchers general impressions of the</p>	

		process.	
Session Conclusion	16.	After completing formal discussion, ask participants if there are any other comments that he/she would like to add before the session is concluded	
	17.	Inform participant that the recorded interview will be transcribed and a written transcript prepared for him/her to review and validate	
	18.	Thank the participant for his/her participation in the research effort.	
Post Session	19.	Observe the established University protocols for the storage of data, electronically; including labelling, indexing and password protection; as well as shredding of hard copies.	
	20.	Move into the Data Analysis phase of the research.	

Appendix E – Participant’s Consent Form

University of Sunderland
Doctorate in Business Administration
Participants Consent Form

Research Title: Leveraging Human Capital for Organizational Competitiveness: A Multi-Case Study in Jamaica

Organization Code: _____

Participant Code: _____

I hereby give my consent to participate in this study by ticking the relevant box and signing below:

1.	I am over eighteen (18) years old.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I voluntarily agree to participate in this study	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study without notice at any point throughout the study, and without giving a reason	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand that I have the right to change my mind about participating in the study for a period of up to two (2) weeks after the interview/focus group session	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I have been assured that the data gathered will be used solely for the purpose of this research	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I agree to have my interview session conducted via Zoom video platform	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I agree to have the interview session recorded, so that the researcher can create a transcript for the purpose of data analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I have read and understood the information regarding this study, as provided in the Research Project information Guide.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed by:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F – Research Project Information Guide

University of Sunderland

Doctorate in Business Administration

RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMATION GUIDE

Research Title: Leveraging Human Capital for Organizational Competitiveness: A Multi-Sector Case Study in Jamaica

Background to the Study

The advent of globalization has led to increased international competition and a compelling need for organizations to identify more effective sources of competitive advantage. The variables which now drive global competitiveness are more focused on service, innovation, speed and customized products. Importantly, the challenges modern businesses face in light of the intangibles of E-commerce, the Internet of Things and the interconnectivity of a globalized technology-driven world, necessitate increased organizational intelligence and a shift in strategic purpose.

With this in mind, firms need to dig much deeper in the search to find a way to innovate and distinguish themselves from their competitors. This search has led organizations to take a closer look at their strengths beyond the more traditional types of resources such as land and equipment; with a view to identifying more rare, distinctive resources which can be exploited to take advantage of possible opportunities. The researcher contends that the ‘people’ resources of a firm, in the form of **Human Capital provides a significant source of competitive advantage;**

with more and more studies pointing to the increasing connection between the development of Human Capital and a firm's ability to achieve and maintain competitive advantage.

Moreover, as organizations are confronted with the imperatives of the 4th Industrial Revolution characterized by a highly digital society, several of the more recently done studies show that specific attributes of Human Capital like, know-how, skills and expertise are key influencers on the firm's competitive performance in today's technological age (Shavarz et al., 2018; Latilla et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Alawamleh, 2019; Soltani and Zareie, 2020; Ginting, 2020; Lu et al., 2021). Arguably, the power of an organization's people-resource lies in its ability to convert inputs into output by adding creativity, ingenuity and entrepreneurship; which makes Human Capital one of the most distinctly valuable resource that any organization possesses.

Therefore, in order to achieve and maintain sustained competitive advantage, organizations need to invest in the development of its Human Capital resources to build and enhance the dynamic capabilities of the firm. By so doing, the Human Capital will become uniquely firm specific, difficult for competitors to imitate; and offer significant competitive value.

Purpose of the study

Against this background, the purpose of this study is to explore the concept of Human Capital within an organizational context; by examining how Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning can be leveraged to add value and improve Organizational Intelligence and Competitive Advantage. The following three (3) themes will be used to frame the study and undergird the central and sub-research questions:

- Theme 1: Understanding the dimensions of Human Capital within the organization;

- Theme 2: Creating Value through People-focused strategies;
- Theme 3: Achieving Competitive Advantage using an HCD Framework.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind about taking part in the study, **you can withdraw at any point during the session without giving a reason and without penalty**. After you have completed the study, you can also withdraw your consent for your data to be included by contacting me via email **within 2 weeks of participation** and providing me with your participant code. The **Participant Code** will be stated at the top of Participant Consent Form. If you decide to withdraw during the study or in the subsequent two (2) week period, your data will be destroyed and will not be used in the study.

