UNDERSTANDING THE "WHAT" AND THE "HOW" OF DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS IN GLOBAL ORGANIZATIONS: AN INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY OF A FIRST-LEVEL LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN A LARGE GLOBAL ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

This instrumental case study sought to provide an insight into the "what" and the "how" of the development of future leaders in global organizations. The study explored the experience of participants of a first-level leader development program in a large global organization. The outcomes and the process of leadership development were conceptualized through the lens of Transformative Learning theory and Adult Learning theory (Andragogy). Data analysis consisted of triangulation of data from multiple data sources including individual participant interviews, a focus group interview, interviews with the regional and global program managers, analysis of journal notes from direct observation, and a review of the program and external documentation. The findings indicate that leadership development programs can facilitate transformative experiences for participants leading to an expanded leadership capacity that is demonstrated in individual and in organizational contexts. The findings also suggest that the transformative process involves mutual learning, includes elements of challenge, occurs in a safe environment, allows the participants to practice behaviors in real time, and includes different modes of reflection. The program elements that enable the transformative process include a focus on deep learning, self-directed learning, learning environment that supports relationship building and trust, a cohort format that supports mutual learning, and relevant learning content. In addition to the andragogical assumptions, relational learning was found to be a key variable for the transformative process. The study also provided insight into the global implications for leadership development, suggesting that there is no difference in the outcomes and the learning process globally, but affirming the role of cultural context as a factor of learning.

Key words: leadership in global organizations, complexity, leadership development, transformation, transformative learning theory, adult learning, andragogy

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There is a Chinese proverb that states that “a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step”. When I took the first step in this journey, I could not have imagined taking this final step toward my doctoral degree. The whole process was truly a journey, during which I often had to remind myself to just take one step at a time and trust the process. I am grateful for all the lessons learned on this journey and for all the people who supported and encouraged me when doubt would creep in. I am passionate about the topic that I selected for my study and I am thankful I had the opportunity to conduct this research. I enjoyed every part of the research process and I am especially thankful to all the participants who so graciously shared their experiences with me. I am also grateful to those who could see the value in this research and opened the door for me to conduct the study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Globalization is an undeniable force that had an impact on many organizations and their operations around the world. The Levine Institute, a graduate institute of international relations at State University of New York, defines globalization as

> … a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process has effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical well-being in societies around the world. (Globalization 101, n.d.)

The complex and ambiguous nature of the environment in which global organizations operate warrants new approaches to business practices that are defined by greater flexibility, a higher level of collaboration, and less institutionalization (Kostova, Athanassiou & Berdrow, 2004). As a result, globalization has had a significant impact on the human resources (HR) and leadership development (LD) practices of organizations, particularly those with global operations since their operational success often depends on their ability to adapt their leadership practices to a variety of contextual factors, from national and cultural, to organizational and individual (Jeong, Lim & Park, 2017). Global organizations are not only focused on developing individual leaders, but also on expanding their broader leadership *capacity* because they understand that greater diversity at all levels of the organization is key to achieving superior performance in the modern era (Den Hartog, 2004). In global organizations effective leadership is subject to both convergent (universal) and divergent (culturally specific) aspects of leadership, as well as other contextual and organizational factors (Gentry & Sparks, 2011; Jeong et. al, 2017). This level of complexity in global organizations creates a need for leadership development initiatives that can

prepare future leaders to effectively navigate organizational challenges that come with global operations.

Over the past ten years, the number of online references relating to global leadership has quadrupled, while those associated with global leadership assessment has risen from below 100 to over 11,000 (Bird and Stevens, 2018). This growth suggests that there is an increasing need to understand, develop, and assess the type of leadership capacity that global organizations need in order to effectively navigate the global environment. The same theme emerged in academic research and it is reflected in the countless studies that have been done with the intent to identify leadership frameworks that can pinpoint the skills, traits, mindsets or behaviors associated with effective leadership in global contexts (Jeong et. al, 2017; Kim & McLean, 2015; Park, Jeong, Jang, Yoon, & Lim, 2017).

Scholars argued that leadership in global contexts is multi-faceted and highly contingent on the degree of complexity, information flow, and physical boundaries that define the context (Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, & Osland, 2012). It is also dependent on the type of leaders' roles that vary greatly depending on the levels of task and relationship complexity that define the roles (Mendenhall & Reiche, 2018). Gentry and Sparks (2011) pointed out that it is imperative that global organizations understand the types of universal competencies that leaders at different organizational levels need to possess, as these will determine the effectiveness of their leadership development initiatives. It could be argued that this is especially true for leadership development initiatives that are global in scope, but have standardized design, process, and goals. This presents a challenge as well as an opportunity to define the concept of "leadership in global organizations," especially for leaders early in their careers.

Industry research suggests that early-career leadership development is essential for global organizations because leadership effectiveness is positively correlated with the early identification and development of future leaders (Institute for Corporate Productivity [i4cp], 2015). A sound talent pipeline has been identified as the most desirable component of talent development strategy in global organizations (Association for Talent Development [ATD], 2015). Nonetheless, many global organizations do not achieve this objective successfully, since only third of organizations surveyed for the 2018 Global Leadership Forecast study reported that they have an effective leadership strategy (DDI, The Conference Board & EYGM Limited, 2018).

What are the implications for the state of practice in leadership development? As the leadership development manager of Schlumberger, the world's largest oilfield services company Janice Hyslip stated: "to develop leaders, companies want to build adaptability, tolerance for ambiguity, and the ability to work with diverse people. There is nothing that replaces early exposure to help individuals develop those traits" (as cited in Developing Global-Minded Leaders to Drive High Performance, Institute for Corporate Productivity [i4cp], 2015). Hyslip proposes some of the necessary foundational competencies of future leaders and she suggests that these traits or skills can be developed through intentional exposure to developmental activities and experiences. Many global organizations have recognized- and responded to- the need to develop their leadership capacity with various global leadership program approaches, from online, to classroom-based programs, initiatives centered around developmental relationship learning (e.g. networking, coaching or mentoring), or experiential programs (e.g. international business travel, international assignments, international service learning). Other novel methods have been used by organizations and academic institutions with the goal to

challenge the participants and expand their perspectives and worldviews (Oddou & Mendenhall, 2018).

While global organizations clearly understand the benefits of having a strong leadership pipeline, the complexity of the environment in which global organizations operate presents a challenge. According to the "Building a Talent Development Structure Without Borders" study, the top three challenges facing global organizations include: (1) A need for an innovative workforce, (2) more flexible organizations to adapt to the rapidly changing world, and (3) changes in the skills needed to be successful in the workplace of tomorrow (ATD, 2015, p. 13). These top three challenges have implications for talent development in global organizations, including early-career leadership development programs.

Problem Statement

As described above, in today's global society, organizations are looking for leaders who can effectively perform in complex global business environments; (Development Dimensions International [DDI] & The Conference Board, 2014; Mendenhall, Weber, Arnardottir & Oddou, 2017; University of North Carolina [UNC] Executive Development & Human Capital Institute, 2015). Development of future leaders was ranked as one of the most important "gaps" identified by human resource (HR) leaders in a 2010 IBM study that included data from more than 700 chief HR executives globally (IBM CHRO, 2010). Research continues to show that organizations with a strong leadership pipeline achieve superior performance outcomes as compared to their peers (DDI, 2014; DDI, The Conference Board & EYGM Limited, 2018; McCormick, 2017). Often overlooked, first-level leaders are "likely to have the most profound impact on their teams' engagement and productivity" (DDI, 2018, p. 7). The 2015 Institute for Corporate Productivity [i4cp] Global Leadership Development Study identified early-career leadership development as

one of the top practices associated with superior organizational performance (i4cp & AMA Global, 2015).

Modern organizations face unique challenges that stem from increasing levels of complexity, volatility, and uncertainty, which warrant novel approaches to leadership (IBM CEO, 2010). This has consequences for organizational learning and leadership development (Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013). In addition, due to the ever-increasing diversity of the workforce, managing and leveraging diversity has become central to organizations' competitiveness (Büyükbalcı, Bal, Ertemsir, &Turan, 2014). In response to the changing global market conditions, organizations are looking to leadership development programs to address their global leadership gaps (UNC Executive Development, 2015).

The inherent complexity of global organizations has implications for their talent management practices (Mitchell, Bolling, Phang, & Schott, n.d.; Homer, 2016; McDonnell, Lamare, Gunnigle, & Lavelle, 2010; Newhall, 2012). As stated above, developing a strong leadership pipeline is one of the top challenges facing global organizations, however it is highly contingent on effective leadership development strategy (DDI, 2014; DDI, 2018; i4cp, 2015; UNC Executive Development, 2015). The 2014/2015 DDI "Global Leadership Forecast" study found that while attracting external candidates to increase leadership capacity within organizations can at times have specific benefits, internally-focused staffing strategy that favors leadership development and promotions from within yields overall superior outcomes for organizations.

Recent research shows that many global organizations continue to struggle to achieve desired results through their leadership development initiatives (DDI, 2014; i4cp, 2015; UNC Executive Development, 2017). Scholars argue that the lack of effectiveness of leadership

programs in global organizations often stems from haphazard identification of critical competencies, poor understanding of the process of how leaders develop, along with inadequate program design (Mendenhall et al., 2017). Dungan (2011) argued that leadership development is not a simple process, and today's leadership development curricula should reflect the increasing complexity of the leadership construct. Mendenhall et al. (2017) argued that "to date, global leadership development programs have been descriptive and prescriptive in nature, but they have not specifically delineated theoretical relationships amenable to empirical testing" (p. 140). Osland and Bird (2018) pointed out that while several theoretical models for developing future global leaders exist, there is a need for additional research to better understand the factors that influence development.

Therefore, the problem is that there is a lack of understanding of the foundational leadership capacity that is needed by future leaders in global organizations ("the what"). There is also a lack of evidence about how the process of leadership development occurs ("the how"). This has negative implications for the efficacy of leadership development programs. It limits organizations in designing and implementing leadership development programs that are effective in delivering the necessary developmental outcomes for navigating today's complex global environments, thus failing to address the needs of program participants and organizations. Modern organizations need to develop future leaders who will be able to navigate the increasing complexities of the global environment, and this creates a necessity for deeper understanding of the leadership construct and the program design elements that would be more effective than others in developing future leaders in global organizations. Thus, greater understanding of the rapidly changing dynamics of the global environment, their impact on the leadership paradigm,

and the implications for the design and process of leadership development in global organizations is needed.

Significance of the Research Problem

Research that addresses the "what" and the "how" of the development of future leaders in global organizations is significant from both the theoretical and the practical perspectives. Complexities surrounding human resource management in global contexts are here to stay. It is important to utilize new lenses to develop greater understanding of how organizations and their agents can effectively navigate these complexities (Tung, 2016). Global organizations are inherently complex, and they are faced with an increasing need for organizational leaders who can act as boundary spanners and who can successfully "integrate activities across multiple cultural, institutional and organizational contexts" (Schotter, Mudambi, Doz, & Gaur, 2017, p. 404). Leadership development programs need to facilitate the types of developmental shifts that more closely address the needs of modern global organizations (Holt & Seki, 2012). A 2015 study conducted by University of North Carolina (UNC) and Human Capital Institute (HCI) found that 63% percent of surveyed global and not-yet-global organizations feel there is an urgent need for globally-competent leaders, while 92% of respondents indicated that they believed that this can be achieved through leadership development initiatives and experience (UNC Executive Development & Human Capital Institute, 2015). However, the results of research measuring efficacy of formal development efforts are mixed (McCormick, 2017).

The "what" of developing future leaders in global organizations. The global business environment is often described by the acronym VUCA, which stands for volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. The acronym was first used by the American military and has been adopted to define the conditions of today's tumultuous business environment (UNC Executive

Development, 2013). Organizations with a higher number of leaders who are VUCA-capable are 3.5 times more likely to be prepared to navigate future challenges (DDI, 2014). Scholars posit that the increasing complexity and global interconnectedness of today's business environment has led to a convergence of the concepts of leadership and global leadership (Holt & Seki, 2012). "As we live in a globalized world, perhaps all leadership is now global leadership" (Darling, 2012, p.189). The definition of what constitutes a "global leader" has expanded beyond the type of professional who works in an apparent international capacity (Holt & Seki, 2012). In global leadership literature, global leaders and managers have been primarily defined as those individuals who operate in international and multicultural contexts (Park et al., 2017). Some scholars argue that global leadership differs from domestic leadership in *degree* and in *kind*, both differentiators related to culturally diverse contexts (Mendenhall, 2018). However, other scholars argue that it is the increased complexity that differentiates leadership in global environments from general leadership, rather than any multicultural element (Inceoglu & Bartram, 2012; Darling, 2012). Regardless of which side of the epistemological debate about what constitutes global leadership one takes, the literature suggests that leadership in global organizations is highly contextual and complex and may not be easily defined by any single definition of global leadership. Guided by this argument, in order to arrive at a holistic understanding and offer academic and practical implications, leadership in global organizations should be informed by both – general contemporary leadership theories that address complexity in modern organizations, as well as the global leadership construct.

General leadership theories have been subject to considerable development and research in recent years. This development has occurred in response to varying social, political and cultural shifts over time (Grint, 2011). However, these new perspectives have not been fully

reflected in global leadership theory (Bird & Mendenhall, 2015). Research utilizing general leadership theories increasingly converges multiple theories in order to develop a more holistic view of leadership. This development is driven by the need to consider an ever-growing number of independent variables influencing the leadership process (Yukl, 2013). It also creates a new ontological perspective about leadership, which focuses on the process of leadership rather than on individual leaders (Sergi, Denis, & Langley, 2017). Ronning, Espedal, and Jordahl (2014) argued that this perspective is especially useful in the context of global leadership because of the important role of the context and the complexity that define global organizations. In general, researchers who are adopting this new ontology about leadership tend to view leadership holistically and utilize a systems perspective (Mendenhall, 2018). Darling (2012) suggested that, "…globalization is the most compelling current manifestation of a complex social system and … complex system theory is particularly relevant to, and illuminating of, leadership in the context of globalization" (p. 191).

Considering the theoretical developments, as well as the argument that global organizations are complex systems, the research study incorporated emerging leadership theories with special focus on complexity leadership theory, as well as the global leadership construct to inform the understanding of leadership in global organizations and of the foundational leadership capacity necessary for future leaders in global organizations. The application of contemporary leadership theory enriches the understanding of leadership in global organizations and advances the global leadership construct. Identifying developmental outcomes in the context of contemporary leadership theories and the global leadership construct also enhances the practical implications of the research project. As Gentry and Sparks (2011) pointed out: "…with different leadership development initiatives existing … knowing what leadership competencies are

important in organizations is imperative so that the right competencies can be developed during these developmental initiatives" (p. 16).

Moreover, applying a contemporary theoretical leadership perspective to global leadership research creates an additional bridge between the scholarly and practical realms of leadership development.

The "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. To date there has been a lack of consensus among scholars about the type of leadership competencies needed to navigate global contexts, and about the process of how leaders develop (Park, et al., 2017). Even though researchers have identified leadership competencies that can be acquired through developmental activities, there is still a shortage of research about how global talent development systems and programs can effectively develop these competencies (Tarique & Weisbord, 2018). Many leadership and global leadership scholars agree that transformational process is central to the development of today's leaders, however, there is continuous debate among these scholars about how the process of transformation occurs (Ciporen, 2010; Fisher-Yoshida, Geller & Wasserman, 2005; Geller, 2009; Johnson, 2008; Mendenhall et al., 2017; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013). This disparity in scholarly research translates into practical implications. In 2015 only 33% of global, international and national organizations reported high levels of effectiveness in developing globally-capable leaders (i4cp, 2015). Since then the situation has not improved. In 2018 less than one third of global HR professionals reported that their company had an effective leadership strategy (DDI, 2018).

Moreover, historically there has been lack of knowledge-sharing between global talent management and leadership scholars and practitioners (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016; Tarique & Weisbord; 2018). Gaining empirical evidence about how leadership programs foster

development has the potential to incent more future cooperation between scholars and leadership practitioners and provide practical implications for improving leadership development strategy for global organizations. According to Tarique and Schuler (2018),

> Collaboration between (global talent management) GTM scholars and industry experts would enhance the relevance, generalizability, validity, and applicability of GTM research. Leadership development research drawn from shared knowledge and expertise of academics and non-academics would facilitate the work of both. (p. 220)

Scholars further argue that for leadership programs to achieve the utmost effectiveness, various program design elements should be intentionally aligned with the desired developmental outcomes (Simmonds & Tsui, 2010). Gaining a deeper understanding of developmental outcomes in relation to program design grounded in adult learning and transformative learning theories provided valuable insights that can warrant specific actions and improve efficacy of leadership programs in global organizations, thus offering potentially significant implications for HRD and OL managers, leadership development consultants, and other organizational leadership professionals seeking to increase the success of their leadership programs.

While the initial goal of the research project was to gain understanding rather than perform evaluation, some interpretations may be evaluative in nature and thus may provide valuable information to the participating organization about the program's efficacy. This research also intended to contribute to the scholarly conversation about the applicability of andragogical assumptions in HRD, and the utility of TL as a framework for understanding development that is defined by deeper learning, and is essential for effective leadership in complex, diverse environments (Geller, 2009; Johnson, 2008; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2014; Kwon & Nicolaides, 2017).

Methodology

The problem of practice lends itself to a single-case instrumental case study that seeks to understand the phenomenon of developing future leaders in global organizations by exploring the developmental outcomes and the various program elements of a first-level leader development program in a large global organization. The research project focused on investigating a problem of practice that is bound by a specific context (first-level leader development program in a large global organization). The unit of analysis was the program itself with the phenomenon under investigation being the development of future leaders in global organizations. Thus, case study methodology allowed for in-depth, real-world investigation of a phenomenon that occurs in a bounded context (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Most researchers view case study from either a post-positivist or constructivist paradigm as it seeks to gain in-depth understanding of complex real-life phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick & Robertson, 2013; Baharein & Noor, 2008; Yazan, 2015). For the purposes of the study, the researcher adopted the rationalist-constructivist view, positing that the goal of research is not to discover, but rather to gain clarification and a more sophisticated understanding of reality (Stake, 2005). While case study research may not produce generalizations, it does produce rich data that helps refine and modify existing generalizations, and thus offers valuable implications for research and practice (Stake, 2005).

Case study methodology is often fitting when research is focused on “why” or “how” specific social phenomenon works. It allows the researcher to carry out a contextual analysis of specifically bounded events, behaviors or conditions and the relationships between them (Yin, 2013). In an instrumental case study, the focus of research is the phenomenon rather than the case itself (Stake, 2005). Case study is a multimethod, or triangulated research methodology that

enables the researcher to explore a phenomenon within its context using multiple data sources. Triangulation is central to case study as it supports the validity of data (Tellis, 1997), and can be used to identify convergence as well as divergence of findings (Boblin, et al., 2013). According to Creswell (2013),

> In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence. Typically, this process involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective. When qualitative researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data, they are triangulating information and providing validity into their findings (p. 251).

For the research study, the data collection consisted of

- semi-structured interviews with program participants;
- focus group interview;
- interviews with a regional program manager and the global program manager;
- analysis of journal notes from direct observation;
- review of program documentation; and
- review of external documentation.

Positionality

Life experiences and encounters affect one's thought processes and perceptions. Positionality is complex and fluid; it is influenced by several dimensions such as one's demographic positioning within society, one's ideological positioning, and one's discursive positioning of the other (Briscoe, 2005).

Scholar-practitioners take first-hand experience with a problem of practice and they utilize scholarly research to establish grounds for meaningful change. The researcher's "practitioner" role is not purely attached to the professional domain, although it does include interactions within organizational and professional settings. The challenge for the scholar-practitioner is to use his or her professional (and personal) experiences as a practical framework, draw on the experiences that provide valuable perspectives, yet not let them create biases that could limit the room for inquiry and exploration of ideas and therefore hinder his or her scholarly research. According to Machi and McEvoy (2012), "These preconceptions, personal attachments, and points of view present both strengths and weaknesses for the research effort" (p. 18).

The motivation for the research was in part fueled by the researcher's positionality. The passion about developing a deeper understanding of leadership in global contexts, and of the leadership development process, was heavily shaped by the researcher's identity, personal background, and educational and professional experiences. However, these factors may also create potential biases that can adversely impact the research process and outcomes. These potential biases and their potential impact on the research project are explored and discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

Theoretical Framework

The study utilized a conceptual framework informed by Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy) (Knowles, 1970, 1980, 1984) and Transformative Learning (TL) theory (Mezirow, 1991) to guide the research. The two theories have been selected because they are complementary and they provide valuable implications for understanding the process of leadership development. Human resource development (HRD) scholars have suggested that there is no one unified theory of adult learning, and they have called for a diversified and global

understanding of adult learning (Johansen & McLean, 2006; McLean, 2006). The goal of this research project was to utilize existing theoretical assumptions about adult learning and transformative learning within the context of leadership development to gain a deeper understanding of their applicability in improving program design and learning outcomes. Additionally, the study offered insights into existing theoretical assumptions, and expanded and advanced the understanding of these assumptions.

Adult education. Adult education as a field of practice was established in 1926 (Knowles, 1978; Merriam, 2001). The first research was conducted by Thorndike, Bregman, Tilton, and Woodyard in 1928 and it examined adults' ability to learn (Merriam, 2001). Adult learning has roots in psychotherapy, developmental psychology, sociology, social psychology, and education (Knowles, 1978). The term "andragogy" was originally conceptualized to differentiate adult learning from youth learning – pedagogy (Knowles, 1978). The concept originated in Europe, with the term first being used by Alexander Kapp in 1833 (Knowles, 1978; Rachal, 2002). Kapp's (1833) interpretation of andragogy was concerned with providing justification for adult learning, rather than focusing on understanding of how adults learn (Loeng, 2017). The best-known modern interpreter and theorist of andragogy is Malcolm Knowles, who was first introduced to the concept in a conversation with Yugoslavian adult educator Dusan Savicevic (1967.) He presented his interpretation of the theory in his 1968 article "Andragogy, Not Pedagogy" (Knowles, 1978; Rachal, 2002). Unlike the pedagogical model that emphasizes content, the andragogical model of learning is focused on *process* rather than content (Meriam, 2014).

Knowles (1989) considered andragogy to be a model of assumptions about adult learning rather than a learning theory. He described his key assumptions about andragogy as follows: (1)

learning is self-directed, (2) it draws on previous life experiences and is predominantly experiential, (3) learning need (and developmental readiness) is driven by one's need to continuously adapt to new real-life dynamics and the problems that one encounters, (4) learning is self-motivated and driven by one's goal of developing increased competence and performance (Knowles, 1970, 1980). In later publications, Knowles (1984) added two additional assumptions: (5) adult learning is driven by internal motivation, and (6) adults need to know the "why" behind their learning (Merriam, 2014). These assumptions have implications for the design, the learning climate, and the overall process of adult learning, as well as the evaluation of learning outcomes (Knowles, 1970; 1980). In the literature andragogy has been identified as a code, a set of strategies, tools and techniques, as well as a unified theory of adult learning. Despite some criticism, andragogy has survived and evolved since its conceptualization by Knowles (Henschke, 2015).