Questions and Concerns

If you have any questions and concerns, please contact me via email at ggreenmclennon@gmail.com or you may contact my research supervisors Dr. Anne Crick anne.crick@uwimona.edu.jm or Dr. Derek Watson derek.watson@sunderland.ac.uk.

Benefits of Participation

Among the many benefits to the participants include the opportunity to:

- contribute invaluable data, critical to the successful undertaking of this research effort;
- provide valuable insight based on your extensive professional expertise;
- contribute to development of theory and practical solutions intended to benefit; industry

- advance knowledge and scholarship in the field of Human Resources Management and Development.

Risks of Participation

There are no foreseen disadvantages or risks to you by your participation in this study.

Data Protection, Privacy and Confidentiality

All information provided for this study will be kept strictly confidential; and will be used expressly for the purpose of this research only. No information regarding your company or specific participants or anything that could identify you in the study will be included in the study reports. Data collected for the student will be password protected and stored confidentially. All paper documents will be uploaded electronically to a password protected file. Hardcopies will be shredded after use. Data will be kept according to the established protocols as required by the University of Sunderland.

Intended use of Research Finding

If suitable, the results may be presented at academic conferences and/or written up for publication in peer reviewed academic journals.

Organizers of the research

This research is being undertaken in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctorate of Business Administration at the University of Sunderland, UK.

Review and Approval of Research

The University of Sunderland Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved the study.

Appendix G – Participant Invitation Letter

Date

Name

Title

Company

Address

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to be a part of a research effort that is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a Doctorate in Business Administration with the University of Sunderland, United Kingdom.

The aim of the research is to examine how Human Capital can be leveraged for Organizational Competitiveness. The research will take the form of a qualitative Case Study which explores the models used by a select set of successful Jamaica companies which employ strong people-focused strategies. Your company was chosen for this study because of its competitive superiority in the _____ sector in Jamaica; and its strong emphasis on learning and development.

The researcher (Garcia Green-McLennon) will be collecting qualitative data for the research using interviews. Your interview will be done virtually and will last about an hour.

Your participation in this research effort will be beneficial on many levels. Not only will it serve to advance the work already being done in academia in terms of theory development; but it will also propel the discourse around the very important area of human capital development to improve organizational practice and performance in Jamaica.

Attached, is the Research Project Information Guide which provides further details on the research approach; as well as the Consent Form which will ensure that the utmost confidentiality and anonymity is maintained.

Yours sincerely

Garcia Green-McLennon (Mrs).

DBA Researcher

Appendix H – List of Participants’ Codes for Data Collection

Participant Coding Listing for Data Collection			
No	Participant Code	Position/Level	Industry Type
1	WH1	Executive Vice President	Insurance
2	WL2	Snr. Manager Learning & Change Mgmt.	Insurance
3	WS3	Snr. Manager, Group Strategy	Insurance
4	UH1	Snr. Vice President	Banking
5	UL2	Asst. General Manager, Group Human Resources	Banking
6	US3	Manager Learning, Development & Strategy	Banking
7	VH1	Group Chief Executive Officer	Banking
8	VS3	Group Chief Strategy Officer	Banking
9	NH1	Chief Exec. Officer	Manufacturing
10	NL2	Manager, Human Resources	Manufacturing
11	YH1	Chief Exec. Officer	Telecom
12	YL2	Talent Acquisition & Development Executive	Telecom

Appendix I – NVIVO Codebook for Data Analysis

NVIVO Codebook for Data Analysis

Name	Files	References
STRATEGIC PROFILE	10	60
Competitive Strategy	9	55
-Innovation - Differentiator	4	8
-Premium Products - Differentiator	4	4
-Service Quality - Differentiator	3	6
HUMAN CAPITAL DIMENSIONS	16	648
1-Intellectual Capital	16	309
HCD Philosophy	8	15
Knowledge Management	12	56
-Knowledge Acquisition & Retention	9	27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Int. & Ext. Knowledge Acquisition 	5	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMS- Knowledge Repository System 	8	16
-Knowledge Transfer & Application	8	26

Name	Files	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People to People Transfer 	6	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People to System Transfer 	3	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System to People Transfer 	6	7
Talent Management & Engagement	16	238
L & D Structure & Modality	12	37
-L&D Modality	9	21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brick and Mortar 	1	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid 	5	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line 	7	11
-L&D Structure	7	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized Shared Services 	7	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralized- Business Units 	0	0
Training & Development	16	187
-Cross-functional activities -Job Enrichment & - Enlargement	8	16
-Mentoring & Coaching	9	18