Applicability of Andragogy in human resource development (HRD) has been critiqued by some who claim that it is based on a limited worldview (McLean, 2006). However, Knowles (2005) argued that adult learning is an integral part of HRD and performance improvement in organizations. Adult learning is part of both - Adult Education (AE) and Human Resource Development (HRD) - with the difference between the two stemming from the goal of learning, either individual or organizational (Knowles, 2005). According to Knowles (2005), "it is the responsibility of HRD to focus on organizational goals as well as individual goals" (p. 182). Based on the key andragogical assumptions, the following elements influence the learning (transformative) process (Knowles, 2005; Merriam & Bierema, 2014):

- learner's self-concept (self-directed, participatory, collaborative);
- previous experience (existing mental models/schemas, positionality, etc.);

- developmental readiness (developmental stage/social role);
- practical and immediate implications (problem-centered);
- level of intrinsic motivation/self-actualization;
- awareness of the learning gap and learning expectations ("need to know").

Transformative learning. Transformative learning (TL) theory was selected as the second framework to inform the conceptual framework of leadership development in global organizations. The concept of transformative learning was originally introduced by Jack Mezirow (1991). Mezirow's presentation of TL has its roots in adult learning theory while drawing on a wide array of other disciplines such as developmental and cognitive psychology or philosophy (Dirkx, 1998; Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Originally considered a process that is solely based on cognitive and rational processes and focused solely on the individual and one that lacks aspects of social transformation, the construct has evolved integrating cognitive, affective, and relational aspects, with focus on both individual and social units of analysis (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Tisdell, 2012; Cranton, 2016). In organizational contexts, scholars argue that TL can enable organizations to better navigate complexities that define modern global workplaces (Watkins, Marsick, & Faller, 2012).

TL focuses on deeper learning that leads to an expanded "way of knowing" (epistemology) and "way of being" (ontology), the type of development that is necessary for leaders to handle new phenomena and navigate complex and culturally diverse environments (Geller, 2009; Johnson, 2008; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2014; Kwon & Nicolaides, 2017). TL has been called "the new andragogy," providing a lens for understanding the process of learning (Merriam, 2009). Dirkx (1998) pointed out that Mezirow's characteristic of transformative learning represents the core of adult development, since it defines learning outcomes that occur

as a shift in perspective. “The outcome of transformative learning reflects individuals who are more inclusive in their perceptions of their world, able to differentiate increasingly its various aspects, open to other points of view, and able to integrate differing dimensions of their experiences into meaningful and holistic relationships” (p. 4, Dirkx, 1998). Scholars have argued that leadership development programs that incorporate transformative learning have positive individual and organizational impact (Henderson, 2002; Fisher-Yoshida, Geller & Wasserman, 2005, Watkins et al., 2012).

For the research study, andragogical assumptions served as *moderating variables* for the development process, while transformational learning theory being used as a *conceptual metaphor* (Howie & Bagnall, 2013) for the process of leadership development (see Appendix). A detailed literature review of the leadership construct was conducted to identify the “way of knowing” and “way of being” associated with leadership competence needed for first-level leaders in global organizations, which was then explored in relation to the leadership development process and program design elements.

The conceptual framework informed by Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy) and Transformative Learning (TL) helped shape the study’s data collection and interpretation of findings, serving as a specific lens through which the construct of leadership development in global organizations was viewed. Figure 1 provides a high-level depiction of the conceptual framework. A more detailed illustration of the theoretical framework is provided in the Appendix A.

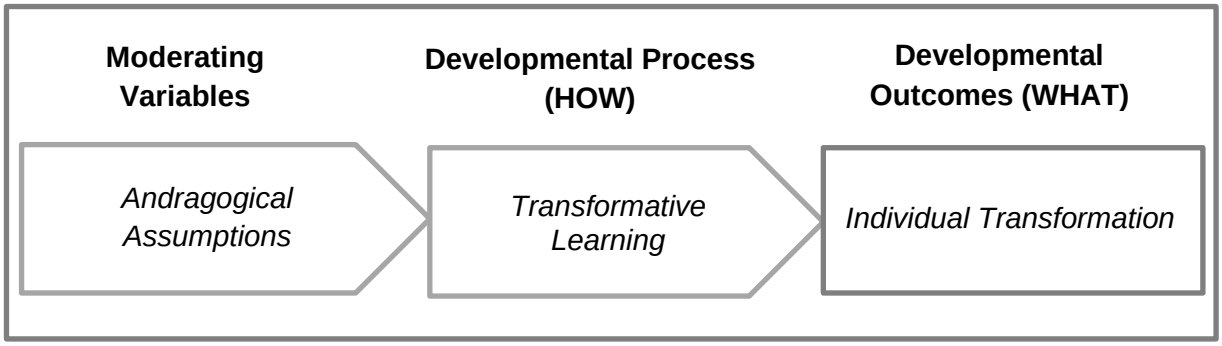


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework of leadership development process in global organizations through the lens of Adult Learning (Andragogy) and Transformative Learning (TL). The figure illustrates how the two theories are utilized as part of the conceptual framework.

Research Questions.

The study explored the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in large global organizations through the lens of adult learning and transformative learning theories. The conceptual framework and the primary research *issues* (Stake, 2005) guided the following central research question and the accompanying sub-questions:

What is the transformative experience of participants of future leader development programs in global organizations?

Sub-questions:

- What kind of individual transformation occurs as a result of future leader development programs in large global organizations?
- How does individual transformation occur?

As discussed in this chapter, the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations were informed by specific concepts that define the context and the conceptual framework for the study. In order to present a holistic understanding of the research problem, the following chapter provides a detailed literature review of these key concepts. The

literature review includes an overview of the existing state of research on the topic and demonstrates how existing empirical knowledge informed the research project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

With the increasing complexity of modern global organizations, there has been a growing need to understand the changing conditions impacting the leadership phenomenon and the process of developing future leaders who will be able to effectively navigate complex global environments. In their article Developing Leadership in Global and Multi-National Organizations, Prewitt, Weil, and McClure (2011) concluded that:

> Individuals working in twenty-first century global organizations must be innovative and creative, practice continuous learning, have values that especially include integrity, have a personal vision, be in charge of their own careers, motivate from within, plan, communicate, and seek harmonious relationships with stakeholders. (p. 19)

This statement underpins the research problem under study as it implies that there is a certain benchmark for the required mindset of those individuals who want to effectively engage in the leadership process in global organizations. The literature review explored those elements that have implications for understanding leadership in modern global organizations and the development process that leads to expanded leadership capacity needed by future leaders in global organizations.

Recent studies reflect the evolution of the leadership construct and show that in modern organizations the term “leader” applies to a broader audience than just upper-level management and C-suite-level executives (All Around Leadership, 2013), and that first-level leaders have a significant impact on organizational performance (DDI, 2018). Other studies show that development efforts geared toward first-level leaders and individual contributors tend to have greatest positive impact on leadership development in global organizations (i4cp, 2015).

However, the concept of *leadership at all levels* creates ambiguity about the subtle differences between leadership and management that have implications for how organizations structure their leadership development initiatives (Gundling, Hogan, Cvitkovich, & Aperian Global, 2011). Moreover, in global organizations there are additional contextual factors that add an extra layer of complexity that impacts the leadership process (Inceoglu & Bartram, 2012). Based on the state of theory and practice described in the problem and significance statements, the literature review explored the leadership construct in global organizations from a holistic perspective by investigating literature on the global leadership construct, general contemporary leadership theories, and complexity leadership. This holistic review of literature informed the understanding of leadership in global organizations and it offered a fundamental understanding of the type of leadership capacity that future leaders need to possess in order to successfully navigate complex global environments.

Sixty percent of large employers now view global leadership development as highly important (Institute for Corporate Productivity [i4cp], 2014). However, research suggests that the effectiveness of leadership programs in global organizations remains low, and not all learning methods are equal in their outcomes (Institute for Corporate Productivity [i4cp], 2015; Smith, Caver, Saslow, & Thomas, 2009.). Reflecting this part of the research problem, the second part of the literature review explored the process of developing future leaders in global organizations and provided an overview of existing leadership development models applicable to global contexts. This section also reviewed literature on transformative learning and adult learning - the two theories that underpinned the conceptual framework of the research study – and on how the constructs have been applied within the context of leadership development and organizational learning.

The state of practice described above warranted opportunity for research about the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. The lack of understanding of the necessary foundational leadership capacity in global organizations has direct practical implications for both individuals and organizations. It leads to ambiguity and confusion, which translates into the lack of effectiveness of global leadership development efforts (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013). In addition, as Dungan (2011) pointed out, "(leadership development) curriculum must … demonstrate increasing levels of complexity that mirrors students' shifting understandings of leadership" (p. 81). Undoubtedly, this statement applies to leadership development in global organizations. Thus, an understanding of the design, the curriculum and the process, i.e. the "how" of leadership development, is needed. It is within this context that this literature review was conducted in order to gain a deeper understanding of the existing state of research on the subject.

The term *global* has been used broadly in literature to describe organizations that operate in different global contexts. The 2015 UNC Leadership Survey offered the following descriptions to differentiate between these various types of organizations:

- An international organization has no foreign investments, but sells products and services in multiple countries.
- A multinational organizations has investment in other countries, but does not have coordinated products and services offerings in each country.
- A global organization has investments in many countries, but maintains headquarters in one primary, "home" country and homogenizes services across markets.

- A transnational organization has investments in foreign operations with a central corporate facility, but gives decision-making, R&D, and marketing powers to each foreign market (UNC Executive Development, 2015, p. 4).

While the participating organization meets the definition of a global organization as described above, for the purposes of the literature review, the term *global* is used in its broader context, and the review examined literature that addressed various organizational environments that are impacted by global complexity. To summarize, the literature review is comprised of two main sections. The first section reviews literature on the leadership constructs that inform the "what" of leadership in global organizations and the foundational leadership competency needed for future leaders in global organizations. This section includes the following related topics: the global leadership construct, an overview of contemporary leadership theories, and a review of complexity leadership. The second section provides an overview of literature on leadership development, as well as an overview of transformative learning and adult learning theories and how these theories inform the leadership development process. The literature review concludes with a summary discussion that highlights the main findings from the literature and how these relate to the research problem.

Leadership in Complex Global Organizations

The global leadership construct. Some trace the origins of the global leadership construct back thousands of years to the first rulers, military commanders, and spiritual figures with worldwide aspirations (Von Glinow & Schneper, 2015). The literature on global leadership in the business context is considerably younger, but the construct has received an increasing amount of attention over the past couple of decades (Bird & Stevens, 2018; Mendenhall, 2018). Global leadership has proven to be a challenging concept to define, since the concept of

leadership itself is difficult to pin down (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013). The development of the construct has been driven by the evolution of organizational needs, adapting to the changing contexts within which organizations operate. It has evolved from cross-cultural "management" to the modern concept of global "leadership," and it is expected to keep evolving in the future (Bird & Mendenhall, 2015).

Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, and Osland (2012) argued that many existing definitions of global leadership are problematic because they contain limitations such as ambiguity, insufficient distinction of the focal concept from related concepts, varying conceptualizations of global leadership, and inadequate attention on the conceptual scope of the attribute "global" etc. In subsequent literature, Mendenhall and Bird (2013) discussed two main dimensions of the term "global" - complexity and boundary spanning which "involves the creation and navigation of linkages that integrate and coordinate across economic, functional, geographic, cultural, linguistic, religious, educational, political, and legal systems" (p. 169). In addition to boundary spanning, global leadership occurs through other unique roles like *bridge maker* and *blender* that allow leaders to effectively overcome challenges of working across national and cultural boundaries (Butler, Zander, Mockaitis, & Sutton, 2012). Global leadership scholars argue that the ambiguity of the definition of what constitutes global leadership presents a challenge for both, practitioners and researchers, as it limits them from producing meaningful outcomes (Reiche et al, 2017).

Holt and Seki (2012) pointed out that because of the global complexity of the business and cultural contexts where leaders operate, the distinction between leadership and global leadership is starting to blur. Due to this increasing complexity, Holt and Seki define a global leader as "anyone who operates in a context of multicultural, paradoxical complexity to achieve

results in our world" (p. 199). Thus, today's global leader must be able to not just *think globally and act locally,* but to *think and act both globally and locally* at the same time (Cohen, 2010; Bishop, 2013). Mendenhall (2018) pointed out that just as it is often difficult to draw a clear distinction between management and leadership, scholars have also struggled to identify a clear-cut distinction between traditional leadership and global leadership. However, he also argued that the global context provides differences in degree and in kind that shape the nature of global leadership. Gundling, et al. (2011) offered a similar distinction, acknowledging a level of similarity between global and traditional leadership, but also highlighting that global contexts require leaders to adapt their styles and strategies based on the diversity of the environment and employee backgrounds. Reiche et al. (2017) also agreed that context is a key factor that defines the nature of global leadership roles. They defined global leadership "as the process and actions through which an individual influences a range of internal and external constituents from multiple national cultures and jurisdictions" (p. 553).

The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) project found that leader effectiveness is contextual, meaning that leadership styles should be consistent with the leadership prototypes within the specific cultures, making sensitivity to, and understanding of, different cultures a key point of successful global leadership. Additionally, however, the study also identified universally desired core behaviors that comprise charismatic value-based leadership (Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, Dastmalchian, House, 2012). This finding is consistent with thesis presented by Bass (1997) that leadership characteristics that comprise the transformational leadership construct transcend organizational, national, and cultural boundaries. Gundling, et al. (2011) argued that while the intercultural approach to leadership is a start, it is not enough to provide a useful framework for leadership in global environments. They stated: "It

is essential to move from the "What" – the cultural differences that are identified – to the "So what," or why these matter from a leadership perspective, and then to "Now what," as in what to do next" (p. 25).

Global leadership competencies. In response to the complexity that surrounds the concept of global leadership, numerous models have emerged with the goal of understanding and identifying core global leadership competencies and their different levels of importance (e.g. Mendenhall & Bird, 2013; Story, 2011). As demonstrated above, in recent years, many efforts have been made to develop the conceptual foundations of global leadership (Mendenhall, et al., 2012) and numerous scholars have proposed definitions of *global competence/competency/competencies* (Hassanzadeh, Silong, Asmuni, & Wahiza Abd Wahat, 2015; Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006; Jokinen, 2005; Kim & McLean, 2015; Thorn, 2012). Some of these efforts, such as the GLOBE project (Dorfman et al., 2012), were comprehensive, demonstrating an eagerness to arrive at a shared understanding of competencies necessary for successful global leadership.

Jokinen (2005) pointed out that there is a missing consensus on a concise definition of global leadership competencies, with "global" frequently being used interchangeably with the terms "international", "multinational" and "transnational". Some of the terms that appear in literature in relation to global leadership are "cross-cultural competencies" (e.g. Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012), cultural intelligence – CQ (e.g. Chin & Gaynier, 2006, Moon, 2010), global mindset (Cseh, Davis, & Khilji, 2013; Javidan & Bowen, 2013; Cohen, 2010; Story, 2011), global orientation (Tung, 2016), or *worldmindedness* (Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001).

The extensive body of literature discussing global leadership competencies highlights many different traits, skills, and attributes associated with effective leadership in global

organizational environments (Kim & McLean, 2015). Yershova, Dejaeghere, and Mestenhauser (2000) identified intercultural competence, critical thinking, and comparative thinking as essential competencies to functioning effectively in culturally diverse environments, an example of a combination of culturally-specific and universal leadership attributes. Similar competencies, including critical thinking, cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes, among others, were identified by Boyd, Moore, Williams, and Elbert (2011) as the leadership competencies needed to succeed at entry-level positions in global organizations.

Gundling, et al. (2011) adopted a behavioral focus and developed a framework of important global leadership behaviors that are grounded in *dynamic* competencies, i.e. those types of skills that can be developed. The SCOPE framework consists of the following behavioral competencies: seeing differences, closing the gap, opening the system, preserving balance, and establishing solutions (p. 32). Other studies also explored the influence of dynamic cross-cultural competencies, such as reduced ethnocentrism or valuing cultural differences, cultural flexibility or adaptation, tolerance of ambiguity (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012) or the broader term cultural agility (Caligiuri, 2013).

In an attempt to arrive at a comprehensive definition of global competence, some scholars utilized data collected from focus groups of accomplished international leaders. Hunter, White, and Godbey (2006) created a diverse panel made up of human resource managers, senior educators, United Nations officers, intercultural trainers, and foreign government officers. After three rounds of debate, the Delphi panel presented the following definition of a global competence: “having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment” (p. 277). In another study, twelve leaders of international

and development institutions identified the following qualities important for future international leaders: strategic vision, adaptability, fostering teamwork, creating open communication, and building relationships (Thorn, 2012, p. 161).

Some scholars argue that in global organizations leadership is subject to both convergent (universal) and divergent (culturally-contingent) influences that have implications for necessary leadership competencies and leader behaviors (Gentry & Sparks, 2012; Jeong et al., 2017). Inceoglu and Bartram (2012) argued that global leadership is fairly similar to general leadership, only with greater heterogeneity and complexity. As such, they claimed, general leadership competencies are still applicable and only need to be adopted to broader global contexts. Other research suggests, that indeed, there is no consensus on the terminology of intercultural or global competence leading to most definitions being more general (Deardorff, 2006), and often varying by discipline (Deardorff, 2011).

Cultural intelligence (CQ). Still, several studies focused on cultural intelligence (CQ) in relation to global leadership on an individual, as well as organizational level (e.g. Chin & Gaynier, 2006; Deng & Gibson, 2009; Moon, 2010). Chin and Gaynier (2006) argued that in addition to intellectual intelligence (IQ), and emotional intelligence (EQ), 21st century global leaders also need to possess cultural intelligence (CQ) in order to successfully navigate complex global environments. “Cultural intelligence reflects a capability to gather and manipulate information, draw inferences, and enact behaviors in response to one’s cultural setting” (p. 5). Deng and Gibson (2009) found that leaders’ individual orientation and capacities derived from CQ and EQ act as mediating factors of effective cross-cultural leadership behaviors. Moon (2010) suggested that the conceptual theory of cultural intelligence should not only be

considered on the micro (individual), but also on the macro (organizational) level in order to meet the dynamic demands of the global business environment.

Fisher and Wildman (2016) combined several of the above-mentioned factors from global leadership research to create a model of Globally Intelligent Leadership (GIL). They posited that the three main antecedents of leadership effectiveness in global contexts are cultural intelligence (CQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and personality. They further categorized competency types according to three categories: mindset, skill, and knowledge. The model represents both stable and dynamic types of competencies, and the authors admit that more research is needed to test the applicability and reliability of the model in practice.

Global mindset. Other scholars focused on *global mindset* as the main element of effective global leadership orientation, however no clear consensus of the meaning of the term has emerged (Story & Barbuto, 2011). The core properties of global mindset have been described from different cognitive, existentialist and behavioral perspectives (Levy, Beechler, Taylor & Boyacigiller, 2007). Javidan and Bowen (2013) defined global mindset as "an individual's capability to influence others unlike themselves" (p. 42), comprised of global intellectual capital, global psychological capital, and global social capital. Global mindset has also been defined as a combination of cultural intelligence and global business orientation (Story & Barbuto, 2011), or as a combination of (1) orientation, (2) knowledge, and (3) behavior (Cseh, et al., 2013, p. 491). Thus, it is one's ability to navigate cross-cultural differences and changing contexts through combining openness and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets (Cohen, 2010).

Foundational global competencies. Summarizing many of the above-mentioned elements, Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, and Oddou (2010) defined the content domain of

foundational global leadership competence as a set of three dimensions and 17 corresponding competencies, which included

- *perception management*, which consisted of nonjudgmentalness, inquisitiveness, tolerance of ambiguity, cosmopolitanism, and category inclusiveness;
- *relationship management*, which consisted of relationship interest, interpersonal engagement, emotional sensitivity, self-awareness, and social flexibility; and
- *self-management*, which consisted of optimism, self-confidence, self-identity, emotional resilience, non-stress tendency, stress management, and interest flexibility.

Cogner (2014) argued that there are many elements that shape the specific competencies needed for global leaders, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach due to the different contexts that leaders operate in. He stressed that for early-career leaders it is important to identify *baseline* competencies. Some of these baseline competencies include sense of adventure, cultural sensitivity, adaptability, relationship interest, a specific mindset that includes cognitive complexity, and global orientation. Other scholars also proposed frameworks describing different levels of competencies. Jokinen (2005) posited that there are three layers of competencies: foundational core, mental characteristics, and behavioral skills. She argued that the foundational core competencies (self-awareness, engagement in personal transformation, and inquisitiveness) are "viewed as conditions, the driving force, for the emergence of a wide range of other competencies" (p. 205). Osland (2018) argued that while competency-based models are not sufficient for understanding the complexity of leadership in global organizations, they provide a starting point for understanding a basic progression of leadership levels.

The literature review presented a foundation for understanding the complexity of global leadership and global leadership competencies. As Cascio and Boudreau (2015) pointed out:

"The search for global competence is a race with no finish line, but instead, it is one with many hurdles and benchmarks" (p. 104). Inceoglu and Bartram (2012) posited that global leadership competencies should be informed by general leadership theories, and rather than redefined, the competencies should just be broadened for the global context. They argued that the domain of global leadership at its core is the same as general leadership. With this argument in mind, the following section provides an overview of contemporary leadership trends that inform the concept of leadership in global organizations.

Overview of contemporary leadership. The leadership construct is on the brink of change. Increasing complexity within organizations presents challenges that "defy existing solutions, resources, and approaches; they question fundamental assumptions and mental models; and they demand new learning and creativity" (Martin & Ernst, 2005, p. 83). In response to this development, scholars have offered new approaches to thinking about leadership, shifting attention from individual-based leadership models to more holistic approaches that have significant implications for leadership practice and development (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Kennedy, Carroll & Francoeur, 2013). A detailed examination of the leadership construct is not the goal of this literature review. Rather, the following section provides an overview of the recent developments in the leadership construct that reflect changing conditions and challenges facing modern organizations.

According to Tal and Gordon (2016), there are two main categories of the leadership paradigm that still prevail in modern organizations: the hierarchical framework and the flexible, process-based framework. The hierarchical framework includes the traditional trait approach, as well as the ever-popular transformational leadership approach. On the other hand, the process-based framework includes the shared, the distributed, the complex, and the collective leadership

approaches, with shared and collective leadership significantly raising in popularity. This recent development in the leadership construct mirrors the division of leadership as a *specialized role* vs a *shared influence process* (Yukl, 2013). Integrating useful elements of both leadership dimensions, Yukl (2013) defined leadership as: "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (p. 7).

Highlighting the ever-changing nature of the leadership construct, Grint (2011) pointed out that the theory of leadership always follows societal and organizational shifts and often swings like a pendulum to "correct" itself, so it properly addresses the challenges of the specific era. This was reflected by the historical trends, such as the move away from the "great men" leadership approach towards styles grounded in scientific management at the end of the 19th century. The trend changed back to embrace normative approaches in the early 1900s and eventually swung back again to more rational approaches in the mid- to late-1900s (Grint, 2011). Throughout history, however, there has always been a tendency to assign much importance to individual leaders. As Grint (2011) stated: "Indeed, we appear to have an amazing capacity to attribute organizational success to individual competence on the basis of virtually no evidence at all" (p. 9).