Name	Files	References
-Strategic Recruitment	8	15
-Succession Planning	8	14
-Talent Development	15	111
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert Talent Attrition 	3	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert Talent Retention 	2	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal & External training initiatives 	2	21
Team Engagement	8	14
-Emotional & Mental Well-being	5	14
-Personal Welfare & Professional Development	8	25
2 -Social Capital	16	143
Organizational Culture	15	109
-Feedback Systems	11	58
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous Feedback 	7	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic Feedback 	10	30
-Multi-Dimensional Communication	9	14
-Team Spirit - Unity of Purpose	6	9

Name	Files	References
Organizational Learning	12	34
-Cross-functional -Collaborative Learning	4	6
-Personal Learning -Mastery	6	11
-Team Learning	4	8
3- Organizational Capital	16	196
Dynamic Leadership & Shared Vision	9	25
-Strategic HC Alignment	9	36
-Strategic HC Oversight	8	13
Dynamic Capabilities	14	55
-Adaptive Capability - Responsiveness & Agility	11	31
-Innovative Capability - Creating Change	10	23
HC Policies & Systems	15	116
-Digitization & Data Analytics	13	39
-Documented Polices & Procedures	4	6
-HC Resource Audit	3	5
-L & D Gap Analysis	5	5
-Performance Mgmt.	7	9

Appendix J – NVIVO Case Classification Summary from Data Analysis

5/16/2022 8:17 AM

Case Classification Summary

Data Analysis - NVIVO 1

5/16/2022 8:17 AM

Attribute Value	Attribute Value Description	Number of Cases
Classification Name:	Business Sectors	

Attribute Name: Competitive Differentiator

Innovation	5
Premium Products	5
Service Quality	3

Attribute Name: Industry

Banking	6
Insurance	3
Manufacturing	2
Telecommunication	2

Attribute Name: Position

Executive Leadership	5
Head of Learning &	5
Head of Strategy	3

Classification Name: Management Practitioners

Attribute HR Practioners

Name:

Unassigned 4

Attribute Mixed Group - HR & Non-HR Practitioners

Name:

Unassigned 4

Reports\\Case Classification Summary Report

Page 1 of 2

5/16/2022 8:17 AM

Attribute Value	Attribute Value Description	Number	of
Attribute	Non-HR Practitioners	4	

Appendix K – Summary of Transcript Files Imported to NVIVO

8/6/2022 8:21 AM

File Summary

Data Analysis - NVIVO 1

8/6/2022 8:21 AM

File	Total Words in Document	Total Paragraphs	Number of Nodes in Nodes	Number of Coded Percentage	Number of Text	Number of Audio	Number of
Files\\Research Transcript NH1-Completed 30-04-22B	3478	171	29	1.0000	159	0	0
Files\\Research Transcript NL2-Completed 30-04-22B	4437	237	31	1.0000	118	0	0
Files\\Research Transcript WH1-Completed 03-05-22	6112	243	35	1.0000	242	0	0
Files\\Research Transcript - FG1- Completed- 08-05-22	4784	156	38	1.0000	347	0	0
Files\\Research Transcript - FG2. Completed - 08-05-22 docx	3998	115	23	1.0000	218	0	0
Files\\Research Transcript - FG3 Completed 08-05-22	5881	161	34	1.0000	373	0	0
Files\\Research Transcript YL2- Completed 06-05-22	1307	51	25	1.0000	97	0	0

Files\\Research Transcript UH1- Completed 06-05-22

4993	151	37	1.0000	207	0	0
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Files\\Research Transcript UL2- Completed 03-05-22

2992	196	37	1.0000	195	0	0
------	-----	----	--------	-----	---	---

Files\\Research Transcript US3- Completed 03-05-22

3868	177	28	1.0000	133	0	0
------	-----	----	--------	-----	---	---

Files\\Research Transcript VH1- Completed 03-05-22

4323	210	32	1.0000	189	0	0
------	-----	----	--------	-----	---	---

Files\\Research Transcript VL2- Completed 06-05-22

2614	133	26	1.0000	98	0	0
------	-----	----	--------	----	---	---

Files\\Research Transcript VS3- Completed 03-05-22

5844	225	30	1.0000	177	0	0
------	-----	----	--------	-----	---	---

Files\\Research Transcript WL2- Completed 03-05-22

5112	222	38	1.0000	195	0	0
------	-----	----	--------	-----	---	---

Files\\Research Transcript WS3- Completed - 03-05-22

2962	118	29	1.0000	119	0	0
------	-----	----	--------	-----	---	---

Files\\Research Transcript YH1- Completed 06-05-22

3676	120	35	1.0000	177	0	0
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Appendix L – Sample Interview Transcript

Interview WL2

Mon, 4/4 9:32AM • 52:18

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

People, training, pandemic, team members, learning, group, strategies, HR, activities, hear, year, culture, knowledge, gap, persons, manage, development, question

SPEAKERS

Interviewer, Interviewee

Interviewer 00:31

Right. Alright. So what I'm going to be doing is just asking you a series of questions, and you just share from your perspective, I'm going to be looking at how the Learning and Development function operates within The company. And just to see whether or not from your perspective, you see how that influences the performance of the company. So I'd first like to ask you to share with me, **what is the HR philosophy of The company?**

Interviewee 01:14

That's a very good question. One of the promises that group HR makes to all team members is that The company will be a place for you to grow and learn. So it's a promise, one of r four promises articulated in our HR policy. And that's one of the promises that we make from the get go; this is something we share with the team members at induction and beyond. We therefore don't see the spend on people so much as an expense, it's more of an investment. I'm sure the

guys in finance would disagree. I'm sure our initiatives and our activities that we do on a yearly basis aligns to the fact that human capital investments bring value to the organization.

Interviewer 03:05

I don't think I'm going to open my door. I close it because I didn't want my daughter to interrupt, but I'm going to open it, its maybe from my end, one minute, I'm just going to open it.

So, um, in terms of learning and development, could you describe for me how that is built up in the company's structure? Because I noticed you mentioned it being aligned in so much of what the company does, how is that learning and development practically? Operating within the company?

Interviewee 04:13

Alright. So the group it's a group it's a group department, which means we support the entire The company group, including Grand Cayman.

Interviewer 04:28

Oh, okay.

Interviewee 04:29

We have business lines, and business lines like the bank, the insurance, the investments, the employee benefits, these people deal with the medical side and then you have the shared services that's persons like us who are support them and all business lines including Shared Services has training budgets, including Grand Cayman. So they all have training budgets. We all sit at the

table in October, November thereabouts, we talked about the strategies and how training aligns to the strategy. So they when they come up with their strategies in October, then they meet with me to discuss what training team members will need. So its organized from the group level in each business line and then all support lines they get the opportunity to develop their own training plan and budget, and then they pass that on to me as head of Learning & Development.

Interviewer 05:48

Okay, great. So in terms of when you're now actually going to be living delivering some of the types of training focus and so on, is that do you have different focus for different levels? **Do you have specific areas of training linked to a strategic initiative?** For example, if the company is going to be doing going in a particular direction? Do you have learning and development operating in tandem with strategy?

Interviewee 06:21

Loaded question, let me try to take it piece by piece. Alright, so yes, when we meet with the heads, because I usually meet with all executives who run their business lines and shared services, then they outline to me what is it that the team members must do to specialize those trainings are specialized trainings, I can't sit at my desk and know that you need that. So we do specialized trainings for different groups based on the training needs. And then we also do general training, depending on the group strategy.

So every January, we have the blast off; which is an all teams meeting, where we hear from the Group President and his coalition of executives? And then they tell us what the group strategy is. And after we hear the group strategy, they also share with their individual business lines, how

they align to the group strategies, what it that we need to do is, you know, to achieve the group strategies. And so I usually have to align the trainings that we offer to the strategy. For example, right now going through a period of strategic transformation driven by innovation in digitization, so immediately, the L&D team has work on a plan to upskill or reskill so drive this digital transformation for the company

So for example, the team of us in learning developing, which is about seven will sit down, we decide, okay, bank needs to grow their thing by \$3.5 billion this year, how are they going to do that we're going to look at the salespeople, we're going to look at the guys at the front end, who are giving the client experience then will e start, you know, brainstorming like that. And if we say okay, client experience has to peak, then we go sit with a client experience manager and ask him, let him share with us some of the gaps they're seeing from the mystery shopping, and other surveys.