Yukl's (2013) integrative approach reflects the recent shift towards a leadership paradigm that is more inclusive and holistic. Mendenhall (2018) pointed out that this integrative approach is significantly impacted by the systems perspective, takes into consideration the complexity of modern organizations, and gives rise to *pluralizing leadership*. Sergi, Denis, and Langley (2017) argued that there are three different drivers behind the move towards plural forms of leadership - context-driven, ideals-driven, and theory-driven. While plural forms of leadership have clearly

gained on popularity as demonstrated by the rise in published studies on shared and collective leadership (Tal & Gordon, 2016), it is often difficult to ignore the role of individual leaders. According to Gronn (2011),

> … the unit of analysis in empirical investigations of leadership contexts is less likely to boil down to a hard and fast choice between an individual leader or some version of leadership plurality, and is more likely to comprise a hybrid mixture. (p. 442)

Echoing the above sentiment, Martin and Ernst (2005) argued that leadership in modern times of paradox and complexity should be examined from three perspectives: the individual, the organization, and leadership across cultures (p. 91).

One of the integrative pluralizing theories that has emerged in response to the dynamic demands on today's leaders is complexity theory (Neyisci & Potas, 2014). Darling (2012) argued that complex systems theory is the best fitting framework for an understanding of leadership in today's global organizations. He stated that, "a consideration of the characteristics of complex adaptive systems can shed significant light on the characteristics required for effective leadership in a global context" (p. 202). Reiche et al. (2017) argued that a context defined by complexity is a key contingency factor of leadership in global organizations, and they utilized process-based complexity leadership theory to inform their model of global leadership roles. Global leadership scholars have acknowledged that complexity is central to global operations (Mendenhall, 2018). The below section reviews the basic tenets of complexity leadership theory and demonstrates how understanding of organizations as complex systems shapes the leadership construct.

Complexity leadership. In today's complex world, traditional leadership models that were products of top-down, bureaucratic leadership prototypes are no longer sufficient for explaining the complex realities and dynamic interactions of complex organizational

environments (Geer-Frazier, 2014; Havermans et al.; Uhl-Bien & Russ, 2011; Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey, 2007). Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) argued that traditional leadership models are not well-suited for modern learning organizations functioning in a more knowledge-oriented economy. One of the biggest shifts of this new emerging leadership paradigm is that it changes the conversation about leadership, viewing it not as a means of controlling organizational outcomes, but rather as a means of enabling a productive future (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT). One of the theories that has emerged in the past couple of decades that offers a new paradigm for leadership in post-modern learning organizations is Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT). Within the framework of CLT, leadership is framed as an event that emerges as a result of interactions among individuals (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, Marion, Seers, Orton & Schreiber, 2006). As a result, rather than viewing leadership as a set of individual traits or attributes, leadership from the CLT perspective is emergent and process-based, and it interacts with internal and external forces influencing organizational functioning (Geer-Frazier, 2014). In addition to being emergent, it is also dynamic and highly contextual and thus not easily explained by traditional individualistic leadership models (DeRue, 2011; Havermans, Den Hartog, Keegan & Uhl-Bien, 2015).

Albeit process-based, CLT does provide suggestions for the leadership orientation that is necessary to navigate complex environments of postmodern organizations. Scholars have identified leadership orientation as a mindset, and they have proposed intentionality as a key aspect of developing the type of orientation that can increase organizational effectiveness in complex environments (Boyatzis, 2008; Kennedy et al., 2013).

Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) has roots in ‘scientific leadership’ principles and utilizes the metaphor of organizations as ‘living systems’ to describe organizational dynamics

(Uhl-Bien & Russ, 2011). CLT frames leadership as a process, rather than an individual-based phenomenon, and thus focuses on the dynamic interactions between all individuals that produce emergent outcomes (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). The theory builds on the limitations of the previous individual-focused leadership theories, and shifts the focus toward interpersonal influence; i.e. power and influence can shift based on the complexities of the system and although leaders may be "in charge" based on their role, they may not be "in control" (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). According to CLT, leadership is a product of complex system interactions, and it is not limited to the roles of individual authority. That means that organizational members may engage in leading-following acts at different points of time. As a result, leadership effectiveness stems from the equilibrium of the variability in the leading-following process and the variability of the organization's environment (DeRue, 2011).

According to Schneider and Sommers (2006), complexity theory is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, as it builds on General Science Theory (GST), which regarded organizations as open systems, and it had significant influence on leadership research in the past. CLT uses Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) as a unit of analysis and assumes CAS to be open systems; however, it adds an additional level of complexity to understanding organizations as complex systems. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) defined CAS as "open, evolutionary aggregates whose components (or *agents*) are dynamically interrelated and who are cooperatively bonded by common purpose" (p. 302). Albeit complexity theories predominantly utilize systems thinking, some scholars argued that complexity leadership theory also employs process thinking, focusing on social and psychological dynamics, and also viewing organizations as complex, responsive processes (Simpson, 2007).

At the core of CLT is the concept of emergence. Emergence requires dynamic, uncontrolled interaction between system elements (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009), and it is the source of innovative organizing processes and functions in CAS (Hazy and Uhl-Bien, 2015). CLT frames leadership in terms of functions and these leadership functions interact with complexity dynamics to enable emergence and enable adaptive outcomes (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Schneider and Somers (2006) examined leadership functions in the context of developing organizational identity and social movements. They suggested that because uncertainty and volatility are at the core of CAS, "leadership should encourage an organizational identity that reflects variation as well as self-similarity, for identity could then serve as a potentially countervailing force to destructive possibilities" (p. 362).

Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) discussed leadership functions within three entangled leadership roles – adaptive leadership, administrative leadership and enabling leadership. These leadership roles reflect the dynamic interaction between the bureaucratic functions and emergence dynamics. Hazy and Uhl-Bien (2015) expanded on this understanding and described five main leadership functions in CAS: generative, administrative, community building, information gathering and information using (p. 81). They described organizations as products of fine-grain interactions between individuals and coarse-grain properties that define the organization as a whole, noting their dynamic relationship.

Implications of CLT for the leadership paradigm. CLT frames leadership as a complex process that is influenced by many complexity dynamics. The theory prompted re-examination of leadership and although inherently process-based, it has not eliminated the role of leaders, but rather redefined it (Schneider & Sommers, 2006). Lichtenstein and Plowman (2009) argued that while complexity theory frames leadership as emerging from dynamic interactions between all

individuals, formal leaders still play a crucial role in enabling the conditions needed for emergence. Thus, while complexity theory redefines the view of leadership, it does not eliminate the importance and potential impact on individual leaders (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). In their study, Psychogios and Garev (2012) identified several managerial attitudes and leadership behaviors the can negatively or positively impact organizational performance. Other scholars explored the implications of complexity theory on traditional leadership roles and proposed useful leadership styles and behaviors that support complex functioning within organizations (Schreiber & Carley, 2006).

The literature suggests that the goal for leaders to employ specific leadership behaviors and styles is not to control outcomes, but rather to act as catalysts of positive change that foster bottom-up dynamics, empower distributed participation and enable innovation and organizational adaptation (Drew, 2010; Hazy, 2006; Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Surie & Hazy, 2006; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). Some scholars argued that leaders should act as "tags" and guide the leadership process but refrain from directly controlling organizational outcomes (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). For this, they argued, leaders need to think systematically and utilize a variety of holistic behaviors (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Hazy (2006) defined leadership as an organizational meta-capability and identified leadership activities that enable this leadership meta-capability "to guide the system as an entity, one with a unity of purpose …" (p. 67). Surie and Hazy (2006) proposed a framework that depicted leaders as enablers of conditions that support innovation by facilitating interactions, while also regulating complexity. Enabling leaders thus act as catalysts for adaptive leadership by balancing administrative functions and emergence (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Focus on leadership behaviors has contributed to complexity leadership studies and it has furthered the goal of developing a holistic model of leadership that includes both individual, as well as, organizational-level processes (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). The key characteristics of the Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) and its implications for complexity leadership (CL) provide the basis for understanding of leadership orientation that is needed to successfully navigate complex organizational environments and enable productive outcomes.

Leadership orientation. As discussed above, literature about CLT suggests that there is a need for an alternative style of leadership to navigate complex environments, one that views leadership as less leader-centric and more distributed and devolved (Geer-Frazier, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial that leaders have leadership orientation that is grounded in distributed and shared leadership concepts and that supports collective action (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). This approach requires leadership that supports adaptive climate and conditions that are characterized by rich interactions and interconnectedness. This kind of climate can only be created by enacting relational and empowering leadership. This style of leadership is characterized by creating collaborative and safe climate that allows members of the organization to openly share and even disagree (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009).

CLT further calls for leaders to serve as context setters and facilitators who enable emergence and its successful integration with organizational systems (Morrison, 2002; Schneider & Sommers, 2006; Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009). Morrison (2002) suggested that leaders are responsible for creating an open and creative environment rather than for mandating prescriptions, stating: “Recognizing that their authority is both earned and limited, leaders must listen, respond, encourage, build relationships, acknowledge, support and keep out…” (p.59). Hazy and Uhl-Bien (2015) suggested that enabling leadership helps drive innovation and creative

problem solving within organizations, which calls for leaders to have a generative leadership orientation. In addition, in complex environments, the leader-follower processes are highly contextual, and therefore leaders need the ability to have leadership orientation that acknowledges the importance of context in determining their behaviors (Havermans et al., 2015). Because leadership in complex environments is inherently relational and situational, these elements point to leadership orientation as a mindset versus skillset, and it has implications for the understanding of leadership practice, as well as leadership development. The below section discusses the main elements of complexity leadership orientation that emerged from the literature.

Distributed and shared leadership. According to Drew (2010), one of the main elements of complexity leadership is that it encourages distributed participation in the leadership process. He stated that "leadership is effective when it invokes the engagement of others" (p. 56). *Real* power thus stems from the ability of leaders to enable others to participate in the sharing of power. Complexity leadership requires a mindset of expanded thinking and awareness that is grounded in the distribution of leadership (and power) at all levels of the organization (Geer-Frazier, 2014). This does not diminish importance of leadership as an organizational phenomenon, but rather challenges leaders to understand the importance and benefits of interactive dynamics and the sharing of leadership functions (Lichtenstein et. al, 2006). According to Lichtenstein and Plowmen (2009), "in complex systems, mutual influence across agents is necessary for survival" (p. 618). By having a leadership orientation of distributed and shared leadership, leaders should focus on enabling the conditions that produce emergent outcomes.

Relational and empowering leadership. Distributed and shared leadership orientation go hand-in-hand with having a relational mindset that understands the importance of collective intelligence (Geer-Frazier, 2014). Complexity leadership moves away from leader self-importance and exclusion towards inclusion (Morrison, 2002). Martin and Ernst (2005) found that the increasing complexities of modern organizations have implications for the leadership practice, requiring greater collaboration and shared commitment. Lichtenstein and Plowman (2009) suggested that leaders should encourage rich interactions through a culture of relational space and encourage collective action. In addition, participative leadership style was found to be more conducive to complex functioning than directive style because it enables interactions and interdependencies among agents, stimulating higher levels of human and social capital co-evolution (Schreiber, 2006). This is in line with suggestion made by Hazy and Uhl-Bien (2015) who included community-building, defined by belonging and the forming of shared identity, to be one of the five functions of leadership in complex organizations.

Highlighting the interactive nature of leadership, Lichtenstein et al. (2006) argued that interactions and relationships are at the center of the leadership construct, not only as sources of cooperation, but also as sources of adaptive leadership that occurs through interactions that generate tension and can lead to productive change. Supporting this claim, Psychogios and Garev (2012) found that building strong interpersonal relationships that encourage collaboration and informal communication build trust, which in turn helps organizational members deal with the uncertainty of complex environments.

Generative leadership. The ability to foster relationships and cooperation is closely related to generative leadership (GL) that emphasizes rapid learning and innovation (Surie & Hazy, 2006). Innovation is a key element that allows complex organizations to continually adapt

and thrive in today's global environment (Elkington & Booysen, 2015). Generative leadership orientation encourages self-organization and was found to have positive impact on organizational performance (Psychogios & Garev, 2012). Surie and Hazy (2006) defined generative leadership "as those aspects of leadership that foster innovation, organizational adaptation, and high performance over time" (p. 13). Generative leadership orientation aids leaders in acting as catalysts of innovation by fostering fine-grain interactions that influence the emergence of new coarse-grain properties (Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2015). Thus, having a generative leadership orientation is a crucial element of complexity leadership orientation.

Contextual leadership. Probably one of the biggest implications of CLT for the understanding of complexity leadership orientation is the element of contextual leadership. In complex organizations, leaders are faced with the challenge of continually working towards contextual ambidexterity - the balance between exploration and exploitation learning practices (Havermans et al., 2015). This requires leaders to have adaptive leadership orientation and a large behavioral repertoire (Havermans et al., 2015; Scheider & Somers, 2006). Hazy (2006) argued that in complex organizations, leadership practices need to be adapted based on contextual organizational goals such as efficient operation versus innovation. Adjustability and flexibility are at the center of contextual leadership and were found to be positively related to organizational performance in turbulent business environments (Psychogios and Garev, 2012). Therefore, leaders have to consider the contextual dynamics in order to balance administrative functions and emergence to promote adaptive leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Summary of leadership in complex global organizations. The literature review suggests that global leadership is a growing and an actively researched subject, and although there is no single definition of global leadership, several overlapping themes provide a

foundation for the identification of global leadership competency. The foundation lies in understanding that global leadership includes both culturally-specific and universal attributes (Dorfman, 2012, Gentry & Sparks, 2012; Jeong et al., 2017) and is highly contextual (Reiche et al., 2017). Some of the major themes of foundational competencies needed to effectively navigate global contexts that emerged from literature include having a certain level of cultural intelligence (CQ), a global mindset or knowledge of global environments; a self-authored identity, self-awareness or knowledge of self; effective relationship management; and open-mindedness, curiosity, and tolerance of ambiguity.

In addition, review of complexity leadership theory (CLT) provided a framework for understanding leadership orientation that is necessary to navigate complex global environments. CLT defines leadership as a process and shifts the dynamics of influence from individual authority towards interpersonal influence (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). Collaboration and influence were identified as key defining elements of effective global leadership (Institute for Corporate Productivity [i4cp], 2014). The review of literature found that the main concepts that inform complexity leadership orientation include distributed and shared leadership, relational and empowering leadership, generative leadership, and contextual leadership. These suggestions are in line with empirical findings of Psychogios and Garev (2012) who reported that "generative and contextual leadership, close relationships based on mutual trust and entrepreneurial approach requiring large behavioral repertoire have been identified as different leadership styles nurturing complexity …" (p. 16).

The above section reviewed literature of the following topics: the global leadership construct, an overview of contemporary leadership theories, and a review of complexity leadership. The review of literature on these leadership constructs informs the "what" of

leadership in global organizations and the foundational leadership competency and orientation needed for future leaders in global organizations. The combined themes that emerged from the literature mirror the five key imperatives proposed by Salicru (2015) that shape the leadership of the future. He argued that:

1) The leadership construct should move beyond a competency-based concept and focus on a leader's character and integrity.
2) Future leaders will operate in complex contexts that call for adaptive leadership, which can only be developed through vertical development grounded in transformational learning.
3) Leadership of the future will be increasingly global and will require leaders to develop expanded capacity to deal with global challenges.
4) Creative thinking and innovation (generative leadership) will be paramount for the success of future leaders facing global challenges.
5) Leadership is a relational phenomenon.

Similarly, Petrie (2011) found that a mix of global and complexity competencies and leadership orientation will be most valuable for future leaders to navigate VUCA business environment. This included adaptability, self-awareness, boundary spanning, collaboration, and network thinking (p. 9). He also argued that rather than focusing on a set of leadership competencies, organizations should focus on transforming leaders' mindsets. The challenge lies in understanding how leaders can develop the new types of skills and an expanded mindset needed to navigate complex environments. "Managers have become experts on the "what" of leadership, but novices in the "how" of their own development" (p. 6). While the traditional focus was on the "what" of leadership, the future focus should be on the "what" and the "how"

of leadership development. The following section focuses on topics related to the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. It covers literature on transformative learning and adult learning theories and on how these theories inform the leadership development process.

Developing Future Leaders in Complex Global Organizations

According to Cremo and Bux (2016), a key to creating a vibrant organizational leadership pipeline is "identifying qualities and skills that are needed for leadership, and then developing a systematic and documented process for developing people who are capable" (p. 76). Research suggests that program design and learning methods are closely correlated with developmental outcomes of leadership development programs (Institute for Corporate Productivity [i4cp], 2015; Simmonds & Tsui, 2010; Terrell & Rosenbusch, 2012). Yukl (2013) stressed that leadership development programs should be grounded in learning theory and the design should be closely aligned with the outcome goals and participant profiles.

Literature shows that with the move toward the collective and the distributed leadership paradigms that are defined by the ontological view of leadership as a process of interpersonal influence, scholars have started to differentiate between the terms *leader development* and *leadership development* (Clarke, 2013; Day, 2011; Martin & Ernst, 2005). Clarke (2013) argued that leadership development in complex organizational contexts should be approached from system- and individual- level perspectives. Martin and Ernst (2005) made a similar point by distinguishing between the building of individual and organizational leadership capacities. They argued that this type of approach is necessary when viewing leadership from a holistic perspective. However, while the terms leader development and leadership development are not synonymous, they are often used interchangeably (Day, 2011). For the purposes of this literature

review, the term leadership development will be used to describe the development of individual leadership capacity that prepares future leaders to navigate complex global challenges.

The importance of intentional and targeted leadership development program design cannot be understated. However, as demonstrated above, the content domain of leadership in complex global organizations requires a new approach to leadership development. According to Petrie (2014), rather than emphasizing the horizontal development of leadership competencies, organizations should be focusing on developing an increased capacity or mindset which can only be developed through vertical development. Salicru (2015) defined horizontal and vertical development as follows:

> Horizontal development is related to technical learning and is competency-based, which is useful when problems are clearly defined and techniques for solving them are known. Vertical development, in contrast, refers to the mental and emotional staged process individuals progress through to make sense of the world. (p. 166)

Vertical development leads to an expanded mindset that is more complex and inclusive. Horizontal development is important but insufficient without vertical development. Vertical development leads to increased ability to lead in complex environments (Petrie, 2014). Vertical development is grounded in transformational learning, the type of learning that is necessary for leaders to deal with the adaptive challenges of the complex global business environments (Geller, 2009; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013; Salicru, 2015). Transformational growth leads to an expanded way of being, or what Hunter (2011) described as "changes in our *form* rather than *content* of understanding…" (p. S30). Global leadership scholars agree that leadership development is a process of personal transformation (Osland & Bird, 2018; Mendenhall, et al., 2017). According to Van Dongen (2014), leadership development initiatives in today's global

organizations should be grounded in the andragogical approach, which unlike the pedagogical approach, is self-directed. Transformative learning falls under the andragogical approach and it has gained popularity because it leads to more reflective, open-minded, and inclusive leadership practices.

Transformative learning in leadership development. Organizations are faced with a challenge to develop new approaches to leadership development that foster the capabilities that are necessary for twenty-first century global leaders (Geller, 2009). Johnson (2008) argued that the shift in the leadership paradigm calls for transformational learning that challenges and shifts one's mental models leading to enhanced ability to handle complex phenomena. Geller (2009) summed up transformative learning as follows:

> Transformative learning theory incorporates a constructivist focus on individual development, rational thought, and reflection, while bringing to the fore the importance of cultural context, group learning, and discourse. It suggests a learning process for developing socially responsible, clear-thinking decision makers who use critical reflection to challenge assumptions (their own and others'), increase their understanding of complex situations, question conformity, embrace change, and align their actions toward the betterment of society. (p. 178)

Types of transformative learning. Cranton and Taylor (2012) argued that while transformative learning has been largely described as a cognitive rational process, recent research has demonstrated the importance of extrarational, affective and relational aspects of learning. Cranton (2016) claimed that this integration leads to a holistic understanding of transformative learning. She stated: "Different individuals may engage in transformative learning in different ways; the same individual may engage in transformative learning in different ways in

different contexts" (p. xii). Tisdell (2012) argued that both the cognitive and the affective domains are involved in the process of transformative learning. Taylor and Cranton (2012) concluded that, "by recognizing the interrelationship of cognition and emotion, we can give greater attention to what is most necessary: ways to facilitate the transformative experience" (p. 567).

Research shows that in addition to autonomous learning, connected or relational learning plays a significant role in transformative learning and development (Cranton, 2016). Group work and dialogue have been found to serve as powerful enablers of transformative learning. Commitment and motivation, curiosity and openness, emotional engagement and reflection, and mutual sensemaking were identified as key factors that impact the transformative outcomes of group learning. This type of relational and collaborative learning can foster greater self-awareness, increase empathy and inclusion, and develop critical social systemic consciousness. (Schapiro, Wasserman & Gallegos, 2012). Geller (2009) argued that reflective dialogue in a collaborative context is a key component of transformative learning as part of the development of relational leaders.

What is transformative learning? According to Nicolaides and McCallum (2013), transformative learning intersects two conceptual frameworks - adult learning and the psychological theory of constructive development. The constructivist focus of transformative learning is reflected in the process of reflection on one's *way of knowing* and the *way of being* in relation to other viewpoints and realities. It assumes that our understanding of reality is constructed through social processes. This process of reflection is a key aspect of development that leads to expanded ways of being and the ability to appreciate and navigate global diversity (Yoshida Geller, & Wasserman, 2005). Constructive development theory frames leadership as a

mindset rather than a skillset (Hunter, Lewis, & Ritter-Gooder, 2011), and shifts the epistemological understanding of "knowing" from subjective to objective (Kegan, 2000).

Transformative learning is different from informational learning because it not only focuses on *what* we know but *how* we know it. While both types of learning are important, transformative learning leads to a change in the *form* and leads to expanded capacity (Kegan, 2000). Rooke and Torbert (2014) referred to this change in "form" in leaders' development as a development of their 'action logic'. They claimed that leaders can progress through different levels of their action logic by learning from overcoming personal or professional changes and challenges. They also pointed out that transformational leadership development can be achieved through structured development interventions.

Mezirow (2012) pointed out that transformative learning can take place through objective or subjective reframing of mental models. Objective reframing involves critical reflection on the assumptions of others. On the other hand, he argued that subjective reframing is a product of critical self-reflection on one's assumptions about a specific narrative, a system, an organization or a workplace, feelings and relationships, and on the way one learns. Subjective reframing involves double- and triple-loop learning. While single-loop learning of leaders is predominantly concerned with surface level improvements (behavioral), double-loop learning questions existing assumptions (a way of knowing). Triple-loop learning integrates the two and results in an expanded way of being (Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013; Nicolaides & Dzubinski, 2016).

Transformative learning and leadership development. Johnson (2008) argued that in leadership development, transformative learning can be fostered by introducing challenging experiences that occur in real time. The challenge should be significant enough that it results in a shift in the individual's mental models. On the other hand, research suggests that there is a law of

diminishing returns when it comes to level of challenge that results in development, and the key is that the challenging experience is followed by adequate support (Day, 2011). In addition, critical reflection must be present in order for the challenging experience to produce transformative learning (Johnson, 2008). Within transformative learning theory, critical reflection has been identified as *premise reflection*, which "requires a person to see the larger view of what is operating within his or her value system … and could transform meaning perspective rather than a meaning scheme" (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 114). Mendenhall et al. (2017) posited that premise reflection is central to the development of global leadership competencies. Geller (2009) proposed six practices of transformative learning that foster leadership development for future twenty-first century global leaders:

1. self-reflection,
2. critical thinking,
3. praxis: reflection on action,
4. dialogue,
5. empathy,
6. intercultural appreciation.

He argued that leadership development grounded in transformative learning fosters "changes in assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives" – ways of knowing, that result in "measurable shifts in attitudes and behaviors"– ways of being (p. 186).

Yoshida et al. (2005) offered a few examples of transformative learning interventions in leadership development programs that seek to develop relational leaders who can successfully navigate the complex challenges of the global business environment, and as a result, create positive impacts on business performance. They advocated the use of psychological surveys as

an impactful way of developing a foundational level of self-awareness, adding that the impact of such self-reflection tools seems to be enhanced when they are completed in a communal setting and accompanied by group dialogue. Other methods proposed by the scholars were the creation of learning partnerships and the use of artistic creation as a way to understand the self and the other.

Cranton (2016) argued that transformative learning is fostered by authentic support of the challenging process of transformation. This support can be further enhanced by group dynamics of the learning community or cohort. She added that learner networks can be formal or informal. According to Mezirow (1997, 2000), collaborative learning and reflective discourse are at the center of enabling transformative learning. Other important elements that facilitators need to consider in order to help create an environment that fosters transformative learning are supporting a new way of moving forward after transformation, managing conflict that may result from self-reflection and group interactions, and respecting individual differences (Cranton, 2016).

Ciporen (2010) found that leaders who engaged in transformative learning as part of a leadership development program developed an increased leadership capacity which led to enhanced individual and organizational outcomes. The case study also found that transformative learning was enabled by several individual, interpersonal, and organizational factors. It also identified barriers of the learning transfer in the same three categories. Personal motivation was identified as the most important individual enabler, while “old habits/myself” was the top theme identified as an individual barrier to learning transfer. This finding corresponds with the andragogical perspective that adult development is self-directed (Knowles, 1970, 1980; Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). Van Dongen (2014) argued that while participants of

leadership development programs are expected to assume future leadership roles within organizations, many leadership development programs do not give the participants much responsibility for their own development.

Andragogy and leadership development. Adult learning theory (andragogy) has greatly informed the concept of transformative learning (Cranton, 2016, Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Merriam & Bierema, 2014). The andragogical model of learning was developed by Malcolm Knowles who specifically differentiated the process of adult learning from pedagogy, which was focused primarily on teaching children (Knowles, 1978, 1989; Rachal, 2002). Adult learning is said to be self-directed, voluntary, practical, experiential, and informed by prior experience(s) and one's self-understanding (Cranton, 2016). According to Knowles et al. (2005), adult learning is at the core of human resource development (HRD), and namely leadership development. He stated: "Building leadership capacity is a learning process. In organizations where innovation is a key performance driver, learning becomes central to survival" (p. 169). The adult learning paradigm has had great influence on leadership development education strategies, which include problem-based learning, action learning, reflective learning, and technology-facilitated learning that is interactive, collaborative and linked to experiential learning (Wuestewald, 2016).

Andragogy, which was conceptualized by Knowles (1990) as a set of assumptions about adult learning, has roots in *humanism*. (Johansen & McLean, 2006; Wuestewald, 2016). The humanistic approach has significantly contributed to the understanding of the process of leadership development (Wuestewald, 2016).

> Rejecting the rather mechanistic method and goals of behaviorism, *humanisms* treats individual freedom, autonomy, and personal experiences as key to learning and development. It sees humans as essentially good, intrinsically motivated to higher levels

> of learning and development, and able to examine and draw meaning from experience. Learning is a highly personal activity, and it is the role of the educator to guide the learner in the process. (Johansen & McLean, 2006, p. 325)

Self-concept and the learner's need to know. As mentioned above, one of the main principles that differentiates adult learning (andragogy) from pedagogy that has implications for staff development is that adult learning is self-directed. This is important as often staff development programs are rooted in pedagogical approaches that do not effectively enable the development process (Dalellew & Martinez, 1988). According to Knowles et al. (2005), there are two conceptions of self-directed learning, one related to the control over the process of learning and the second related to the goals and purpose of learning. However, the authors also pointed out that self-direction is grounded in the idea of *self-concept* rather than in the absolute control over the learning process. Merriam and Bierema (2014) summarized the debate as follows:

> The fact that adult learners can be presumed to have a more independent self-concept than a child and therefore be more self-directed in their learning does not imply that all adults are always self-directing and can plan their own learning. Or that all children are always dependent learners. (p. 48)

Self-concept is closely related to the principle that adults "need to know" the why behind their learning. Knowles (2005) argued that by engaging adults in the how, what, and why of their learning through shared program planning and facilitation satisfies both their "need to know" and their self-concept as adult learners. Merriam and Bierema (2014) pointed out that the "need to know" is linked with intrinsic motivation, as when adults understand their why, their motivation to learn is stronger.

Within the context of human resource development (HRD), control over the determination of the need for learning, the development process and evaluation of learning outcomes should be shared between the learner and the organization. This is because organizations are focused on both the individual and organizational goals (Knowles, et al. 2005). Samaroo, Cooper and Green (2013) proposed a new model they named *pedandragogy* to address the tension between facilitation of learning and self-direction: "While pedandragogy maintains self-directedness as a key feature, it calls for the development and creation of tools of learning that promote students' self-engagement" (p. 84).

Merriam and Bierema (2014) argued that the biggest practical implication of self-concept of learning within adult educational programs is related to the learning climate. They claimed that both, the physical and psychological climate should be supportive and comfortable. Knowles (1980) proposed that in addition to adult learning programs having a supportive and participatory learning climate, programs informed by andragogy should also involve the learners in the entire learning process, from the diagnosis of needs to the final evaluation of learning outcomes.

Problem-centered orientation. Another principle of adult learning that has implications for staff and leadership development is that learning should be practical and problem-centered (Dalellew & Martinez, 1988; Wuestewald, 2016). Cranton (2016) pointed out that: "This conceptualization is based on the assumption that adults have immediate problems to solve and that they wish to apply their learning directly to their workplaces or to their personal lives" (p. 3). This principle gave rise to the experiential approach to learning (Knowles et al., 2005). In practice, this approach has been used in the form of case-study methodology that is characterized by hypothesized or real-world problem simulations that require peer collaboration, critical reflections, and discussions and is inherently self-directed. Closely related to problem-based

learning is action learning, which often occurs in the actual work context or as part of communities of practice (Wuestewald, 2016). Knowles et al. (2005) pointed out that organizations often use experiential learning in a form of on-the-job training, which has been shown to have high transfer of learning, meaning that it has a direct impact on performance improvements in organizations.

Experience. One significant difference between adult learners and children is that adults usually have an established worldview that stems from their life-long experiences. As such, the minds of adults are not as easily malleable as those of children. This has implications for adult development (Dalellew & Martinez, 1988). Knowles et al. (2005) specified four ways in which adults' prior experiences impact learning and development. They argued that experiences

- create wider range of individual differences;
- provide a rich resource for learning;
- create biases that can inhibit or shape new learning; and
- provide grounding for adults' self-identity. (p. 189-190)

McLean (2006) pointed out that this reality of adult existence greatly impacts the learning process, and it has implications for the compatibility of andragogy with the diverse international perspectives. Merriam and Bierema (2014) discussed the impact of culture and context on the understanding of adult learning and argued that andragogy has been predominantly studied and applied from the Western perspective. However, Henschke (2005) claimed that his extensive international experience revealed that adult learning does not vary greatly across cultures. The only difference he found was related to the learning context. Knowles et al. (2005) stressed that experiences, biases and existing mental models can both foster and inhibit new learning. Henschke (2009) also pointed out that because of the diversity of experiences, adults learn from

the experiences of other adults through collaboration, discussions, and interactions. The literature thus suggests that adult learning, including leadership development, is strongly impacted by an individual's unique background, life experiences and their worldview.

Developmental readiness and motivation. There are two more interconnected concepts that impact the development process of adults – developmental readiness and motivation. According to Knowles et al. (2005), both readiness to learn and motivation are related to the "need to know" principle. Henschke (2009) pointed out that while readiness to learn is related to the different developmental stages of adults, it is possible to induce readiness through targeted exercises that help individuals identify gaps between their current state and their desired state. Merriam and Bierema (2014) argued that for adults, readiness to learn is predominantly related to the *social roles* of adulthood, especially in the business context. According to Kegan and Lahey (2009, 2016), adult development reflects an increase in mental complexity. They identified three adult meaning systems that impact how adults make sense of- and operate in- the world: (1) the socialized mind, (2) the self-authoring mind, and (3) the self-transforming mind (p. 63). Each level of mental complexity represents higher level of leadership capacity. They argued that due to the presence of adaptive challenges in today's complex workplace, organizations should strive to increase the mental complexity of employees at all levels (2009).

Scholars stressed that adult-education programs should be tailored to the specific developmental stages of the participating employees (Dalellew & Martinez, 1988; Knowles, 1980). Van Dongen (2014) argued that leadership development initiatives in global organizations need to reflect the stage of the leadership level of the program participants. This is necessary as different level leaders are faced with different leadership challenges and demands. Leadership development research supports this argument showing that effectiveness of development

methods varies based on the leaders' career levels (DDI, 2014). A first-level leader development program would be an example of such developmentally aligned initiative as it is targeted at employees that are in a similar developmental stage of their careers and seek to further their leadership skills to move to the next social (leadership) role within the organization.

In their process model of global leadership development, Mendenhall et al. (2017) posited that developmental readiness impacts one's response to developmental triggers. They proposed that development readiness impacts how individuals respond to trigger events and thus influences the development that results from that trigger event. Knowles et al. (2005) argued that motivation should be incorporated into instructional models because, just as with developmental readiness outlined above, motivation can be stimulated through goal setting and the clarification of instructional objectives at the beginning of the development process. McCauley, Hammer and Hinojosa (2017), incorporated proactive goal setting as a tool to increase intrinsic motivation in their students' leadership development process. The students then engage in continuous reflections about their learning journey towards achieving their selected goals. According to Kegan and Lahey (2009), cultivating employees' intrinsic motivation to grow should be an integral part of an effective organizational learning strategy:

> No "benefit" an organization provides its employees is a better investment than one that meets our deepest human hunger, to experience the continuing unfolding of our capacities to *see* more deeply (inwardly and outwardly) and to *act* more effectively and with greater change. (p. 316)

As demonstrated above, the review or literature shows that the andragogical assumptions are closely interconnected. There are six main principles that influence the adult learning process: (1) learner's self-concept (self-directed, participatory, collaborative); (2) previous

experience (existing mental models/schemas, positionality, etc.); (3) developmental readiness (developmental stage/social role); (4) practical and immediate implications (problem-centered); (5) level of intrinsic motivation/self-actualization; (6) awareness of the learning gap and learning expectations ("need to know") (Knowles, 2005; Merriam & Bierema, 2014). The andragogical assumptions inform the process of learning and have implications for how adult education programs are designed and carried out (Merriam and Bierema, 2014).

Summary of developing future leaders in global organizations. Literature shows that in order to meet the leadership demands of today's complex organizational realities, there is a need for new approaches to leadership development (Geller, 2009; Johnson, 2008; Petrie, 2014; Salicru, 2015; Schwartz, 2011; Van Dongen, 2014). Van Dongen (2014) argued that the development of talent in global organizations should be grounded in the andragogical approach: "Since the development of adult leaders is largely a matter of self-development, albeit supported by opportunities provided by the organization, the andragogical approach seems to fit best" (p. 9). In order to develop future leaders that will be able to effectively deal with complex adaptive challenges, leadership development programs should focus on fostering vertical development that leads to an expanded mindset (Petrie, 2014; Salicru, 2015).

Vertical development is grounded in transformative learning (Salicru, 2015), which has been termed "the new andragogy" (Merriam, 2009). Transformative learning is described in the literature as deeper learning that is characterized by critical reflection on one's mental models and assumptions. According to Drago-Severson (2009):

> With transformational learning, or growth, a qualitative shift occurs in how a person actively interprets, organizes, understands, and makes sense of his or her experience. This kind of learning is associated with an increase in individual developmental capacities,

> which enables a person to have a broader perspective on him- or herself, on others, and on the relationships between self and others. (p. 11)

Scholars sum up this type of development as a change in *form* reflected in an expanded *way of knowing* and *way of being* (Geller, 2009; Kegan, 2000; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013). While transformative learning was initially considered to be predominantly a product of cognitive learning, more recently scholars posited that transformative outcomes can occur as a result of both, rational and extrarational learning (Cranton, 2016; Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Recent research also suggests that transformative learning can lead to an increased self-awareness, a greater relational capacity, and an ability to navigate complexity at the systems level (Schapiro et al., 2012).

The review of literature suggests that the diverse theoretical perspectives and practical applications have led to a more holistic understanding of transformative learning (Cranton, 2016; Cranton & Taylor, 2012). However, some scholars like Howie and Bagnall (2013) argued that due to the diverse and unfocused research, transformative learning as a theory lacks content clarity, process specificity, and outcome predictability. Merriam and Bierema (2014) pointed out that there are some unresolved issues surrounding the construct of transformative learning related to both the process and the outcomes. However, both acknowledged the contribution of the research utilizing transformative learning theory for deepening the understanding of adult learning and development. Howie and Bagnall (2013) suggested that despite the existing debate, applying the concept of transformative learning in future research can be very useful and can bring about new theoretical and practical insights. They proposed treating transformative learning as a *conceptual metaphor* that allows for greater freedom of its applicability in diverse contexts: “The conceptual metaphor in this case serves the purpose of generating an image of

learning as a transformative experience, which then provides the basis for the research, theorising and practice that follows" (p. 831).

Whilst transformative learning can serve as a conceptual metaphor for the process of leadership development, the literature suggests that andragogy provides a useful framework for understanding the various assumptions that moderate the process of leadership development. Knowles (2005) argued that the six andragogical assumptions presented in the previous section have implications for every aspect of human resource development (HRD) and performance improvement, including leadership development. While some scholars argue that there can be no one unified theory of adult learning (McClean, 2006; Johansen & McClean, 2006), others have suggested that adult learning constructs such as andragogy offer valuable methods that can guide individual and organizational development (Delellew & Martinez, 1988; Yang, 2004; Wuestewald, 2015). Yang (2004) argued that adult learning theory should serve as a foundation for HRD as it provides better explanation of adult learning than any other discipline.

Summary of Literature Review

This literature review sought to provide an overview of the constructs that inform the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. The review of literature demonstrated that the complexity of leadership in global organizations has implications for the leadership development process of future leaders (Petrie, 2011; Prewitt et al., 2011; Salicru, 2015). The efficacy of global leadership development initiatives is contingent on organizations' ability to effectively identify desired developmental outcomes and to align program design and curriculum with these outcomes. (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013).

Global organizations are inherently complex (Inceoglu & Bartram, 2012; Darling, 2012). It is therefore important to understand how this complexity impacts the leadership paradigm. The

literature shows that future leaders in global organizations will need to have the capacity to deal with global and operational complexity, and thus need to develop leadership competency grounded in both global leadership and complexity leadership (Darling, 2012; Petrie, 2011; Salicru, 2015).

While there is no consensus in the academic community about what constitutes global leadership competency or orientation, many overlapping and interconnected characteristics have been identified. Many of these aspects are dynamic, i.e. they can be acquired or enhanced through training and development (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012). Several scholars argued that leadership in global organizations is subject to universal and culturally-contingent factors of leadership (Gentry & Sparks, 2012; Joeng, Lim, & Park, 2017), and that competencies should be viewed on a continuum based on the leadership level (Cogner, 2014; Jokinen, 2005; Osland, 2018).

In addition, global leadership scholars suggest that general contemporary leadership theories should be used to inform the concept of leadership in global organizations (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016). Bird and Mendenhall (2016) argued that:

> …studying the (global leadership) phenomenon from additional theoretical perspectives will likely produce rich findings that will advance the field. The general leadership field has benefited from studying leadership from new perspectives such as complexity leadership theory, shared leadership theory, collaborative leadership frameworks, responsible leadership modes, to name but a few. (p. 124)

The review of literature indicates that contemporary leadership approaches reflect a new approach to understanding leadership, one that is process-based, collective, distributed, and holistic (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Carroll & Francoeur, 2012; Yukl, 2013). Scholars

argued that complexity theory can be especially helpful for understanding the implications of contemporary leadership in global organizations (Darling, 2012). Some of the main themes that emerged from complexity leadership literature that inform the leadership construct in complex modern organizations include distributed and shared leadership, relational and empowering leadership, generative leadership, and contextual leadership.

As described in the previous section, the current state of leadership theory and practice has implications for the "how" of leadership development of future leaders in global organizations. Contemporary leadership scholars have argued that in order to prepare future leaders to effectively navigate complex global environments, new approach to leadership development is needed (Geller, 2009; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013; Petrie, 2014; Salicru, 2015). This new approach should be grounded in the adult learning theory (andragogy) (Van Dongen, 2014), and should foster transformative learning (Johnson, 2008; Geller, 2009; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013; Yoshida, et al, 2005).

As demonstrated above, the literature clearly supports the utility of adult learning theory (the andragogical assumptions) and transformative learning theory for studying the development of future leaders in global organizations. The purpose of this research project was to gain a deeper understanding of the type of individual transformation that occurs as a result of future leader development programs in global organizations (the "what"), and on how various program elements facilitate this transformation (the "how"). Yukl (2013) argued that the use of learning theories in leadership development is key to achieving successful outcomes.

The research problem was explored utilizing the case study methodology that investigated a first-level leader development program in a global organization. A conceptual framework informed by the transformative learning and the adult learning theories provided a

helpful lens for understanding the design and the process (the “how”) of leadership development of early-career leaders in a large global organization. The literature review also supported the argument that developmental outcomes (the “what”) of leadership development programs in global organizations should be informed by the global leadership construct, as well as contemporary leadership theories, specifically the complexity leadership theory. Applying this holistic approach to studying developmental outcomes of early-career leaders in a global organization offered greater practical and theoretical implications. The following chapter provides an overview of the case study methodology and describes the research design of the research project.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This research project was focused on developing a deeper understanding of the transformative experience (development) that occurs as a result of leadership development programs in global organizations by investigating the individual transformation (the "what") of program participants, and on how various program elements facilitated this transformation (the "how"). The study explored the design, curriculum, process, and developmental outcomes of first-level leader development program in a large global organization.

The research project was structured as a single-case instrumental case study. Stake (2005) argued that while an intrinsic case study is focused only on particularities of a specific case, an instrumental case study is inspired by the greater phenomenon under investigation. Thus, the goal of an instrumental case study was to gain understanding about specific matters related to the phenomenon. The goal of the research project was to investigate the phenomenon of the development (conceptualized as transformation) of future leaders in global organizations. Stake (2005) used the term *issues* to identify those key matters that underpin the study and shape the research questions. For the research study, the guiding *issues* were the "what" and the "how" of the transformative experience (development) that occurs as a result of leadership development programs in global organizations. The primary research *issues* (Stake, 2005) guided the central research question and the accompanying sub-questions. Further analytical questions were used to guide the data collection process.

Research Questions and Analytical Questions

The following is the central research question of the study:

What is the transformative experience of participants of future leader development programs in global organizations?

The following sub-questions and analytical questions helped guide the data collection process:

Sub-question 1. What kind of individual transformation occurs as a result of future leader development programs in global organizations?

Analytical Questions:

- How is individual development demonstrated in an individual context?
- How is individual development demonstrated in an organizational context?
- What are the differences/similarities in developmental outcomes globally?

Sub-question 2. How does individual transformation occur?

Analytical Questions:

- Which program elements (curriculum and process) facilitate individual development?
- How do the various program elements facilitate individual development?
- How does the impact of the various program elements vary globally?

Methodology

Qualitative research. Creswell (2013) metaphorically described qualitative research as "an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material" (p. 42). There are several different types of qualitative inquiry that include narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2013). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argued that often qualitative research can simply be described as a "qualitative research study" without having to be narrowly identified as one of the five types. Qualitative research is intrinsically explorative, and it focuses on gaining a complex and detailed understanding of the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

The concepts of leadership and leadership development are inherently complex. While these subjects have been studied extensively using both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, there is still a lack of understanding of the leadership capacity needed by future leaders in global organizations and of the process of how this capacity can be developed. Additionally, contemporary scholars acknowledge that context is highly important when trying to understand leadership in global organizations (Cogner, 2014; Reiche et al., 2017). Stake (2005) argued that quantitative research methods that seek to establish generalizations and strict cause and effect relationships are not fitting when the goal of research is to develop holistic and contextual understanding of a phenomenon.

Qualitative studies are grounded in different philosophical assumptions that guide the research paradigms (Creswell, 2013). These philosophical influences are described and categorized in various ways by different qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The main epistemological perspectives include the positivist/postpositivist paradigm that assumes that reality is objective and observable, the interpretive/constructivist paradigm that assumes the existence of multiple realities that are shaped by context, the critical paradigm that is also focused on existence of multiple realities but highlights the impact of political, social and cultural factors, and the postmodern/poststructural paradigm that is grounded in questioning and challenging of reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, this research study employed a constructivist paradigm and the researcher assumed the role of an interpreter. Stake (2005) summarized the role of the case researcher as interpreter as follows:

> The case researcher recognizes and substantiates new meanings. Whoever is a researcher has recognized a problem, a puzzlement, and studies it, hoping to connect it better with

> known things. Finding new connections, the researcher finds ways to make them comprehensible to others. (p. 97)

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interpretive research is the most widely used form of qualitative research. In interpretative research, knowledge is created from the understanding of the process or the experience. The mode of inquiry is "inductive, hypothesis- or theory- generating…" (Merriam, 2001). However, Creswell (2013) argued that the process of complex reasoning in qualitative studies also includes deductive logic as the researcher goes back and forth between new and existing data. Within the constructivist interpretivist paradigm, the goal is not to discover a universal understanding but rather to construct a clearer, and more sophisticated reality that helps us collectively understand complex phenomena (Stake, 2005).

The focus on interpretation is one of the main characteristics of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 2005). Stake (2005) argued that another element that separates qualitative research from quantitative inquiry is the focus on gaining *experiential understanding*. He stated that: "Quantitative researchers have pressed for explanation and control; qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding complex interrelationships among all that exists" (p. 37). The literature review demonstrated that leadership development in global organizations is a complex phenomenon that is not easily defined or understood. It is thus fitting that the research project took a form of qualitative inquiry that is better suited for the construction of greater understanding that can help further research and practice.

Case study research. There is an ongoing scholarly debate about case study as a research methodology (Creswell, 2013). While divergences exist among case study scholars regarding the epistemological and philosophical underpinnings of case study methodology (Yazan, 2015), most researchers view case study from either a post-positivist or a constructivist paradigm

(Baxter & Jack, 2008; Boblin, et al., 2013; Baharein & Noor, 2008; Yazan, 2015). Yin (2013) defined case study as a robust research method that investigates social phenomena holistically within a specific context of the research problem that defines the "case" of the study. Scholars also defined a case as an integrated system (Stake, 2005), or a bounded system (Merriam, 2001).