And those things, including we sit with in group HR, we have relationship managers, and these relationship managers, they will they manage the different business lines and shared services. So I will say to the relationship managers also get glean from the person performance appraisals, where they're seeing gaps, so that we can do targeted training..

Interviewer 09:15

Yes. And I see you're doing a lot of gap analysis, which means it's very much targeted. Fantastic. It was loaded, but you're dissected it, quickly. Thank you very much. Okay, tell me a little bit about **how you manage knowledge**. In other words, so people will get information whether you

do it in house training, or you send them out? Is there any formal system to manage that knowledge? Like, is there a repository where information is kept electronically? Or is there a physical library or both or that sort of thing?

Interviewee 09:53

Yeah, yes. That's a very good question. You see I keep meeting with our vice president, who is doing his doctorate He is he's been he has been educating me on the importance of knowledge transferral.

Interviewer 10:06

This is the same right now. Yeah. And he would like to say, we have a problem with knowledge transferring. Because we'd want all the training. And that's true. And we, we do have, most times we capture the.... So if we have a facilitator whose external, external facility, we usually try to get them to share their information, they're sharing with that particular group to give it to us. So we can share it, keep it on our repository, where we keep our knowledge. Yes, so we have a system, and we keep them there. But you know, that most external share their knowledge and the presentations or the booklets that they use it's sometimes so skeletal. So we are working on building up a cadre of leaders who are knowledgeable and equipped to deal with a myriad of issues. The training programme is in **Resilience in Leadership**; and it became even more important with the 2020 pandemic, we recognize that we needed to pivot our leadership or how they manage our people pretty fast. We set up a training with Dale Carnegie and we provided resiliency training for over 300 people leaders.

Interviewee 11:42

It was very expensive to get into the double figure millions. And, and so I had to decide, okay, I can't be I can't I can't go to billion so we chose the method of designating **Knowledge Ambassadors**. So we chose we sent over 127 people leaders who were trained and now they have to go back to their different units in their different business lines, and the knowledge that they've gained from Dale Carnegie transfer that knowledge to both people and systems. They are being tasked with a whole booklet to do these activities which are to be implemented to facilitate the transfer the knowledge. So essentially, it's a train the trainer model of sorts, and its important because we need our management team to understand that its not just about meeting large financial targets; as people leaders, they have a role to develop the people under their charge. And so build this in the appraisal process, so they get measured on it.

So we have that going on right now with these people leaders say, you have this knowledge, you have been certified as resilient ambassadors across the group. Now it's time to put the activities in place.

One of the top things that we were stressing with our people, leaders, and the first activity is how to show empathy. And I think that particular element of leadership came out, out of the pandemic. First activities they Dale Carnegie taught them and it's the first thing we want to transcend across the group. So the first activity they're doing this quarter is teaching our other people leaders and team members to be empathetic.

Interviewer 14:39

That's a good model. It's a very good model that you saved money. You got a core team of persons trained equipped and declare them ambassadors, you link it to the appraisal, and you send them out to spread the reach across. It is a model for knowledge transfer.

Interviewee 14:50

Yes. So that's one way. The other way we came up with was a very innovative way of trying to get the internet different generations work. And with the millennials especially Gen Z came in; it got a little difficult. The older generations couldn't understand their work ethics and stuff like that. And so it was difficult. You know, the younger folks would complain that the older guys, in a sense, they're not there for them. They're not respecting them, they don't respect the way they work and stuff. And so we decided, okay, we need to bridge the gap. And one thing that we did at The company was to form what we call a **Professional Millennial Mentorship Society**. And the pro millennial mentorship society is one in which we use the older guys at The company and we also pull on the older guys from the external from the industry, who come in and do group mentoring so there is a two-way transfer of know from the more experienced to the juniors and back from the more tech-savvy to the more traditional workers. The group is about 200, and something probably 300 now, it's been going on for probably the last three or four years, and we have been recognized by HRMAJ, and they were received the Optima award, some international award for being innovative in this field.

So now, I see you as a person. You know, when we did generations at work, wait, so we did a generation that work presentation with them. And all we could hear is Oh my God, my mother's

like that, oh my God, my father's like that, oh my god, it's not my supervisor. If that's how we people, we're just cultured, you know, we did it with the older guys are like, Oh my god, I have somebody on my team that's like that, we're so happy for this. So it's not the person is different and they're cultured differently. And you can't just employ them at The company for one year expect them to become a Gen Z, or to become a Gen X you know, or a traditionalist, they are different and the value that they bring, they do bring value.