Stake (2005) identified two main types of case studies – intrinsic and instrumental, which can take the form of a single-case or a collective case study. As the name suggests, an intrinsic case study focuses on understanding the deep intricacies of a specific case. In contrast, an instrumental case study investigates particularities of a case with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of an issue or to expand the general understanding of a phenomenon. Stake (2005) stated that, "one of the most important things to remember is that for intrinsic case study…the case is of the highest importance. For instrumental case study, we start and end with issues dominant" (p. 16). Yin's main (2013) categories included explanatory, exploratory and descriptive case studies. Case study can focus on a single case where the focus is on holistic understanding of one unique case, or multiple cases where the goal is to investigate phenomena across multiple cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Scholarly debate. Over the past 30 years case study research has been gaining in popularity (Yin, 2014), partly as a response to the limitations of quantitative methods that fail to address the deeper, complex problems under inquiry (Zainal, 2007). While the case study methodology offers solutions to fill this gap, it has not been without criticism (Yin, 2014). Some of the main criticisms include a lack of rigor, little opportunity for generalization, and the challenge of managing large amounts of data produced (Zainal, 2007). To address these concerns, Yin (2014) stressed the importance of using systematic procedures for case study design and analysis.

The increase in the use of case study research has prompted scholarly debate about the methodology among scholars (Yazan, 2015). Some of the most impactful case study methodologists are Robert Yin, Sharan Merriam and Robert Stake. All three of these scholars have developed procedures and recommendations for case study research based on their respective epistemologies. Some scholars associate Yin's approach with the post-positivist, or even a positivist tradition (Boblin et al., 2013; Yazan, 2015) because of his focus on scientific design elements such as the use of propositions, cause-and-effect orientation of the research, and greater focus on controlling researcher bias. In contrast to Yin's approach, both Merriam and Stake embrace the constructivist approach and purely qualitative methodologies (Yazan, 2015).

Yin's (2014) case study approach is to some extent informed by the quantitative methodology, and it was developed as a response to offer an "all-encompassing method – covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis" (p. 17). While Yin's (2014) approach most closely reflects a realist orientation, he accepts that case study research can embrace relativist or interpretivist epistemological orientations. Stake and Merriam both align themselves with the constructivist approach and offer their own defining characteristics for case studies. Stake posits that case studies should be holistic, empirical, interpretive and empathetic, while Merriam's essential attributes are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Yazan, 2015).

Some of the major divergences among the case study methodologists are related to their design and the data collection techniques. As briefly mentioned above, Yin (2014) advocated for a more structured approach that includes five main design components: study questions, study proposition, if any; unit(s) of analysis; linking data to the propositions; and the criteria for interpreting the findings. Stake's (2005) approach allows for much more flexibility, and it even

allows for the study to evolve as it unfolds. While this flexibility may be appealing to some researchers, it may also be a challenging approach to adopt by novice researchers because of the lack of specific guidelines (Yazan, 2015). Some researchers argue, however, that Stake's flexible approach is better suited for a qualitative case study (QCS) as it allows for a more inductive analysis and a deeper exploration of the phenomena (Boblin, et al., 2013). Others posit that Merriam's approach strikes a balance between the approaches of Yin and Stake, offering a well-structured design as well as a level of flexibility that is driven by the qualitative tradition (Yazan, 2015).

Regarding data collection, all three scholars highlight the importance of triangulation which requires the use of multiple data sources. However, Yin (2014) advocated for a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, while both Stake (2005) and Merriam (2001) are firmly grounded in qualitative methods. According to Yin (2014), "mixed method research can permit researchers to address more complicated research questions and collect a richer and stronger array of evidence…" (p. 65). Yazan (2015) pointed out that in addition to this fundamental difference, Yin's approach to selecting and collecting data follows his overall structured approach, while Stake adopts the other extreme of great flexibility, emphasizing the role of researcher interpretations. He also argued that while Merriam follows a purely qualitative approach to data collection, she offers a more structured approach than Stake, highlighting the importance of effective data collection techniques.

The argument that Stake's approach allows for flexibility is reflected in the following statement by Stake (2005): "Good research is not about good methods as much as it is about good thinking" (p. 19). However, while Stake's (2005) approach is more flexible, it does not ignore the importance of careful planning and tedious research process. It appears unstructured

because when discussing his approach to case study research, some of the fundamental elements of designing and conducting a study were implied rather than explicitly stated. Merriam (2001) for example, closely discussed the importance of the theoretical framework and the literature review, while Stake (2005) did not explicitly highlight them. However, this does not mean that he does not find these elements important. He clearly stated: "I do not want examination of the phenomenon expressed in the issue to become more important than examination of the case as a whole, but I want my examination to draw upon the best discipline-based scholarship I can provide" (p. 18).

As can be discerned from the above discussion, the different approaches to case study research are strongly influenced by the epistemology of the individual scholars, which also shapes their stance regarding data validity. While Yin's overall approach is interwoven with strategies to achieve maximum validity and reliability of data, both Merriam's and Stake's constructivist epistemology underpins their perspective of validity as something that can be enhanced, but not fully achieved (Yazan, 2015).

Alignment. There are several reasons why case study research was a fitting approach for this research study. Yin (2014) pointed out that case study methodology is most fitting when a research question seeks to answer "how" or "why" certain phenomenon works. The research project was centered around two key issues – the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. Additionally, the research sought to explore the phenomenon by examining a specific leadership development program in a global organization that provided the specific context for the case study. Yin, Stake and Merriam all advocate the applicability of cases study research for the analysis of programs because programs are inherently bounded systems. The key characteristic of case study research is that it examines a system that is confined by

specific limitations. These constraints determine the boundaries of the case, and they also impact the extent and types of data collection methods (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 2005). As Stake (2005) stated: “Thus, people and programs clearly are prospective cases” (p. 2).

The research project was focused on developing a deeper understanding of a specific phenomenon. While the particularities and the context of the case are important, the goal was to gain clarification and a refined understanding of the foundational leadership capacity needed by future leaders in global organizations and of how this capacity can be developed. The research project can thus be best described by Stake’s (2005) definition of instrumental case study. By exploring the phenomenon under study, the research also offered insights into the applicability and utility of transformative learning and adult learning theories in leadership development, and thus offered both practical and theoretical implications. Additionally, the case study methodology allowed for in-depth real-world investigation of the phenomenon.

Research Site

As stated above, the case has specific boundaries that are defined by the selected program. The program is a first-level leader development program in a large global organization. The participating global organization is a multi-national conglomerate with operations in more than 200 countries worldwide, spanning over several industries and numerous business units. The research site for the study was selected through a purposeful criterion-based sampling by identifying a global organization that offers a dedicated leadership development program, and that was willing to provide access to the program and the participants who were willing to participate in the study. Creswell (2013) defined the process of purposeful sampling as follows: “…the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study” (p. 156). The

process of purposeful selection includes determining essential criteria that are informed by the purpose of the research study (Merriam, 2001). For the selected study, the essential criteria included:

- Selected organization must have operations that are global in scope.
- Selected organization must offer structured leadership development initiatives.
- Selected organization must have a leadership development strategy that is global in scope.
- Selected organization must provide access to the researcher in order to collect necessary data.
- The selected program must have a clearly defined structure, design, and process that can be investigated through different modes of data collection in order to perform triangulation.

Recruitment and Access

The access to the selected program was provided by the global program manager who acted as the *gatekeeper* (Creswell, 2013) during the research process. The program manager was introduced to the researcher through networking efforts assisted by Dr. Cheryl Richards, the Founding Regional Dean of Northeastern University in Charlotte, North Carolina. Due to the proprietary nature of the program design, the selected organization requested full confidentiality during the research process, as well as in the publication of the final published dissertation document. Thus, in any written works, the organization is identified by the general descriptor "the global organization" or simply "the organization" and the selected program is identified as the "first-level leader development program". The global program manager was informed about

the goals and the extent of the proposed research project, including the proposed data collection timeline and methods.

After the approval of the research proposal from the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB), with the help of the global program manager, the researcher identified and contacted suitable participants who were then formally asked to participate in the study. The participants were informed that the participation is voluntary and were assured of full confidentiality. Participants were provided with an informed consent form. According to Creswell (2013), consent forms should inform the participants about the purpose and the potential benefits of the study, provide details about the research process, declare the participants' right to withdraw from the study, and pledge full confidentiality.

Data Collection

Case study scholars identify several potential data sources for case study research. Yin (2014) provided the following six potential data sources: (1) documentation, (2) archival records, (3) interviews, (4) direct observations, (5) participant observation, and (6) physical artifacts. According to Merriam (2001) and Stake (2005), interviews, observations, and document reviews should be the three main data sources in a qualitative case study. Stake (2005) also highlighted the importance of observing context, which closely resembles Yin's (2014) physical artifact observation. According to Yin (2014), all these data sources have strengths and weaknesses that need to be considered. The goal of using multiple data sources is triangulation, which increases the credibility and the validity of the research project (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

For the research study, the data was collected from the following sources: (1) interviews, that included individual interviews with program participants, a focus group interview, an interview with a regional program manager, and an interview with the global program manager;

(2) analysis of journal notes from direct observation; (3) review of program documentation; and (4) review of external documentation.

Interviews. Merriam (2001), Stake (2005) and Yin (2014) all seem to agree that interviews are the most important sources of evidence in case study research. According to Stake (2005), "the interview is the main road to multiple realities" (p. 64), suggesting that the interview is the best data collection method for capturing variety of perspectives about the studied phenomenon. In case study research, the interviews should be in-depth, open-ended and less structured to allow for fluid flow of information (Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2014).

In-depth interviews with participants. The research study utilized in-depth semi-structured open-ended interviews with 12 participants of the first-level leader development program. The researcher conducted interviews with participants from two different geographic global regions (North America and Southeast Asia) in order to collect "global" differentiated perspectives. In addition to being from two different global regions, the participants were selected from various program cohorts. Some participants completed the program less than 6 months prior to the time of the interview, some completed it 6+ months before the interview and some competed the program 12+ months before the interview. The interview questions were focused on the participants' individual learning experiences and the learning outcomes from the program.

Due to the geographic diversity of where the participants are located, the individual interviews took place via a video conference service (Zoom). Conducting the interviews via video calling allowed for both verbal and non-verbal cues to be observed and captured. Follow-up probing questions were asked when needed to gain *thick description* from the participants that provided a deeper account of the participants' experiences (Stake, 2005). Each individual

interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Immediately upon interview completion the interviews reviewed in detail to capture not only the content but also the tone and verbal emphasis of the interviewee. Table 3.1 lists the individual interview questions, the probe questions and the purpose for each question. The full interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3.1

Individual Participant Interview Questions

Interview Question	**Potential Probe Questions**	**Purpose**
	Context	
Tell me about your experience of working in a large global organization.	What is unique/different, if anything, about it because of the global scope?	Informs the "global" context.
Based on your experience of working in a global organization, what kind of skills and mindset does a leader need to have to be effective in their role?	What makes these skills and mindset important?	Informs the understanding of leadership in global contexts.
	Program	
Why did you decide to participate in the program?	What were your main expectations? How did the program fulfill these expectations?	Informs motivation, design and outcomes.
Describe the program - the process, the individual stages and the timeframe.	What were your main impressions/takeaways from each "stage"?	Informs the design, process and outcomes.
Describe your experience with the virtual elements of the program.	What did you find helpful for your learning/development and why?	Informs the design, process and outcomes.
How did this program help you prepare for a future leadership role in a global organization?	What specific insights, perspectives, understandings, skills, and/or behaviors did you gain, develop or learn as a result of the program? How did this program equip you to handle challenges associated with global complexity?	Informs the design, process and outcomes.
When did these learning shifts occur?	Think back to specific experiences/exercises/encounters.	Informs the design and process.

What was it about the specific program experiences/exercises/encounters that was so impactful?	Please provide as much detail as possible. What were you thinking? What were you feeling? Tell me about any instances where you felt “outside of your comfort zone”. What were your takeaways from these instances?	Informs the design, process and outcomes.
How did this program and what we just discussed impact how you will approach leadership in the future?	How is this thinking different/new from how you thought about leadership before?	Informs the developmental outcomes.
How has going through this process impacted you personally and professionally?	Provide some specific examples.	Informs the individual and the organizational context.
Fill in the blanks in these statements: Because of this experience I feel... Because of this experience I think... Because of this experience I see... Because of this experience I am…	Take 5 minutes to think about and to answer these questions.	Informs developmental outcomes.

Focus group interview. A focus group interview was conducted one month after the participants’ second on-site workshop meeting of the first-level leader development program. The focus group interview was conducted via a video conference service and consisted of a moderated discussion with a group of nine participants from the same program cohort. The researcher introduced herself to the participants in person at a brief initial meeting that took place during the observation of the second on-site workshop meeting. During this introductory meeting the researcher built rapport with the participants and discussed the format, timing and the process of the focus group interview.

Focus group interviews are beneficial when interviewees have similar experiences and when the discussion can yield valuable data (Creswell, 2013). “The purpose of conducting a focus group is to better understand how people feel or think about an issue, idea, product, or service” (Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 2). For the purposes of the study, the goal of the focus group interview was to gather information from participants about their main takeaways,

impressions, feelings or mental shifts from the program. This qualitative data provided insights about the impact of various program elements, the similarities and the variations of participants' thoughts and feelings about these elements, as well as the relational aspects of participants' interactions. The first part of the interview was in a round robin format, and the second part took form of a less structured guided discussion. Table 3.2 provides the focus group interview questions and the overview of the format and the purpose of the questions. The full interview transcript can be found in Appendix E.

Table 3.2

Focus Group Interview Questions

Interview Question	**Purpose**
Opening & Context – Round Robin	
Tell me about your role in this organization. How long have you worked here and why did you decide to participate in the program?	Informs the context and motivation.
Based on your experience of working in a global organization, what kind of skills and mindset does a leader need to have to be effective in their role? What makes these skills and mindset important?	Informs the understanding of leadership in global contexts.
Program - Discussion	
Considering the skills and the mindset we just discussed, what are the three (or more) main shifts or takeaways from this program thus far. Discuss how these answers resonate for each of you.	Informs the developmental outcomes.
What have been some of the most impactful experiences/exercises/encounters in this program thus far? Why were they so impactful?	Informs the process, design and outcomes.
How has being part of a cohort impacted your experience in this program?	Informs the process, design and outcomes.
What have you learned from each other and the other participants about leadership during this process?	Informs the design and process.

Has there been any time during the program when you felt “outside of your comfort zone”? If so, when and why? What was your takeaway?	Informs the design and outcomes.
How has participating in this program shifted your view of leadership (if at all)?	Informs the design, process and outcomes.
If there is one personal and one professional change that you think you will implement in the future because of this program, what will they be?	Informs the individual and the organizational context.
Fill in the blanks in these statements: Because of this experience I feel... Because of this experience I think... Because of this experience I see... Because of this experience I am…	Informs developmental outcomes.

Interview with the regional program manager. As part of the data collection, the researcher interviewed the regional program manager of the North America (NA) region. The goal of this interview was to gain an additional perspective about the program goals, the program design and about the program manager’s account of the participants’ learning process. The interview provided valuable information about the similarities and differences between individual cohorts and about the potential impact of these variables on the groups’ interactions and outcomes.

Interview with the global program manager. The purpose of the interview with the global program manager was to collect data about the program within the context of the organization’s greater global talent management strategy. The global program manager oversees the global programming activities for the organization. This unique perspective provided a bird’s eye view of the program, and it offered additional insights about the relationship between the program design, the program goals and about the impact of the program on individual development within the organizational context. Table 3.3 provides a list of the interview questions arranged according to the interviewees’ roles. The full interview protocols for the

regional and the global program managers can be found in Appendix C and Appendix D, respectively.

Table 3.3

Interviews with the Regional and the Global Program Managers

Interview Question	**Examples of Probe Questions**	**Purpose**
Context – Regional and Global Program Managers		
Describe your role in the organization and how it relates to the first-level leader development program.	What are your key responsibilities?	Informs the context.
Based on your experience of working in a global organization, what kind of skills and mindset does a leader need to have to be effective in their role?	What makes these skills and mindset important?	Informs the understanding of leadership in global contexts.
Program – Regional Program Manager		
Describe the first-level leader development program.	What are the goals of the program? What are the participant selection criteria? Describe the overarching design philosophy.	Informs program design.
What are some program elements that address the global nature of the organization?	Describe the specific goals, the design elements, and the participants' engagement with these program elements.	Informs the global aspects of the program.
How does the program provide a transformative experience for the participants?	Describe some specific elements/experiences/exercises/encounters that you consider transformative. Why do you believe they are transformative?	Informs the design, process and outcomes.
How is this program (the process, participant feedback, outcomes) impacted by the cultural and regional context?	Think of specific examples of when culture played a role in how the participants engaged with the program (participation, interactions, outcomes, etc.)	Informs the global differentiation in program design and outcomes.
Describe the "cohort" element of the program design.	How do participants benefit from being part of a cohort? What is the purpose of the cohort during the development process? What is the role of the cohort upon completion of the program?	Informs the design, process and outcomes.
In your experience, how would you describe the outcomes of the program?	What is the overall official and unofficial feedback from the participants? What are some specific examples of organizational impact from the	Informs the developmental outcomes.

	program? (promotions, retention rates, employee engagement, etc.)	
Program – Global Program Manager		
Describe the first-level leader development program.	What are the goals of the program? What are the participant selection criteria? Do these vary globally? If so, how? Describe the overarching design philosophy.	Informs program design.
How does this program reflect the "global" context of the organization?	What curriculum or design elements address the challenges associated with global operations?	Informs program design and outcomes.
How does the larger global strategy inform the design of the program?	What is the overarching design philosophy? How does this program fit within the organization's talent management strategy?	Informs program designs and outcomes.
What are the leadership paradigms that inform the design and curriculum of the program?	How would you describe the organization's global leadership culture? What are some of the organization's main espoused leadership values?	Informs program design and outcomes.

Analysis of journal notes from observation. Observations play an important role in case study research as they can provide additional valuable information about the context of the phenomenon under study. This can be especially useful if the case study focuses on specific program elements, such as program curriculum where the curriculum can be observed as it is being implemented. Observations can offer an additional layer of data and can be conducted separately or during other data collection activities (Yin, 2014). Merriam (2001), described observations as follows:

> First, observations take place in the natural field setting instead of a location designated for the purposes of interviewing; second, observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview. (p. 94)

For the research study, the researcher conducted an observation of two onsite workshops that are part of the first-level leader development program. The researcher took journal notes during the observation which were later analyzed and triangulated with the other data sources. The goal of the observation was to obtain a firsthand account of the program implementation process, the various developmental strategies, and to capture observational data about the participants' participation and interactions.

Review of program documentation. The goal of the program documentation review was to collect information about the intended program design, the implementation process, and the goals of the first-level leader development program. The documents provided valuable supporting data about the relationships between the program goals, the design, and the developmental outcomes. The documents included an internal program overview document, participant workbooks and a sample of seven participant program surveys.

Review of external documentation. The external data review consisted of a detailed examination of industry studies, journal articles, public corporate reports, and other external documents that contained information pertinent to the research case. The goal of this type of data collection was to corroborate and augment evidence from the other data sources (Yin, 2014) and to place the study in the greater context of leadership development and global talent management.

Data Analysis

The previously described overreaching differences between the three main case study scholars are also reflected in the way they approach data analysis. Yin (2014) put forth specific analytic procedures that he believes are also cornerstones of enhanced validity. He argued that the analysis phase is one of the least developed aspects of case studies, which can have

especially detrimental effects for novice researchers. Based on this state of practice regarding the analysis phase of case study research, Yin (2014) proposed several useful strategies and analytic techniques to follow during the analysis process. To get started with building an analytic strategy, he suggested that researchers “play” with their data. This can be done in a form of “searching for patterns, insights, or concepts that seem promising" (p. 135), or by memoing.

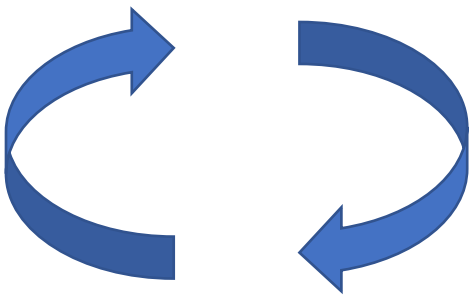
With his focus on interpretation, Stake (2005) argued that data collection and analysis happen simultaneously. He did not provide “one right way” of approaching data analysis and pointed out there is no set time when data analysis starts. He proposed two strategies for analyzing data, *categorical aggregation* and *direct interpretation*, positing that the nature of the research study will determine the type of analysis used. The analysis techniques focus on identifying patterns in the data or on data synthesis. In an instrumental case study, he argued, categorical aggregation helps focus the interpretation of data with the goal of answering the research questions.

Like Stake, Merriam (2001) also proposed simultaneous data collection and analysis. Her primary goal is to make sense out of the data through the process of meaning making, “that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation” (p. 178). While qualitative data analysis is predominantly thought to be an inductive process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), Creswell (2013) argued that holistic and complex analysis includes both inductive and deductive logic. While inductive analysis is the starting point of qualitative analysis, new data is always consolidated and integrated with existing data, which is where deductive analysis allows the researcher to reach a holistic understanding of the phenomena.

Considering the varied stances towards case study analysis, the researcher utilized both direct interpretation and categorical aggregation, or what could be described as a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning. Saldana (2016) argued that this type of two-cycle coding allows for cyclical, and thus more thorough, analysis of data. This allowed for data to freely emerge and be interpreted directly, while also being placed within the greater context through identification of themes and patterns. Saldana (2016) refers to this process as codification – "a process that permits data to be divided, grouped, reorganized and linked in order to consolidate meaning …" (p. 9). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "Data analysis is a complex process. We sometimes think of it as a dialectic in which you move between seeing the big picture (the "forest"), and the particulars (the "trees")" (p. 207). Table 3.4 depicts the data collection sequence and the data analysis process.

Table 3.4

Sequence of Data Collection and Analysis

<table>
<tr><td>Stage 1</td><td>Stage 2</td><td>Stage 3</td><td>Stage 4</td><td>Stage 5</td><td>Stage 6</td></tr>
<tr><td>External Document Review
& Literature Review</td><td>Review of Program Documentation</td><td>Observation & Focus Group Interview</td><td>Global and Regional Program Manager Interviews</td><td>Individual Participant Interviews</td><td>Additional Program Document Review</td></tr>
<tr><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td></tr>
<tr><td>● Developed problem statement.
● Placed proposed research in the larger context.
● Identified theoretical framework.
● Identified suitable research cite (program).</td><td colspan="5">Holistic Analysis – Inductive-Deductive Logic
  </td></tr>
</table>

To aid in the data analysis process, the researcher utilized the software program MAXQDA Plus 2020. Scholars argue that while researchers should not solely rely on computer tools because of the inherent complexity of data collection, a *computer assisted data analysis software* (CAQDAS) can be very helpful when analyzing large and diverse types of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014).

Ethical Considerations of the Case Study

There are several ethical elements that a researcher needs to consider when conducting a case study, such as his/her positioning as an insider/outsider, the qualitative/quantitative nature of the research, and the unique context of the case study. As a scholar-practitioner in the field of organizational leadership, it is the goal of the researcher to advance knowledge in organizations in order to drive positive change. This goal, however, does not come without its unique ethical dilemmas, which include the ethical consideration of participants, motivations for conducting the research, and questions about the quality and the credibility of qualitative research, all of which influence achieving the goal of creating positive change (Lindorff, 2007).

Credibility and trustworthiness. According to Kapoulas and Mitic (2012), there are several challenges related to qualitative research that can influence the quality and the credibility of the research outcomes. One of these challenges is the researcher's ability to gain access to key participants who can provide valuable insights that could lead to the creation of new knowledge. They argued that organizations and participants are often wary of participating in research due to the fear of revealing information that is sensitive and could impact the organization's competitive advantage or the participant's position in the organization. Keeping this in mind, the researcher ensured complete confidentiality for the organization and the participants throughout the entire research process.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) pointed out that in qualitative research, “understanding is the prime rationale for the investigation, the criteria for trusting the study are going to be different if discovery of law or testing a hypothesis is the study’s objective” (p. 238). Kapoulas and Mitic (2012) argued that the credibility of research is affected from the research inception stage and throughout the research process. Some scholars consider data analysis to be the “Achilles’ heel” of qualitative research because of the potential for misrepresentation or manipulation of data (Kapoulas & Mitic, 2012). Qualitative researchers recommend various strategies for increasing validation in qualitative research, including triangulation, peer review, member checks, adequate engagement with the data, long-term observations, participatory and collaborative modes of research, reporting of discrepant evidence, and clarifying researcher bias (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2001; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To ensure the utmost credibility and trustworthiness of the research project, several of the strategies mentioned above were used, and the purpose and the process of the data collection was clearly communicated from the beginning of the data collection. Triangulation was performed by using multiple sources of data. According to Stake (2005), “for data source triangulation, we look to see if the phenomenon or the case remain the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently” (p. 112). During the research process, various forms of interviews were conducted in order to collect data from different vantage points (participant vs. program manager), in various contexts (individual vs. focus group), and from different global perspectives. An observation and a review of program documentation and external documentation provided additional data sources for triangulation.

For the purposes of achieving internal validity, member checks were solicited from the research participants. Member checks help triangulate the researcher’s interpretations (Stake,

2005). Additionally, the researcher conducted an observation of two on-site components of the selected program. This type of prolonged observation generated rich data about the different learning and developmental activities of the program.

Protection of human subjects. As discussed above, the data collection included in-depth interviews with the program participants, interviews with the regional program manager and the global program manager, a focus group interview and an observation. All of these instances involve human subjects. While the elements of trustworthiness and research credibility are important and require ethical consideration, the impact on human participants and their role in the research process is central to qualitative research methodologies such as the case study. Qualitative research in general presents many different challenges because of its dependence on close interactions with human beings (Eide & Khan, 2008).

In addition, especially in organizational research, participants may often feel "invisible" or as mere sources of data, as the research may be too focused on the research outputs of improving organizational outcomes rather than the research process and the benefits of the participants (Lindorff, 2007). Wright and Wright (2002) claimed that this lack of consideration for participants is the reason why organizational research often lacks in relevance and meaning. Brief (2000) pointed out that all levels of organizational members are studied under management research, and they deserve the researchers' ethical obligation. Lindorff (2007) argued that the ethical impact of management and organizational research on the well-being of participants is often forgotten because unlike in clinical research, there is no danger of physical harm to the participants. However, in organizations, just as in other areas of life, there is suffering and pain, and therefore it is equally important to think about all organizational members through the lens of compassion (Frost, 2011).

Due to the above concerns, it was very important for the researcher to develop a sense of trust with the participants, which is one of the main goals of conducting qualitative research (Boeije, 2010). According to Creswell (2013), building trust with the research participants also helps balance any potential power imbalance. To do this the researcher explained the academic purpose of the study to the participants, assured them of the confidentiality of the data, and obtained appropriate consent. However, Boeije (2010) contemplated that concern for the participants should not end with the interview or observation itself, but rather should include consideration of the potential for harm even after the researcher has completed the data collection process.

Wright and Wright (2002) proposed the committed-to-participant research (CPR) paradigm as a useful approach to organizational research. The CPR approach is based on the action research model developed by Lewin (1948) (as cited in Wright & Wright, 2002), and it is grounded in empathy, compassion and continuous critical reflection on the needs of participants. In addition, according to CPR, "researcher responsibility extends beyond the data collection stage" (Wright & Wright, p. 176).

The researcher used the CPR approach to guide her interactions with the participants before, during, and after the research project. Lindorff (2007) argued that in order to show full consideration for the participants, it is important that their welfare is considered during the research design phase. This is in line with the CPR approach proposed by Wright and Wright (2002). According to Lindorff (2007), one way to do this is to ensure voluntariness and informed consent. While the researcher had the help of the regional program managers who initiated the contact with the potential participants, the researcher personally reached out to each participant, requested their participation, and informed them about the details and the purpose of the study.

The participants were also informed about the significance of their honest perspectives for the validity of the research study, and about how the outcomes of the study may provide useful information for their personal and professional future growth and development. The participants were very eager to participate and to share their insights about their experience in the first-level leader development program. Thus, intentionally applying the principles of compassion and empathy as proposed by the CPR approach not only reduced the potential harm to the participants but added relevance and meaning to the data.

Researcher bias. Reflection on the researcher's position as relating to the research problem and revealing potential biases that may impact the research process are key aspects of maintaining research integrity. The researcher grew up in Slovakia (formerly Czechoslovakia) and has an extensive international background, having lived, studied, and worked in several countries. As a teenager, the researcher participated in an international student exchange program in the United States and subsequently pursued her post-secondary education internationally, first at the University of Malta in the Mediterranean, then at Purdue University in the United States and finally at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland. The experiences of interacting with people from different backgrounds and cultures may have created potential bias about the way the researcher perceives global diversity and the type of competence that is essential for effectively navigating diverse global environments.

The researcher also believes that encountering differences expands one's ability to relate to others, and it creates a more inclusive world view. This may pose a bias about the way the researcher views leadership in global contexts and about how she may assign importance to certain aspects of leadership development. The researcher's experience of having worked in an international environment fueled a curiosity about leadership, specifically about the complexities

related to navigating diverse global business environments. Looking back at the experience, the researcher understands that it left an imprint on her perception of "effective" leadership in global environments. The challenge that this bias presents is that the concept of leadership is very complex and contingent on many different variables. The perception of "effective" leadership is difficult to measure and interpret (Mendenhall, 2018). The definition of what constitutes effective leadership in global contexts is challenging to define, keeping in mind that the concept of leadership itself is difficult to pin down (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013). This challenge, however, also represents an opportunity to further explore the concept of leadership in global contexts and to gain a deeper understanding of how leadership development programs can create meaningful transformation that will enable future leaders to effectively navigate challenges of the global working environment. During the exploration, however, it will be important that the researcher continuously reflects on these potential biases about leadership.

In addition, the experience of being an immigrant, going through the process of assimilation, and having to adjust to significant change provides the researcher with an increased understanding of people's ability to handle and respond to change. One of the reasons the researcher is interested in the study of leadership is because it is a concept that inherently requires individuals to challenge their stereotypes, and it requires them to develop richer understanding of the "other". Yukl (2013) suggested that while the multitude of definitions of leadership have little in common, fundamentally they all hold the assumption that leadership "involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization" (p. 2). Words such as "influence" and "relationships" are central to leadership.

The researcher understands that while conducting the case study she will need to be sensitive to the power status and will need to continually reflect on how it may impact the participants and the research process. The researcher will be conducting the case study as an outsider, which may be perceived negatively by the participants who may feel that the researcher may not fully understand their experiences. On the other hand, approaching the research problem from outside-in will ensure greater objectivity, and it may allow the participants to be more vulnerable and honest in sharing their opinions without the threat of being internally evaluated. Thus, during the research process the researcher will need to reflect on both sides of the "outsider" positionality in order to effectively develop a sense of trust and comfort with the research participants.

Lastly, professionally the researcher currently acts as a consultant in the area of global leadership development. While the researcher fully embraces the role of a scholar-practitioner, she also understands that through her research she has developed a level of scholarly bias that shapes her approach as a practitioner. Although these perceptions and interests serve as the engine fueling the research project, the researcher will have to be very careful not to allow her biases to project certain pre-determined outcomes onto the research.

In summary, the unique value of the scholar-practitioner lies in the ability to recognize the subjectivities arising from their positionality and to use this awareness to build upon the existing knowledge and explore new theoretical ideas that could lead to potential practical improvements. The researcher's interest in leadership in global contexts arises from her personal and professional experiences and the perceptions that she acquired through these experiences. The researcher believes it provides a unique opportunity to create value in both research and practice. According to Machi and McEvoy (2012), one's personal experiences, preconceptions,

and acquired points of view can present both strengths and weaknesses for their research effort. This conflict between valuing the individual viewpoints and understanding reality, yet admitting that one's truth is based on a subjective perspective, is difficult to navigate.

According to Takacs (2002), connecting positionality to epistemology can be simultaneously empowering and disempowering. One cannot completely disregard his or her positionality in an effort to minimize bias, because just like everyone else's positionality, it is grounded in personal experiences. Denying these experiences would prevent authentic reflection. It is important, then, to strike a balance between fully embracing one's positionality, knowing how they know the world, and actively seeking and listening to other viewpoints in order to develop a fuller understanding of the context in order to achieve "strong objectivity" (Banks, 2007). It is the researcher's goal to continuously reflect on the biases related to the research problem in order to control the effect of these biases on the research efforts.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

The purpose of this research study was to gain a deeper understanding of the transformative experience of participants of leadership development programs in global organizations (the "what") and of how various program elements facilitate this transformation (the "how"). The goal of this single-case instrumental case study was to investigate the development process (conceptualized as transformation) of future leaders in global organizations by focusing on two key *issues* (Stake, 2005), the "what" and the "how", that comprise the phenomenon of leadership development. In the case study, the "what" is represented by the outcomes of the first-level leader development program in a large global organization, with the "how" being exemplified by the learning process and the design elements of the program. The global organization is a multinational conglomerate with revenues of over $90 billion and over 375,000 employees world-wide.

As an instrumental case study, the focus of the research process was underpinned by the greater phenomenon of development of future leaders in global organizations. As such, the particularities of the case were investigated with the goal of gaining an experiential understanding of the phenomenon and of the two *issues* that define it.

This first section describes the particularities of the case under investigation, including the organizational context and the program itself and the research participants. The following section provides an overview of the data collection and the data analysis process that outlines the sources of data, the research questions, and the conceptual framework that guided the research process. The next section presents the research findings as they relate to the central research question, the sub-questions, and the analytical questions that helped further focus the data analysis. The findings are organized according to major themes and categories that emerged from

the data analysis through triangulation of data sources. The chapter concludes with a summary of key research findings.

Research Case Overview

A case has been described as a bounded or integrated system that can address the research question(s) posed by the researcher (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2013). For the purposes of this research study, the selected program provides clear boundaries of the case under investigation. The program was selected through purposeful criterion-based sampling that defined the essential criteria outlined in Chapter Three. The program is a first-level leader development program in a large global organization. The global organization has operations in more than 200 countries worldwide, spanning over several industries and numerous business units. The global, matrixed nature of the organization represents a unique context within which the case is situated.

The first-level leader development program is the first of three levels of leadership development programs focused on developing management and leadership skills in the organization's employee population. The program is global in nature, in that it is offered world-wide and is open to all of organization's business units. The program is operated by individual global regions that define the participant population for that region's participant cohorts. The design and the delivery methods are consistent across all global regions. The program cohorts are operationally diverse with the cultural diversity determined by that region's cultural make-up.

The program is structured in five phases over a period of sixteen weeks, with two of the phases being 4-day in-person onsite sessions that take place at the organization's regional training sites. The three remaining phases are virtual in nature and take place at the beginning, the middle, and at the end of the program. The virtual phases provide a combination of

organizational and management/leadership-related content, as well as access to a social platform for participant interactions.

Participants. The case study participants included focus group participants (9) from a specific program cohort in the North America (NA) region, individual past program participants (12), the Regional Program Manager for the NA region and the Global Program Manager. Six out of the twelve individual participants were from the North America (NA) region, while the other six participants were from the organization's Southeast Asia (SEA) region. The participants had diverse operational backgrounds and were part of different business units. The length of time the participants had been employed by the global organization ranged widely, anywhere from 2 to 17 years.

The Regional Program Manager is responsible for the oversight of the program in the North America (NA) region that includes the United States and Canada. The Regional Program Manager oversees all matters related to the program in the NA Region, including the requirement compliance for participant nominations. The initial nominations are submitted by the participants' direct supervisors. In addition to overseeing the first-level leader development program, the Regional Program Manager is also responsible for the overall leadership and development learning portfolio for the NA region. The Global Program Manager has a global responsibility for the program, making sure that the program is consistent in design and delivery across all global regions. The Global Program Manager also serves as the connecting point between the various global regions.

The program participant interviews focused on understanding the participants' individual and shared experiences while the program manager interviews provided valuable data about the

program design, specifically the goals, the design philosophy, the organizational values, the organizational culture and the larger organizational context that informed the program design.

In order to maintain confidentiality and to protect the participants' identities, each participant was assigned a pseudonym. To distinguish the focus group participants from the individual participants the focus group participant pseudonyms start with FG (for "focus group"), followed by letters A-I. The individual participants will be distinguished by their respective region (NA or SEA), plus letters A-F. Table 4.1 and table 4.2 summarize the participants' pseudonyms, their respective regions and the number of years they have worked at the organization. The program managers will be referred to by their operational titles of Regional Program Manager and Global Program Manager.

Table 4.1

Focus Group Participants

Focus Group Participants		
Participant Pseudonym	**Region**	**Years with Organization**
Participant FG-A	North America	7 years
Participant FG-B	North America	12 years
Participant FG-C	North America	8 years
Participant FG-D	North America	17 years
Participant FG-E	North America	12 years
Participant FG-F	North America	8 years
Participant FG-G	North America	3 years
Participant FG-H	North America	8 years
Participant FG-I	North America	15 years

Table 4.2

Individual Participants

Individual Interview Participants		
Participant Pseudonym	**Region**	**Years with Organization**
Participant NA-A	North America	13 years
Participant NA-B	North America	8 years
Participant NA-C	North America	4 years
Participant NA-D	North America	12 years
Participant NA-E	North America	6 years
Participant NA-F	North America	2 years
Participant SEA-A	Southeast Asia	3 years
Participant SEA-B	Southeast Asia	12 years
Participant SEA-C	Southeast Asia	8 years
Participant SEA-D	Southeast Asia	7 years
Participant SEA-E	Southeast Asia	10 years
Participant SEA-F	Southeast Asia	10 years

Overview of Data Collection and Analysis

The process of the data collection and the analysis were informed by the qualitative nature of the research study. The data collection comprised of four data sources: (1) an analysis of journal notes from direct observations; (2) qualitative interviews that included a focus group interview, individual interviews with past program participants, an interview with the Regional Program Manager of the NA region, and an interview with the Global Program Manager; (3) a review of program documentation that consisted of the organization's internal program overview document, of the participant program workbooks, and of student program evaluations (7) that were collected from a specific cohort of program participants; and (4) a review of external documents on the subject of leadership development in global organizations. The external

documentation review was used to support the instrumental nature of the case study and to place the findings in the greater context of the phenomenon of leadership development in global organizations.

Research Questions. The research study was guided by the following central research question: *What is the transformative experience of participants of future leader development programs?* Two sub-questions and additional analytical questions helped further focus the data collection and the data analysis process. The central research question and the sub-questions were informed by the proposed conceptual framework of leadership development process in global organizations that utilized the theoretical lens of adult learning and transformative learning theories (see Appendix A).

Sub-question 1. The first sub-question helped further focus the research by investigating the first issue (the "what") that defines the phenomenon of leadership development in global organizations: *What kind of individual transformation occurs as a result of future leader development programs in global organizations?* Utilizing the proposed conceptual framework, the data collection and the analysis was focused on understanding the participants' expanded "way of knowing" and "way of being", the type of learning outcomes needed to navigate complex global environments (Geller, 2009; Johnson, 2008; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2014; Kwon & Nicolaides, 2017). In addition, the research process sought to understand the participants' shifts in perspective that lead to an increase in self-awareness and inclusiveness, and that help foster relational orientation (Dirkx, 1998). The data that best addressed this question was collected during the focus group interview and the individual participant interviews. Corroborating data about the program's goals was collected from the interviews with

the Regional Program Manager and the Global Program Manager, the internal program overview document, and from the sample of participant surveys.

Sub-question 2. The second sub-question focused on the second issue (the "how") of the phenomenon under investigation: *How does individual transformation occur?* Also guided by the proposed conceptual framework, the process of development was viewed through the lens of transformative learning theory. The cognitive, relational and affective aspects of transformative learning were considered during the analysis and the interpretation of findings to gain a deeper understanding of the transformative process. Further, to understand any supporting elements and potential barriers to learning, the andragogical assumptions were considered as moderating variables for the development process. While the focus group interview, the individual participant interviews and the observational journal notes provided the greatest insights into this question, triangulated data from all data sources was used during the analysis and the interpretation of findings.

Data Collection Process. The data collection took place in six stages. The initial stage was focused on reviewing external documentation that included journal articles, industry leadership reports and global leadership surveys. This data helped focus the problem statement and to place the research study in the broader context of leadership development in global organizations.

The next step in the data collection process was the review of the organization's internal program overview document outlining the goals, the framework, the content, and the design philosophy of the program. The document provided initial introductory information to the researcher about the expected outcomes and the design elements that may impact the transformative experience of program participants. This information was considered during the

development of the interview protocols for the focus group interview and the individual participant interviews. The document also outlined the timeline of the program that helped the researcher develop timeline for the observation and for the focus group and the individual participant interviews.

The next stage of the data collection included an observation of the program's onsite training sessions and a focus group interview. The researcher observed two onsite sessions for two different cohorts (onsite 1, and onsite 2 of the first-level leader development program). While conducting the observation the researcher took detailed notes that were later analyzed independently and then triangulated with the remaining data sources. During the observation of the 2nd program onsite, the researcher solicited initial interest from the cohort participants to take part in the focus group interview. The cohort participants who expressed interest were later contacted and officially recruited to participate in the focus group interview. The focus group interview took place a month and a half after the completion of the participants' 2nd program onsite.

The interviews with the Regional Program Manager and the Global Program Manager took place after the observation, which allowed the researcher to reference the data collected during the observation and to ask more informed questions about the different design elements and the design philosophy informing the program. The interviews with the regional and the global program managers provided valuable insights about the program, the global context of the organization, and about the larger organizational talent management strategy.

The next stage of the data collection consisted of individual interviews with past program participants. The participants were identified with the help of the regional program managers for the NA and the SEA region. The interviews took place over a span of two months during times

that were convenient for the participants. All interviews had a semi-structured format; they were conducted over the video conferencing platform Zoom and followed the protocols outlined in Appendixes B-E.

As the last step of the data collection, a sample of participant evaluation surveys was obtained from the organization. The surveys were used to corroborate the data from the other sources, especially form the interviews and the observation journal notes.

Coding and Analysis. All the participant interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview transcriptions, the observation notes and the program documents were uploaded to the qualitative analysis software MAXQDA Plus 2020 to help with the organization and the analysis of data. To assist with the coding of the interview transcripts, the original recordings of the interviews were also uploaded into the program so they could be referenced during the coding and the analysis process. The interview transcripts and the observation notes were initially coded with first cycle coding methods. Saldana (2016) pointed out that often several different coding methods may be fitting for a study, especially with various data sources. As such, the first cycle open coding included a combination of process coding, descriptive coding, concept coding and in-vivo coding. Following the initial first cycle coding, the codes were organized into general categories that emerged as the codes were reviewed. During the second cycle coding, axial codes were created that re-focused the codes and the categories to more closely capture the meaning as it related to the research issue questions. Sub-categories were created under the main axial codes to further organize the data and to aid in interpretation of findings. During the entire coding process the data was repeatedly re-examined and re-analyzed to arrive at the best understanding of the defining issues of the research phenomenon.

The following section presents the research findings as they relate to the central research question utilizing the research issue questions (sub-questions) and the analytical questions to present the findings.

Sub-question 1: What kind of individual transformation occurs as a result of future leader development programs in large global organizations?

The first sub-question focused on developing an understanding of the outcomes (conceptualized as transformation) or the "what" of developing future leaders in global organizations. Three analytical questions were used to help understand specific aspects of the developmental outcomes: (1) How is individual development demonstrated in an individual context?; (2) How is individual development demonstrated in an organizational context?; and (3) What are the differences/similarities in developmental outcomes globally?

Utilizing the theoretical framework of transformative learning, the interviews with the individual participants and the focus group interview focused on understanding the program outcomes reported by the participants that led to the participants' expanded *way of being* and *way of knowing*. This type of development has also been described as a change in "form" that leads to one's expanded capacity (Kegan, 2000). During the interviews, the participants were asked to discuss their major takeaways from the program. In addition, at the end of the interviews all the individual participants and the focus group participants were asked to fill in the blanks to the following statements: "Because of this experience - I feel…; - I think…; - I see…; and - I am…". The goal of soliciting responses to the "I feel" and "I am" statements was to develop an understanding of the participants' *way of being*, while the goal of the "I think" and "I see" statements was to get an insight into the participants' *way of knowing*.

The research findings related to the first sub-question are presented in four different sections. The first section reports the program outcome goals referencing the data collected from the interviews with the regional and the global program managers and from the organization's internal program overview document. This data provides the context for the participants' developmental outcomes. The second section reports the major themes and the sub-categories related to individual transformation reported by the participants. The third section provides a summary of the responses to the "I feel", "I think", "I see", and "I am" statements that provide an insight into the participants' transformative outcomes as they relate to their *way of being* and *way of knowing*. The last section reports findings that provide insights into the analytical questions.

Program goals and targeted outcomes. The organization's internal program overview document defined four overall goals of the first-level leader development program: (1) grasp the organizational strategy and initiatives to contribute to a strong organizational culture; (2) engage with stakeholders to drive results and to achieve business success; (3) understand leadership roles and how change impacts managerial behavior; and (4) develop greater self-awareness which strengthens the ability to lead people to excellence. Other key aspects related to the program outcomes that emerged from the document review include the ability to manage complexity and developing an ownership culture ("getting into the driver's seat").

The program is the first of three levels of the organization's leader development programs. According to the Global Program Manager, the broader organizational leadership goals that underpin the goals of all three levels of the leader development program are organized into three main areas: (1) developing yourself; (2) developing others; and (3) developing the business. The threads that are found throughout all three program levels include categories like

customer focus, driving for results, maintaining self-awareness, emotional intelligence, owning your career, coaching and developing others, and communicating effectively. As a first-level leader development program, the program focuses on foundational management and leadership skills. The Global Program Manager discussed that it is the first-level leader context that determines how these skills are determined, recognizing that not all participants will be in a functional leadership position upon completion of the program:

> … because while we know that your ultimate goal is to move into a management level position, we don't know when that's going to happen … The differentiation becomes … at what level do I need to apply it? So as far as driving business results, when I'm an individual contributor and thinking about becoming a manager, I need to think about what are the factors … (for categories like) driving for results and performance … what are the factors that I have control over and can influence? What are the ways that I can influence the colleagues who are working with me? If I'm moving into … a team lead position, but I don't have … (management) responsibility for somebody … what can I do to tweak them … their performance and drive them toward what I need?