Interviewee 18:33

The latter is called **Reverse Mentorship** to get mentorship. Younger guys now because we do have mentorship so we get into younger ones. So first, we had to reach the hearts of the older guys to let them realize that listen, the guys are not coming in to replace you. For The company, to remain viable knowledge has to transfer they need to understand the work properly. And at the same time, you need to listen to them and realize that the way how we used to capture the information years ago has changed; and work has also changed. You don't have to be at work from seven to seven, they're showing you a better way. It's not being disrespectful. I never forget this one. I showed my manager that we were captured, capturing accounts in a very manual when I showed her how I went on and I use Excel to so much that she looked at me, I should say, Did I teach you that? Go back to the old way which we teach you. So we knew that we had to bridge that kind of generation?

Interviewer 20:35

You did answer the question and the next question after because the knowledge transfer, I was going to ask people to system to people and people to people. And how you said, now there's

there, you can always improve and make it you have a definite, you're definitely going in the right direction with these programs that you have developed here. And I think that that's fantastic.

Interviewer 22:30

Okay. I was going to ask you to tell me about the culture. Would you say that The company has a culture of learning?

Interviewee 22:45

I have some executives who are not telling me you have to bond the people them kind of kind of money you're spending on my people on this talent. We are actually known by our competitors, as a place where we develop people, so just quality talent, when I'm finished and I'm not lying our competitors come and they steal our people because they say we're well developed,

Interviewee 23:48

And that's the first thing I can tell you, that makes us different. We have a handsome budget for training and I'm always dreaming big. I mean, the theme this year for us is **Peak Everything!** people purpose fashion. And so I must say we have the budget to do we want to do differently this year, because we usually do this we do specific trainings, it is general trainings to go with the strategies. But what we want to Peak Everything, we want to reach out to some of what we call critical talent across the group and say to them, this year, we're peaking what certificate

courses would you like to go with and pay for them? But it must align with the company's strategic direction.

Interviewee 25:07

No, I was saying so for example, somebody in projects may want to do the PMP course. And they may not be able to afford it, we are reaching out to them this year to say, when you need it. So The company is willing to pay 50%. And if you pass it within the year, we will incentivize you by giving you back that 50% up. So, does it have a culture, **we have a culture of learning, everywhere we go.** That's the first thing people talk about, to the point where it gets even muddy sometimes if something is wrong, they said, well, they need training. Sometimes I get mad and say not everything is training guys, let's hold people accountable. Yes, we definitely have a culture of training, and we're always training. And we tell people at induction, you're going to feel like you're at school. We're always training always.

Interviewer 26:08

Okay. And when you talk about the theme, it's a theme for learning, peak everything?

Interviewee 26:20

No, if the theme every year The company has a strategic theme, and all units pull on that theme, all business lines or supports or whatever strategies I have to make for group learning a different mentality and change management. It must align to the fact that **this year we're peaking everything we're peaking people, we're peaking purpose, and we pick it passion.**

Interviewer 26:44

So groups and in terms of getting, do you have, um, I'm trying to, to understand, you know, cohesiveness and team spirit and how that works. **Would you describe the organization of as having unity of purpose in terms of people working together towards a common goal?**

Interviewee 27:07

Yes, yes. Yes. I would say definitely, yes. I mean, we every year, we ensure that we do something as it relates to building teamwork, building trust in the team. So this year, **last year, we looked at building great teams.** And **this is year we're looking at building trust in teams.** So yes, it definitely has cohesiveness we'll always have the teams doing things together. And what we do push it a little further by asking them to show us what you're doing in your team. And they were we rewarded. So we have team rewards.

Interviewer 27:54

Oh, excellent. Excellent. All right, I'm in the last segment. I'm going quickly. All right, tell me I'm going to look at data now, **do you use any kind of HR data analytics and HR metrics** that you use to make you know guide organizational decision on strategic decision anything like that?

Interviewee 30:16

Yeah, That is what we use for the learning needs is we do our own surveys.

Interviewer 30:31

Okay. Okay. So you do a canvas?