The Global Program Manager shared that the leadership skills that drive the program goals are determined by combining corporate-informed values and new leadership trends that are emerging organically at different divisions within the organization:

> We're seeing the trends. We're aware of it. So how do we help define that? So we're using that influence to shape that conversation. We're partnering closely with a couple of our major divisions to say, "All right, here's what you're saying is going to be important with your leaders". What I'm particularly excited about is there's a strong influence for positive leadership right now … And so they're focusing on caring, they're focusing on

> engaging, they're focusing on the positive aspects of leadership … We're working collaboratively with them to say, "Here's the traits that we think are important for leadership." So when I was talking about, you know, some of those key parts of develop yourself, develop others, and develop the business and the areas within those, we're trying to make sure that those are reflected within our leadership and management programs."

Both, the Regional Program Manager and the Global Program Manager discussed the importance of the matrixed and the global organizational context that informs the foundational leadership skills that define the goals of the first-level leader development program. They both discussed the importance of the applicability of the skills at an individual contributor level, not just in a functional management role, as well as the applicability of the skills globally. The Global Program Manager described the thought process behind the importance of the skills having applicability in different organizational contexts:

> When we pick the categories … we know that most people that are at the point in their career that they have that potential, they're going to be working in projects where they're needing to use these skills. Most of the time they're leading without authority, but you can always use coaching and development skills with somebody that you're working on a project with that you need them to perform at whatever level and do something. So I'd say with … (the program) that's another special component of it … you're trying to prepare somebody for the next level, but also give them tools that are useful when they come back on the job, that they can use immediately.

The Regional Program Manager conferred that all the skills from the program can be applied globally. The global applicability of the skills is especially important due to the global context within which the organization operates. The Global Manager pointed this out, saying:

> Because the idea is the skills you gain from this program, you can use it in your own country, but if you moved into a leadership or management step in another country at … (the organization) you could take those skills and apply it there, as well.

As the findings from the program documentation review and the program manager interviews suggest, there are specific outcome goals of the first-level leader development program that are informed by the organizational context, the organization's corporate values and specific leadership trends emerging within the organization. The next section reports the findings of the first-level leader development program outcomes as they were experienced and described by the former program participants.

Major themes of participants' developmental outcomes. The major themes of the "what" of participants' transformative experience that emerged from the interviews with the individual participants and the focus group participants include increased self-leadership; effective communication; value of giving and receiving feedback; understanding and leading others; challenging assumptions, valuing other perspectives and navigating diversity; and understanding of leadership.

Self-leadership. The overarching theme of improved self-leadership as an outcome emerged from the data by combining several smaller categories that make up self-leadership. The main themes under the self-leadership category were a change in mindset, increased self-awareness, self-management, and continuous learning and leveraging relationships. Based on the

participants' responses, the self-leadership category included elements of both, expanded *way of being* and *way of knowing*.

Mindset. The participants discussed various elements and shifts that impacted their mindset but several of them pointed to an overall change of perception. Participant NA-D stated that he, "came away with a different mindset". He later elaborated on this shift demonstrating that often a change in mindset includes several different realizations and insights:

> Um, just never lose sight of that big picture, I mean … I really think that's … my biggest take-away, to not get lost in your individual task or individual moment and to always keep the big picture in mind and you really, to be a good leader you really need to care and make yourself vulnerable to your team's performance and make sure they know it too, it needs to, it was definitely more of a, you know, exposing the human element to leadership and (to) business performance.

Participant SEA-B expressed the shift that occurred for him after the program stating, "It's your perception … (that) changes. And you start to observe more. And when you observe more, of course you get more data to process. And hopefully if you process that much data, you can grow a little bit". Participants SEA-C pointed out that the key outcome of his learning is the change in mindset that is necessary for the learning takeaways to have a long-term impact:

> This learning is … to ready your own mindset. To know something that you may not know before and how to implement it. And this is just knowledge but (the) most important (thing) is (that) you have to keep on doing it, (so it can) become a habit. Which is the most challenging part. And of course, it's not easy to say that, I have this knowledge now, that it can mean that next time when I hold a leadership (position) I will also have this … same kind of one hundred percent understanding. It may be reduced, but

> what I can do now is I can keep on trying my best to implement it. Surrounding (myself) wherever I go. It's not only fixed to … the working environment.

Another important aspect of mindset was discussed during the focus group interview. During this instance, participant FG-B discussed the importance of having an intentional mindset as a manager:

> I think that the … (program) really reinforced that because … a large portion of managers become managers because it's the next step or the opportunity's there and they're what someone else thought was the best person to do it. ... And there are so many … good things that you can get out of, you know, spending a little time and effort … being … an intentional manager ... to me, that's the difference between … what makes you a good manager ….

Several other participants in the focus group interview talked about the importance of intentionality. Some discussed intentionality in the context of their communication and interactions with others. Participant FG-D stated, "Professionally it's to be the more deliberate and organized in my communication, especially with … colleagues around the world and to understand … both culturally and individually … where they're coming from." Participant FG-E pointed out that being intentional about time management helped him feel more productive, "You know, (at the) end of the day I feel more accomplished … which is beneficial from my work life, but also from a mental stability standpoint. … It's really helped my outlook." Participant FG-F shared that he was being intentional about implementing reflection practice into his workday, while admitting that having the intention is one thing, but actually implementing the practice is much more challenging:

> I realize that my … reflections … (would) change if I actually tried to set aside time … to do that in writing. So far it hasn't worked that great. I can add that, I set aside time in my calendar at the very end of my day, but at the very end of my day, I'm also busy trying to get out … So then I was like, well, let me shift it to the beginning of the day. Maybe when I come in, nothing has happened yet. It's usually very early. I can reflect on things, but some of that doesn't work because I just somehow slip into the usual work routine. So I'm still trying to figure out how that can actually best work out.

In the individual interviews, participants also brought up the importance of intentionality in making the best out of their daily habits and strategies, or in being fully present. Participant NA-B stated, "If there was one insight it was be fully present. Just, you know, if you're somewhere, just be there."

Increased self-awareness. Another factor that impacted the level of the participants' self-leadership was an increase in their self-awareness. Several participants discussed their new awareness of how their behaviors impact others. Participant NA-E shared her realization stating, "It turns out that I'm pretty argumentative so … you know, it's all those things that you … know about yourself but maybe don't take that much time to think about it or think about how it impacts others." Participant NA-D posited that part of being able to see the bigger picture, one must be aware of the impact of their actions and behaviors on others saying "… it definitely helped with … opening your eyes to the bigger picture, …. broadening your consideration, not (to) just the big decisions, even the small decisions, even the culture that you project to those around you."

Other participants shared instances of increased self-awareness about their behavioral tendencies that do not serve them. Participant NA-C discussed an instance from the program that

made him aware that sometimes even strengths can be weaknesses if one is not self-aware. The following is the recount of his “aha” moment:

> I think that's kind of a key thing that we took away from this … one comment that was highly interesting to me was, "… you're thinking in … a thousand miles a minute, you're engaged in the discussion, you're doing everything, and yet you don't seem to miss anything that's going on … you're just constantly thinking." And so … another participant) gave me a great feedback and said, "That's awesome, but you now need to take your time and slow it down so the rest of us can catch up."

Participant SEA-F shared her realization about gaining awareness of one of her tendencies that does not serve her stating, “I realized something ... there are things that I don't need to dwell on too much … I could save time and do the job more. Sometimes I tend to dwell on some areas, and then I tend to … overlook the other parts.”

Participant SEA-B discussed how increased self-awareness also helped him understand other people:

> I’m an extrovert definitely … (who) likes to talk. I'm not good at planning and … I was very judgmental. So now, … I understand … these personality types and so on. And then you … also start to understand the people in my team.

Participant NA-C pointed out that an increase in self-awareness helps him be more aware of his strengths and opportunities for growth and of the type of support he may need to be successful. He stated:

> I am who I am, and … understanding that a little bit more is key. So, understanding the blinders (and) understanding the things that I'm good with … I can then have those discussions (and) say, "I'm going to need more time to build this team because it's going

> to be challenging for me because my leadership strengths are A, B, and C. This will help me grow with D and E, and that becomes a key part, which makes me a better person overall in the future."

Self-management. Self-management as a category is different than the larger theme of self-leadership. This category emerged as the participants discussed their understandings of the specific strategies and changes of behavior that they need to implement to become better leaders. Their statements demonstrated that the increase in their self-awareness and the newly gained knowledge about effective leadership needs to be followed by specific actions. Participant NA-B summed up this awareness of the importance (and challenge) of implementing the new knowledge saying, "But now … I don't have any excuses, right? That's … (kind of) the worst part, … you know, … if you don't embrace this, like it's kind of on you … a little bit".

The participants discussed several strategies that they found to be impactful for their self-management. These included better time and task management, intentional reflection, and prioritization. The data revealed that the participants' goals for changes in behavior were highly individual and tied to the participants' learning needs. For example, participant SEA-E who is an introvert realized that he needs to speak up more and contribute his ideas stating, "… (If I don't speak up) nobody can understand about me. So that's why I should insist on speaking out ... Participant NA-F shared a similar insight:

> Going through that experience … made me … feel … (that) even though I'm really young (and) I might not know everything here, … I should just continue to speak out on what my opinions are, even if they're … (going to) be wrong. You know, someone will help teach me.

Participant SEA-F shared her understanding that in order to be a leader she needs to lean into, rather than shy away from conflict. She stated:

> There are situations where you have to deal with … (conflict) and then you resolve (it). Because people … like that. They want things done. They would like things to be finished. ... (it is) not (good to) just let it be … and then afterward the problem again happens and you just back off. So I realized that's how I am. But as a leader, you should not be like that because you have to look into the problem and discuss it and … find a solution.

Participant NA-F also shared an actionable takeaway regarding her conflict management approach:

> It was very important for me to learn that, because I tend to be more … on the agreeable side, whereas, you know, there might be times where I need to … be a shark and … go for it … (because it is) something that really needs to get done.

Participant SEA-B shared that the program helped him identify areas of growth that he can use to become a better leader:

> During the program I got some insights … that helped me a lot. I find … (that) especially after the course I'm optimizing myself. I am, let's say, noticing some things that I'm doing maybe not correctly or (that) I can do in a different way. So, I can say it's really helped me.

Continuous learning and leveraging relationships. The category of continuous learning was closely connected with the participants' realization of the importance of mentoring relationships and with the ability to leverage relationships for continuous growth. One of the focus group participants discussed the value of pursuing mentoring relationships at length.

Participant FG-H stated, “I think for me, one of my biggest takeaways … is that I have to find mentoring within the company to help develop and keep me on track with what my goals are and career path.” He further discussed how the program helped him come to the realization that mentoring will be key to his future growth:

> I think it's good, you know, with having all the people around you, (you) can kind of bounce things off of (them) and … hear where they're going in their careers and some of the things they're doing. And then you definitely feel the need to find somebody within your part of the organization to help guide you. That's the way I felt when I left (the program).

Focus group participant FG-F mentioned that he realized the importance of surrounding himself with the right people in order to stay motivated, “…(the) idea of being motivated, inspired by the people around me. It's just (to) keep looking for those people ... and then … don't surround myself with … people that are negative all the time.”

The individual participants also talked about the program spurring their interest in further learning and development. Participant SEA-D shared his thoughts about continuing to grow:

> … most important is after a certain period of time you have to think about how you can improve. What … you can do … differently, because you can never stay at the same place forever. You have to step up, you have to move forward.

The individual participant interviews also supported the takeaway of leveraging relationships for continuous learning. Participant SEA-F stated, “I just need to reach out more to people so that they can share … (with) me their ideas and I can learn from them ...” Participant NA-F shared a similar takeaway, “Making sure you reach outside of your group, I guess, into other divisions, even if you're not sure if they could help or not; just it's worthwhile.” Participant

NA-A also mentioned that “having good mentors” was one of his main takeaways from the program.

Effective communication. Another major theme of the mental shifts and the takeaways that emerged from the individual interviews was the importance of effective communication and its impact on team collaboration, team outcomes and on conflict management. This theme also included categories of active listening and asking the right questions and managing conflict. Participant SEA-D shared that one of the key takeaways for him regarding effective communication was just the importance of communicating with his team in order to improve outcomes. He stated:

> What I learned … (is that) I have to speak. I have to let my team know … what … I'm not saying... I'm not saying simply yes or no or right or wrong, but … what we can do differently to make it better.

Participant NA-A pointed out that for him the ability to communicate effectively has a wide-reaching impact:

> Learning how to speak, and communicate professionally while learning your audience, ... I mean, it works with customers, it works with employees, … (it) is determining what their needs are so that you can … (serve them better). I mean, I'm in customer service, so I need to know what they need, so that I can make sure I'm servicing the customer appropriately.

Participant SEA-E shared a similar takeaway, stressing the importance of effective communication in a global context:

> … (we learned) there are so many kinds of the people in this world. The different culture, different background, different (way of) communication, and also of course the different language ... That's why … we need to have … (a) better way to communicate.

Participant NA-E discussed her realization that without communicating clearly it is easier to have misunderstandings. She described how during one of the exercises she had an "aha" moment:

> …it was just that recognition of, "Here's where our communication strategies differ and here's what I need to do to make you less stressed," … (because) apparently, I was stressing other people out. I thought I was being energetic ... and it was just making people really stressed out. So … we resolved that. But that was probably the biggest thing I got from the … (exercise), was just different communication techniques in stressful situations and how different people perceive thigs….

Active listening and asking questions. Several participants reported the realization that a key to effective communication is active listening and asking the right questions. Participant SEA-D pointed out that the main takeaway for him was that "first (we) … really (need to) understand and listen to each other". According to participant SEA-C, "being a leader, you have to be active in listening". Participant SEA-E shared a similar insight stating, "listening skills … (are) essential for leaders". Participant NA-A shared a personal takeaway about the importance of active listening stating, "One of the things I needed to work on was listening to learn instead of listening to respond …". Participant SEA-C also talked about how learning to listen allows him to be more present and prevent misunderstandings:

> It's about how you … converse with people. … (It is more about) deep listening and how you understand people first before you give your perspective, your own thought. Or (you)

> may not give (it) as well. Sometimes people just want you to listen. So I try to understand the situation; (try to understand) what that kind of … person feels.

Participants also discussed their takeaways about the importance of asking the right questions in order to avoid making the wrong assumptions. Participant SEA-D described the shift in his understanding that clearly resonated with him:

> I think I learned one thing I really like very much … is how to form the questions using the What, How, What if. Because sometimes, maybe unconsciously, … you have your own fixed opinion in your mind. Often you ask, or you phrase the question, and the answer is normally yes or no. But if that is … the question, you will not get the inside information you really need. For example, if I ask the question … "Am I right?" Most likely, I will get, "Yes, no, or likely." But if I raised the question … "What do you think about my opinion?" You see the difference.

Managing conflict. The participants also discussed the importance of effective communication in avoiding and managing conflicts. Participant NA-F shared that effective communication is not just about saying or not saying the right thing, but it is often impacted by the broader context that needs to be considered in a conflict situation. She shared her thoughts:

> So I think just learning about … (conflict) was really helpful … to try and assess, okay, this is the problem, this is the relationship I have with the person … what do I want the outcome of that to be? And that should kind of help with my conflict strategy.

Participant SEA-F stated that she learned that it is normal to have conflicts but the key to resolving them is to communicate openly about the problem at hand, saying:

> It's normal that there are conflicts, but you just have to … have a common ground, and then you tell the person. I think going to the person directly, not saying it to other people

> will resolve it because if you're not talking, you're not resolving the conflict, then it's not going to be resolved. And afterwards, it's just going to blow out later.

Giving and receiving feedback. Learning to give and receive feedback was a big topic among all the participants. The theme is closely related to effective communication, but it is presented as a separate theme because the participants specifically discussed the value of feedback for their own personal growth as well as for helping others grow.

The focus group participants discussed the shifts that occurred during the program regarding giving and receiving feedback. Participant FG-A stated, “One of the major skills (I learned was to) receive feedback, … be open to give feedback and receive feedback, which was something I didn't really do very well”. Participant FG-G talked about his realization that receiving feedback was valuable for his growth:

> …not … being afraid … to listen to other people's feedback about you. I think a lot of times we get nervous that people are out to get us and there's some vengefulness, but really, it's positive, right? … I think if they're going to spend the time to give me the feedback … it's going to be helpful.

Participant FG-B spoke about the program demonstrating the value of giving feedback in order to improve outcomes:

> … it really drives home how powerful that is. And I think they try to make the point over and over again that this is essential to getting things done productively … to … constantly provide people with constructive … (feedback).

Participant FG-H reported that he learned that, “you don't hold stuff in, you have to give that feedback”.

The individual participants also spoke about similar takeaways about the value of giving and receiving feedback. Participant SEA-E realized that while not easy, the ability to give critical feedback is key to help others improve:

> Feedback is also … essential for … communication, but that feedback … in daily life … (is) not so easy. The good things … (are) very easy to mention to others, but … (if) there are some things we recommend to fix or change (in) others … we normally hesitate … to say something. But we need to … tell them ... to improve their … life.

Participant NA-B stated that he realized that providing feedback is an essential part of serving others as a leader. He stated, "… (one of the) key insights (was) … just the value of really slowing down and giving good feedback. If (we) don't do that … I think we're missing an opportunity to really put someone else ahead of yourself". Participant SEA-B shared that the program changed the way he receives feedback. He described his newfound perspective:

> But now … when they say something, I take it seriously and I'm trying to maybe dig deep a little bit more (to understand) why they see … (things) that way. Or maybe they are …right, maybe I should do something that I can improve or … maybe (there is) something I should stop doing. So with this training … (my perception has changed).

Participant SEA-F reported a similar takeaway about her newly realized value of feedback stating, "I've learned that I like … (feedback). After … (the program) I like giving feedback and receiving (feedback) … because … a lot of people … give feedback really to help you, to help you improve and be a better person".

Participants also shared takeaways about effective ways to give feedback. For example, participant SEA-D stated, "It's important how you can give your feedback, … there are different

personalities, so you should be a little bit careful how … (you give feedback). Participant SEA-C discussed the shift that occurred that led to a change in how he provides feedback, saying:

> I reflected back to … (how) I … (would speak) to others when I give my advice, I … (would start) with (the) bad which is not very good. We (must) go deeper down. We will always (have tendency to) think more negatively … (rather) than … (providing) positive advice. So I always have to be careful when saying something. … (Now I try to be) more careful with this moment.

Being cognizant of how one interacts with others was at the center of the next theme that emerged from the data.

Understanding and leading others. Another major theme that came up during the interviews was the participants' takeaway of valuing the understanding of- and connecting with-others. The participants demonstrated an understanding that as they move towards leadership, whether it is in a formal role or as an individual contributor, focusing on understanding others is a fundamental part of leadership and of effective teamwork. Participant SEA-D summed this point up by saying, "Only people can make the business. So you have to accept (it) and you have to accept it by heart". Participant SEA-C reported that the program was good at demonstrating how "to understand yourself and also to understand people around you and how to manage together". The focus group participants built on each other's answers as they talked about this aspect of their learning. Participant FG-E stated:

> So that would be another thing … I would take with me … the different ways of understanding people and interacting with people I think is a huge component of … (the learning) … that you can take, you know, everywhere with you.

Focus group participant FG-B built on the previous participant's point expressing his understanding of how his approach to interacting with others changes as he steps into a management role:

> If I can build on what … (participant FG-E) just said … (realizing that) … you need to give people those opportunities to do the critical tasks that are critical at that level or for that person to … be successful.

Individual participant SEA-B discussed his realization of how understanding others improves team outcomes:

> When you begin to understand people better than I think it's much more easy to get things done or to form the team or to solve the problems within the team or if something is not working. So you are trying to understand who can do what or … (who) should do which tasks. … I think it's quite important for a leader to, to understand the people.

Individual participant NA-E shared her takeaway that the program made her realize the importance of engaging with others to learn their needs stating, "It was (the) whole back and forth of figuring out what your employee actually wants … rather than … pushing any one person into something that you think is good for them …"

Participant NA-A discussed a similar takeaway about how understanding differences in personalities can help him understand their behaviors:

> I understand that the definition of introvert, extrovert is whether you get recharged, or exhausted by being in a large group, right? So, I mean presenting to a group for an introvert can be very exhausting, but it's going to come with the job. It doesn't mean they're going to be bad at it, it just means that they probably need some alone time that night … to sit down, read a book, have a glass of wine, and recharge, right?

The focus on others as part of a leadership approach was a category that emerged within the larger theme and is discussed below.

Relational and empowering leadership. The individual participants spoke about different aspects of how focusing on understanding others impacts their approach to leadership. Participant NA-A stated that the program helped him realize the importance of empathy and of understanding people's individual needs as a manager:

> If I show empathy, and I have that conversation with … (the employee) … but really, it's learning people, right? So, some people don't care, "Just tell me what to do, I'll go do it." Some people need that empathy, right? … Some people just … (want to) know that they're valued, and … it's really that experience that I learned from the … (program).

Participant SEA-C shared his takeaway about how focusing on understanding allows him to enable leadership in others. He stated:

> It's more on how you can bring out your leaders as being leaders, you need to understand them - their thought, their mindset, (what) they are sharing, … before you can really lead and guide them … Sometimes, you may not necessarily need to give them the answer. Because by questioning, they will find the answer by themselves.

Participant NA-D shared a similar takeaway, "I'd say that's my big take-away, is … how good of a manager you can be just by facilitating but not doing. … that hands-off management has to be the biggest take-away for me."

Participant NA-A shared that one of his biggest takeaways was about understanding his employees and helping them reach their full potential:

> That's one of the biggest takeaways that I had … learning to see other people, and really getting them to open up, and help them with challenges if they're looking to move up, right? So, developing employees for me, recognizing where they have room for growth…

Participant NA-D described how the program helped him appreciate the human element of management and leadership:

> For me, (it) was the importance of focusing on the person in front of you. It really does matter. It's not just some loose term. It's not just a nice slideshow. Like somebody's well-being is on the line, and you have the opportunity and intentionality to just try to connect on it. … That was the takeaway.

Challenging assumptions, valuing other perspectives and navigating diversity. The next theme that emerged during the interviews was closely related to the previous theme of understanding others but when sharing the insights within this theme, the participants talked specifically about takeaways related to navigating different perspectives and the importance of challenging their own assumptions.

Challenging assumptions and valuing other perspectives. Focus group participant FG-C described an instance during the program when she realized how making assumptions can lead to an incomplete and often wrong understanding of the situation saying, “That was really powerful for me is to never just assume something and to always just question more, to receive more information before trying to, make a change or address something.” Participant FG-E added, “assumptions are powerful and often wrong”. He later described an exercise during the program that helped him challenge his own assumptions, stating “you learned again how beneficial it is to look into it more deeply.”