Interviewee 30:36

Yes, yeah. So we use surveys. So there, we do our own group learning and development surveys for the different people leaders, we send out surveys to the **Pro- millennial group**, because there's a group and we have a group **just for the ladies alone, "Totally Her"**. So the all women are caught in that in that group. And we asked them, what are your trading needs then we have a **group for the men "Rated-M?"** So the men also we do surveys for so we do we do gender base, and we do everybody. And we use the company survey for all team members. And there is a there, I think there are three questions that are asked about learning growth and learning development. And we use that to inform us as to what the team members are saying. So it's really surveys that we use you

Interviewee 31:57

It's awesome. I usually go sit into these totally these Rated-Ms discussions. And when we carry guys from outside one of the one of my favorite facilitators is Dr. Herbert Gail.

Interviewer 32:12

Oh, yes.

Interviewee 32:13

Oh, God, when we read her research talks to those men, how to not let the women in society marginalize you. When I listened to them, were brought in. I sat back and under law, yes, yes. Really good. I know, they have people WhatsApp groups where they talk to each other. So they

informed me last year, one of the big trade ins for the men was managing your money during the pandemic. So we carried a lot of widow care this guy from Mona School of Business. Very good. And he sat with them. And he'd tell them. "Alright how much money going home with, this is how you do it?" They don't manage that. So we wanted to see what issues really bother men different from what bother women. For the women, it was me mainly mental health. So we had whole a whole month of mental health activities for the women. And then by November when it was International Men's Day, we brought in the guys that we started doing mentor because they're not telling us but we use the opportunity to say you know, it's International Men's Day, and we want to use November to talk about your mental state. So it was really good. So we tried to do it that way. Hear from the people with we don't want a situation where we're, we're giving them training that they don't want

Interviewee 34:04

I will, last year, we had a training, you know, we invited executive women to talk about rumor has it and we had over 700 to 800 team members and online because we had the executives in the in the auditorium we set up a whole stage with them and everything. Yes. We invited Dana Beckford and had real-talk session about sex.

Interviewer 34:41

Very important topic, please and thanks.

Interviewer 35:20

Yes. Because if our employees are not Ok, then The company will not be okay.

Interviewer 35:24

Exactly what I was going to say and I really love the philosophy and the approach, and I think it's why it yields the kind of benefits that you are seeing.

Interviewee 35:38

Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer 35:40

Fantastic. Um, my last question: Are you seeing a need for a shifting or refocusing of what we're learning and how we're learning based on what's happening now? Digitally? Logically?

Interviewee 36:19

Yes. Yes. That's a very, very, very good question. And I like to give perspective, yes. Before the pandemic. We trainers are in training rooms, Mondays to Fridays, nine to five o'clock. Yes. And we thought it was the best thing we were doing until the pandemic came. And we recognize Okay, we're going to go on and we tried online with the team members before we recognized they we're not ready for it. Yeah, yeah. But the pandemic forced us to embrace the digital. Yeah. And when we did that, it also forced us to, to **change our mindset about how we learn**. And our team members, this what I called micro learning, absolutely great. Micro learning.

So we do our train is not online, the maximum, two and a half hours. Gonne start complaining until either people come on, we need to stop because we've been on this too long now. Micro learning. So yes, we see that there is a need for a shift. Are we there? A lot of the persons are not there. And people tend to say that oh, but Millennials like digital world? Yeah, the digital world because they when they're when you put them in the digital world, they're multitasking doing something else. Because to make sure that there is benefit, we also have to hold them accountable. So the good thing about the digital world is that we have cameras, and when we put them on the cameras, we keep them focused. But after two hours, the learning loss begins at that point and there is research to support it.

Interviewee 38:13

There you go, there you go. So but we get they the best nuggets in within two hours, you know, and what is missing, though, there are definitely some skills that cannot be done online, right? I can't tell my tellers to be the best tellers by sitting online my tellers after coming to my training room, like last week, we had them in training and hands on, we do a lot of role plays, we took kind of downstairs to frighten the bejesus out of them because they thought we were just going to carry a simple face to somebody in HR this and when they realize it was a real-world simulation is still needed, so face to face training still has its place.

Interviewee 39:04

This is the same thing we do for client experience because we invite clients to come inside the trading room and give a real-world experience of what clients really need when they come into the bank. So there are some things we have to do face to face and bring them in and then there

are some people we have to also look at it from the people's perspective there's some people who just can't go online, so we have been doing hybrid.

Interviewer 39:53

That hybrid system.

Interviewee 39:55

Yeah, and I personally think this side of the world is not ready for full online. Even the millennials, even the millennials, you know, they want the face to face. And it's not just the face to face to have me stand up there. They want the people interaction they want to sit and talk

Interviewer 40:15

Interviewee 40:29

Yesterday we said goodbye to a cohort of tellers. I don't mean that if I remember at two o'clock Samika said the trainer said to them, guys, you can leave in this room, I was just chilling and chatting. And they made or what they said no, you know, so you must call me the people they miss that.

Interviewee 40:56

We need the people touch. They love the people. So yeah, we do hybrid, we do hybrid, because there are some sessions that we can just say, Guys, come on. Come online and turn on the cameras. Two hours of this. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer 41:12

Would you say then, that a part of The company's competitive edge why it does so well in the market is because of the people and the learning that has taken place?

Interviewee 42:11

Definitely, definitely. We value learning and development at The company. And one of the things that been mentioned that we do is, as part of our learning and development is that we do cross training. And we cross training is not is not an optional, optional activity. So if someone wants to cross train, just send us the application and we will make it happen. So we have seen so many successes coming out of cross training, we People are not just looking at work these days, but they come into a big The company there are opportunities. So you start off as a teller or somebody at the front desk. And you say, listen to me, I want to get into investment. Cross training helps that you sit with somebody and you learn when the position comes out, you get the opportunity to apply for it. So I'm definitely I strongly believe what we do in group learning and development. And we attach talent management to that because we manage the talents. Notice, yeah, talent we are proactive when it comes that. We literally have somebody at a talent management officer were manage, who's to look across the group, she sits with the execs, she tries to find out what are the critical roles? Who are the people we cannot afford to lose? What is them stay at The company? She sits with them. They do what we call the McQuaig test. It's all psychological. Yeah. We see where they are with leadership where the gaps fall, and we train them up. We bring them up and I think other companies sometimes try to poach our talent, with the offer of bigger salaries; but often times employees choose to stay with us because of our awesome work culture.

Interviewee 44:55

Like I say we work hard, but we play hard and that is so true.

Interviewee 47:08

I can invite you to one of the "Totally Her"

Interviewer 47:11

Fantastic!

Interviewee 47:12

And one of the "Rated-Ms" and I can also invite to one of the pro-Mill sessions, and probably you can talk to the millennials.

Interviewer 47:23

Yes, that would be great. That would be fantastic.

Interviewee 47:28

Before I forget, though, I don't know if anybody mentioned the fact that I think The company is probably one of the only companies that I know, that has a team engagement unit in HR. **They come up with ways** to engage a team. So they work closely with me in L&D they will come to me and say all right, guys, we want to do a talk on let's say this month we focusing on autism. So let's bring the focus on autism. Let's do some short sessions and we look for people outside to come and talk to us. The team engagement unit works closely with the L&D unit but they are the

ones also putting on all the parties to keep the staff up-beat. I mean, we never stopped partying during the pandemic because we were doing online parties at 2:00pm during the day we'd hear that we should stop working engagement team is coming with a party and they have well-known entertainers and artists ready to perform.

Interviewer 48:32

At 2 pm in the afternoon?

Interviewee 48:34

Yes, 2pm. But you energize it when you're finished the party it lasts for like two hours and you sit at your desk listening music while you work and in no time it's 8 PM. Productivity is at its highest even in the on-line environment.

Interviewer 48:47

So cool, because it's a productive worker, is a productive worker.

Interviewee 48:56

Indeed. Indeed. That team I need to mention them because they work very closely with the team members I mean even last year where we redefined the culture as a People first culture the they did they had an initiative where team members were asked to **identify somebody in your unit who you think lives the people first culture** and that persons would be recognized; Somebody wrote in and asked that a particular employee with a disability who has a great attitude be recognized; and that persons was gifted a motor car.

Interviewer 49:43

Fantastic

Interviewee 49:45

I have to mention that team they're always, seeking to engage the people and it positively affects talent retention.

Interviewee 50:13

At The company, the people are what makes The company. Everything we do, we have to do to the people in mind. Every time he ends something, that's what he says it says he always says at The company...other companies he says usually start and says other companies want to be one they want to be Employer of Choice. And The company wants to build team member of choice.

Interviewer 50:49

Wow.

Interviewee 50:49

We want The company to be the place where team members want to come.

Interviewer 50:53

Next to people yes, it is a great way to end these as happy and grateful that you took the time and I kept it within the, are appreciating everything goes well with your activities today.

Interviewer 52:10

Thanks so much and goodbye