During the individual interviews, participants also discussed many insights they gained during the program that led them to understand the power of assumptions and the importance of considering other perspectives. Here is how participant SEA-A described her newfound insight:

> …We could often make mistakes by doing things that have always been done the same way. … Coming to decisions could be difficult … and we could be blinded by the information that we have or … (that) we like. So I feel that, for me, I would always, before coming to decisions, take a step back. Get more information from people who could see things differently from me.

Participant SEA-B talked about his realization that being open to different perspectives can enrich his own understanding stating, "I understand that they have different way of doing things. Let's say they have different way of … understanding and sometimes even their understanding is better than … (mine)." Participant SEA-A reported that being aware of different perspectives impacted her approach to decision-making. She stated, "So, I would definitely approach decision-making in a very different way. … Because of these people that I've met (and seeing) how they … see things differently." Participant NA-A discussed how he changed his overall approach to interactions in both his personal and his professional life:

> It's given me a new way to think, right? Whether it's parenting, whether it's personal relationships, whether it's peer-to-peer, whether it's direct reports. It's definitely helped me at least try to slow down and think about what's motivating the person for that behavior instead of just coming down on them for that behavior.

Focus group participant FG-A shared her takeaway about the importance of valuing different perspectives as part of pursuing a common goal, "(The takeaway is to) acknowledge the

whole. So acknowledge our individual participation, but also the whole contribution and respecting everybody's point of views and everybody's contribution to the one goal in common."

Navigating diversity. The participants also reported that in addition to becoming more aware of differences, the program also helped them to accept and navigate them. Participant SEA-C stated, "… this is what I can sense the most … how you can relate yourself among the colleagues; different colleagues have different feeling, different mentality, different mindset so you have to … adapt to everyone." Participant SEA-D discussed his insight about navigating diversity in a global organization:

> First of all, (the key is) to understand and accept the difference(s) in a global organization, right? There … (is) the different age, different culture, different language, different personality. So, you have to accept that. ... That's … the tool you have ... you have to understand (diversity) and you have to accept (it).

Participant NA-E discussed a different angle of navigating diversity realizing that people are at various points of growth and have different levels of awareness. She stated:

> I think just hearing that … some people are really self-reflective, and some aren't. … but understanding, "Okay, they might not have ever taken the time to know that about themselves." … And … (realize the importance of) the patience that it might take to deal with them and work with them if they aren't even recognizing, you know, X, Y, Z.

Understanding of leadership. The last category related to the participants' outcomes that emerged from the data was the participants' understanding of the different facets of leadership and the different ways the participants reported the program helped them focus their management and leadership approach or recognize their potential limitations. Participant NA-F reported that going through the program made her realize that there are many things to consider

in a management position stating, “I'm learning … I might not know all the tools that I can use as a manager and I need to be very cognizant of that.”

Most participants reported that going through the program reinforced rather than changed their understanding of leadership and their understanding of the difference between being a manager and being a leader. However, they reported a more focused way of thinking about what that understanding meant for them. Participant NA-A reflected on how the program helped him think about what resonates with him as a leader. He stated:

> … (The program) kind of reinforced … what my opinions of leaders were. … I think (that) management and leadership are two very distinctly different things. You can be a manager without being a leader, and you can be a leader without being a manager. I think that … being a manager is very … very process oriented, right? Whereas a leader is going to, regardless of if they have managerial authority or not, they're going to inspire others. They're going to really demonstrate, through their own actions, what outcomes they want … With this program, and with … my path to where I'm at now I've learned that part of being a manager, and a leader is really focusing on the development of anyone and everyone I can, whether that's a peer, or … a direct report.

Participant SEA-B reported that during the program his personal leadership values were reinforced, stating, “It was going through that, and not having my mind blown but having moments of agreement of "Yes, yes, that's what I thought all along". Or that's right up in line with what I was thinking.” However, he also reported that program provided a lesson of participating in leadership without a functional role which impacted his leadership approach:

> The leading without authority, I think that was a lesson in my class too. And I've been trying to embrace that … and … try to influence upward without any of the management

> responsibility and I think it's helped. Its' definitely helped because it's come back to me now and I've realized I have been influencing since I've made a conscious effort to do so, and it's working out for the better.

Participant NA-E shared that while the understanding of leadership without a functional role was not new to her, she realized there are many different ways of engaging in the leadership process:

> I think I've just seen other … (ways) you can be a leader in mitigating arguments or stepping out of arguments and not participating at all, and things like that. I think it was just getting more exposure to all the different facets rather than literally just leading a project.

As the data demonstrates, the participants had numerous valuable shifts in perspective they gained from the program. These takeaways led to both, a shift in their frame of reference (a way of knowing) and a shift in their form (a way of being).

Way of being and way of knowing: I feel; I think; I see; I am. During the interviews, the participants were asked to "fill in the blank" for the following statement: "Because of this experience – I think; - I see; - I feel; and – I am". This section summarizes the findings of the participants' responses and presents the main themes organized by the general attributes assigned to the statements. The statements were categorized based on their association with either the participants' *way of being* or their *way of knowing*.

Way of being. Table 4.3 summarizes the participants' *way of being* statements. The statements included mostly the "I am" and "I feel" statements as they best captured the participants shifts in their *way of being*. However, a few of the "I see" and "I think" statements

were also included as their context pointed to a change in form rather than a change in perspective.

Table 4.3

Way of Being Statements

Way of Being Statements	Attribute	Number of Statements
I am more confident in my abilities I am confident to advise others to lead across, not top down I am feeling that it's possible to be, be a leader I am able to lead I am stronger and more confident because of personal growth I am more confident I am more confident I feel more confident to meet leadership expectations I feel more confident to be a leader I feel more comfortable to be a manager I see I can be an effective leader I think I can be a people manager I feel more confident about my people management skills	Confident	13
I am ready for challenges of management I am better equipped to be a leader, not just a manager I am primed for leadership I feel more prepared I feel I'm becoming a better leader through self-leadership I feel prepared to take on leadership positions I think this experience equipped me for leadership	Prepared	7
I am motivated to apply what I learned I am motivated to make changes because I have the tools I am excited about being a leader even without functional role I feel more excited about my job I feel more motivated I feel energized to grow and put yourself out there	Motivated	6
I am who I am I am more self-aware I am more aware of the human element at work I feel more aware	Aware	6

I see more clearly why conflicts occur I am more conscious about my interactions with colleagues		
I am getting better at leadership I am on the right track, I think I am willing to learn more and keep improving I feel that program helped me grow I think I'm becoming a better person	Growing	5
I feel more empowered about present and future role I feel empowered to be successful I feel more empowered as a leader	Empowered	3
I feel grateful I feel good about going through the shared journey of discovery I feel lucky to have had this experience	Grateful	3
I know I am not alone on this journey of leadership I feel I have larger support group within the organization	Supported	2
I feel I can be more collaborative, diverse, flexible person	Adaptive	1
I think I'm more understanding of others	Empathetic	1
I think I reflect more on my work	Reflective	1
I feel the importance of vulnerability	Vulnerable	1

The attribute that emerged most frequently in the *way of being* statements was "confident". There were several instances when the participants elaborated on how the program made them more confident. For example, participant NA-F stated, "I would say overall, … I gained a lot more confidence from the program. … I feel like I'm better off than I was before I went in." Participant SEA-F shared that the experience made her more confident in speaking up and in sharing her ideas saying. "(I was) not that much of a confident person when I went there. But after that, I learned that actually you had to share because other people, they might benefit also from your ideas." Participant SEA-C spoke about how the program helped him get outside

of his comfort zone and overcome fear, “So this is what I … (got out of) the training that … when I got out … (of) my own fear … (during the) collaboration with other people … (I realized that) … actually everyone is just a human being.” Participant NA-D reported that the program raised his overall confidence in his leadership skills saying, “It gave me the confidence in myself that, "Okay, I do have the right skills to do this, and maybe I do have the right mindset to do it”…”

The other attributes that emerged from the participants’ statements were “prepared”, “motivated”, “aware”, “growing”, “empowered”, “grateful”, as well as “supported”, “adaptive”, “empathetic”, “reflective”, and “vulnerable”. Most of these attributes are reflected in the discussion of participants’ outcomes.

Way of knowing. Table 4.4 summarizes the participants’ *way of knowing* statements. One “I am” statement was included in this category due to its context. All the statements are related to the participants’ cognitive takeaways from the program.

Table 4.4

Way of Being

Way of Knowing Statements	**Attribute**	**Number of Statements**
I see the importance of intentionality I see the bigger picture I see the importance of environment for learning I think differently about team-building and leadership I think I should take feedback seriously I think it's important to be intentional with connecting and caring for the people around you I think differently about feedback	Reframed thinking	7
I see applicability of lessons learned in everyday life I think it was a great opportunity I think that more people would benefit from this type of training I think the program is good training for people management	Value of program	5

I am disappointed that not enough people are exposed to this (program)		
I see opportunity for the future I see opportunities for myself and others I see more opportunities outside of my functional/geo area I see the next steps for my future (career)	Opportunities	4
I see how I can improve I see that there are lots of things to learn. I see there is a lot of work for me to do in order to be a leader I think I can be a better leader	Opportunity for growth	4
I see clearly I see lot of problems but also a lot of opportunities I see my career path more clearly - what I want of don't want	Clarity	3
I see my organization wants to grow their managers	Organization	1
I think I built friends and peer mentors for life	Support network	1
I see how I can collaborate and connect with others	Collaboration skills	1

The attribute that appeared most frequently was “reframed thinking”. These statements are also clearly reflected in the participants’ takeaways discussed in the previous section as they relate to most of the major themes that emerged from the interviews.

The next most frequent attribute from the *way of knowing* category did not relate to the participants’ growth directly, but rather to their appreciation for the program and the chance to go through the development process. This outcome was categorized under the attribute “grateful” in the *way of being* statements and under “value of program” in the *way of knowing* statements. These statements demonstrated the participants’ enthusiasm about the learning process. Participant NA-F stated, “If I had any expectations, it would've been completely surpassed by this. I learned a lot from the class and from the peers that I had in my class”. Participant NA-E

shared a similar sentiment saying, “It was a really good experience. I got out a lot more of it than I thought I would, which is great”. Participant SEA-D pointed out that the development program could benefit even a wider audience stating, “I think it's important, it's necessary to have such kind of training program, not only for the leaders or potential leaders, but it will add value, even for normal employee”. Participant NA-D suggested that “the program should be mandatory”. Participant NA-A summed up his experience as follows:

> Honestly, it was a great experience. I would recommend it to anyone within the company. I think any company should have... whether it's a mom and pop store, I think even they would benefit from having the ability to send someone to a program like this…

The participants’ *way of knowing* and *way of being* statements provided an insight into the takeaways that represent the shifts in their frames of reference and in their form. The next section offers further insights into specific aspects of the “what” of developing future leaders in global organizations by answering the analytical questions that helped guide and focus the research study.

Analytical Questions. The goal of the first two analytical questions was to gain an understanding of how the outcomes reported by the participants are not only described, but also demonstrated, in the individual and the organizational context. The last question sought to understand the consistencies and any convergences between the learning outcomes globally.

How is individual development demonstrated in an individual context? During the interviews, the participants were asked to discuss how they are applying their learning takeaways in their professional and in their personal lives. The goal was to gain an insight into specific impact of their learning on their professional and personal lives. The themes of the participants’ applied takeaways that emerged from the interviews included creating a mentor network,

applying takeaways and practicing new behaviors, having an intentional approach to career planning, and examples of how they are applying their takeaways in their personal lives.

Creating a mentor network. The takeaways that many participants reported putting into practice was creating a mentor network. This is partially because the program provided an immediate access to a potential group of mentors (the cohort), and also provided tools to stay connected with these mentors after the program. Participant NA-F reported that having access to the cohort participants allowed her to use these new valuable contacts to help her "with projects and vice versa". She provided an example of such instance:

> …for projects that I'm working on, I've been looking for beta sites to test out some software. And so I've had people in different divisions try and help connect me to their customers so that, you know, maybe that's a different approach because they have a better relationship with that customer than my division does.

Participant NA-E reported that she now has "a lot more contacts in the organization because of that and people who genuinely seem to want to help". She described how her network of mentors is helping her identify potential career growth opportunities within the organization:

> I've also had a couple of cohorts send me specific job recommendations that they've been seeing so I kind of have this other group of people who are looking out, as well, which really helps within the organization because there's just so many opportunities and so many things going on. It's really hard to even keep track of what's out there, so…

Participant NA-C described how having a network of cross-functional, regionally diverse peers provides access to different perspectives from various parts of the organization. He stated:

> … we meet like every two months just to have a half hour conversation going, "What's going on in your area of the world?" And then that's helping us bring our perspective of

> the organization better because I'm able to talk to the person in Orlando, Florida, and the one in Raleigh, and the one in Delaware just going, "What's going on? What are you guys facing, what are your challenges?" And it gives you that different perspective … but also then able to leverage and share the diversity of what's going on, and even the company.

This theme was also supported by the sample of participant surveys as over 50% of respondents reported that they expect that the learning experience will positively impact the building of internal business relationships.

Applying takeaways and practicing new behaviors. The next theme that emerged from the interviews about how the participants' learning is demonstrated in an individual context is applying takeaways and practicing new behaviors. These included practicing better communication, managing conflict, and practicing questioning assumptions and understanding others. Participant NA-A provided an example of how he is solicits feedback from his team to improve communication:

> … As a manager now I reach out to my team all the time, and say, "Hey, if there something that I'm doing that you don't like, it's not going to change unless you tell me you don't like it." My answer might be, "I'm sorry, this is the way it is, but I would prefer to have that feedback, and know that it's something that you don't like, because I might not be able to do anything about it now, but I can work on it, right? I can try and change. Whether it's my delivery, if it's company policy, that's one thing, … but if it's really me as a manager, and it's something that I can do, or change for you, I will, but I don't know that you don't like it unless you tell me."

Participant SEA-B shared a similar approach that he now takes with his team, stating:

> .. After this program, I said, "Hey, look guys, so I'm not your manager. I don't want it to be your manager. I want to be your peer. I am here to help you. Please come to me. Please ask me if you need help, please. I mean, let's talk, let's discuss if you have something … (on your) mind, just speak up."

Participant SEA-A shared an example of how she is applying her takeaway of valuing other perspectives in her work:

> … Well let's say for example, we're working on a proposal … So I'm seeing things from a more technical point of view, ... but I'm working with the business on their requirements. And obviously they see things very differently from me, … they're more customer-focused. Whereas I have very different customers. My customers are the business. … So instead of making decisions on the usual vendors that I have come in contact with, I try to see things from a different point of view, … what is more important to them.

Participant NA-C provided an example of how he is trying to be more intentional in his business interactions:

> And so that's a blind spot that I've been working on for the last year, especially working with a business partner, and they're trying to do our processes, and I'm like, "All right, how do I slow this down? How do we do more of a teaching moment?" Or now what I'm trying to do is step back and say, "Well now explain to me what you think we're doing?"

Other participants also shared small ways they are trying to improve their behaviors.

Participant SEA-C shared that he is working on using the word “but” less and on being less judgmental, admitting that changing is not easy saying, “… It is really hard. Because most of the time people human nature is (that) we like to judge people.” Participant NA-E reported that she is trying to pay more attention to people’s reactions to her behavior, as well as not to make

assumptions about the behavior of others stating, “I've been trying to read other people's reactions to what I'm doing”, and “ (I’ve tried to) … (be) receptive to what others respond to but not trying to pinpoint them in a certain category or, "You're feeling this right now." Unless they tell me that, I don't know that.”

The theme of applying takeaways and practicing new behaviors on the job was also supported by statements from the sample of participant surveys. When asked to provide an example of how the participants plan to apply what they learned on their jobs, some of the answers included “better time management and prioritization of work”; asking for more feedback from management and “be more conscious and observant to be able to provide feedback…”; and “utilize the time management techniques to become more efficient” and use “reflection…to become a better leader and manager.”

Some of the participants did report that while they were applying their takeaways in their current contexts, they felt slightly discouraged not having a plan to implement some of the learning that they would utilize in a more formal leadership role. Participant NA-E shared this sentiment by saying:

> I think the only thing I would say is some feedback I've heard from a couple of people in our cohort is, "Now what?", and how to use this to move forward. So … I can use these individual skills for myself but because it's a lot of people who want to go into management took the class, but then there's no direct, "What's next?" It's, "Okay. Now just hang out in your same role, do the same thing that you've always done and eventually you'll get to use these things that you learned in a greater scale." … I know that that's a little bit of what I've felt, not to the fault of the program at all. More just in the timing in

> which we take this course … Most people don't have something set up for their, "What's next?"

Intentional approach to career planning. The next theme related to the participants taking specific actions stemming from their learning outcomes was an intentional approach to career planning. Participant SEA-E reported that going through the program prompted him to become more intentional about the steps he needs to take to support his career growth within the organization, specifically becoming more visible to top management from the organization's headquarters. He stated: "In the office, I try to communicate with … colleagues (from other countries), (but) not only the colleagues, the top management also. (Even) just a greeting … or some small … (conversation). (I try to) communicate with them." Participant NA-E shared that the program helped her gain clarity about her future career steps, stating:

> I think the class helped focus me in a little bit more on, "Okay, what are you willing to accept?" and only look at those things and focus on those things very, very narrowly ... to try to find the best opportunity. So that's been good.

Participant NA-C discussed that the program helped him understand the challenges and opportunities that come with management and he has taken steps with his manager to identify the best fit for his next career move:

> I'm going, "All right, well I want to do management, but then how do we do management within project management?" And then there's only so many limits of jobs there. And those are things that we're kind of working out with my current manager. … So, those are the things now that are coming in place.

Personal life. During the interviews, the participants were asked to share examples of how they are applying their learning takeaways in their personal lives. Participants provided

several examples, demonstrating the applicability of their learning outcomes in a personal context. Participant FG-G shared that he realized that his introverted tendency may have held him back and he is taking steps to practice a different behavior. He stated:

> … from a personal change (I am) trying to be a little more outgoing, … not (be) afraid to voice my opinion. … When I'm in a group environment I tend to sit back and just hold things in. … so (I am) trying to be more forthright, more of an extrovert I guess.

The individual participants provided examples of applying their learning outcomes with their families. Participant NA-B reported that he practices receiving and responding to feedback with his wife saying:

> … (I try to) actively listen to my wife, and (her) feedback, and hearing her voice some concerns that she might have about certain things, and … not as, you know … you're dropping the ball, but instead to hear that as, it would really help me feel supported if we could put a plan in together on this one area …

Participant NA-C provided an example of utilizing some of the effective communication and feedback takeaways to help his wife prepare for an interview, as well as using some of the tools to help his daughter gain self-confidence. Participant NA-D shared that since he is not currently in a functional leadership position, he practices some of his takeaways with his children. Participant NA-E stated that she's been applying some of her takeaways in her daily life and with her husband:

> I've even noticed it in my day-to-day life. I'm just trying to speak my thoughts out loud a little bit more and … I've even started just saying to my husband, "I'm not stressed in this moment. I'm excited," or ... I've been trying to read other people's reactions to what I'm doing …

She also shared that because she is currently not in a management role, she practices her newfound skills with her students that she coaches in her personal time saying, “I think, just about everything I learned, I've been able to pull into my coaching techniques, with my high school students”.

Participant NA-B summarized how the lessons he learned impact all aspects of his life:

> … So in my marriage, and my neighborhood, … in my community, in work, it's been unreal how open people are about really deep stuff if they just feel like you're caring for them, and listening, and you know, asking questions, being there with them, right?

As presented above, the data shows that the participants’ learning outcomes have a real and practical impact in their lives. The next section summarizes the findings related to how the participants’ development is demonstrated in an organizational context.

How is individual development demonstrated in an organizational context? The second analytical question was focused on gaining an understanding of the demonstrated impact of the participants’ development in an organizational context. There were two main themes that emerged, one from the participant interviews, and one from the interview with the Regional Program Manager, with both being supported by data presented in the sample of the participant program surveys.

Improving team/project outcomes. While the participants’ recounts of their outcomes provided a glance into the potential impact within the organizational context, the participants provided several specific examples that were a result of the application of their new knowledge and behaviors. Participant SEA-B described a situation in which he encouraged his team to provide feedback and to have open communication, resulting in better teamwork:

> I said, okay, one day I will most probably leave this place and I want one of you to take my place ... I don't want you to stay in this project forever or in this position forever. I want you to grow, I want you to do your best. And then I think this helped them a lot to contribute to … find motivation to speak, which I'm also very happy nowadays.

Participant SEA-D shared that the program re-affirmed the importance of maintaining relationships with others in the organization, even if he doesn't have an existing relationship with them, which prompts him to be in constant communication with his counterparts globally in order to improve both, processes and outcomes:

> …during the … (program), I had to approach, quite a few times, the colleagues I have never met before. But (what) I appreciate a lot … (at the organization) … (is that) people are open ...(and) are willing to support (you). Even (if) the call or the email is from a stranger who he or she has never talked (to), (or) has never met before. So … I try to motivate my counterparts in the (other) countries. "Don't hesitate, if you think you need … information from somewhere, … I can help you; I can connect you. … I can even organize a meeting together with you and the other colleague sitting, maybe, on the other side of the Earth.

Participant NA-F reported that she was able to share a lot of her newfound insights with her manager, who attended a different program, in order to improve their team's outcomes. She stated:

> …we ended up having a meeting for customers somewhere and we ended up sharing a lot of insights that we learned from the classes and what we could do to make the team that we're on better and stronger. … I actually felt that that was extremely beneficial, because it seemed like, as a new manager, he wants to make sure that our team is working really

> well and he didn't learn some of the things I learned and he shared what he learned with me.

This theme of improving organizational outcomes was also supported by the program participant surveys. In addition to the statements that pointed to the participants applying new behaviors in the workplace, the two remaining statements about how the participants plan to apply the content on their job included exercising “corporate culture exercise to work with my branch managers to develop our identity”; and “have my team become more engaged and address our ownership culture within the business.”

Increased participation in leadership development programs. Another aspect of the organizational impact of the participant’s transformative experience emerged from the interview with the Regional Program Manager and was supported by the data from the participant interviews. The Regional Program Manager reported that due to the positive experience of the participants’ and the resulting enthusiasm about continuous learning, the organization sees an increase in other training programs, stating:

> I would say … (that) we see an increase in skills training. So people will go through this, they'll get a management role, and then they'll realize, "Ugh, I really need to dig deep into one of those things that I learned in that … program." And so we see a lot of our … alumni coming through most... The majority of our leadership programs are usually … (the program) alumni.

In addition to an increased engagement in different types of training programs, the Regional Program Manager also pointed out that the former participants usually want to attend the next level of the program as soon as they are eligible. This impact also emerged from the interviews with the individual participants as several of them spoke about pursuing additional

training opportunities in the future. Participant NA-A stated, “If it is still around, I would be anxious, … (in) the next couple years to attend the (next level of the program) … just knowing that I'd be building on a foundation that's there now…” Participant SEA-E also stated that he will join the next level of the program this year.

Another organizational impact reported by the Regional Program Manager is that the first-level leader development program is very popular due to the word-of-mouth from the past participants. Additionally, once the former participants become managers, they often nominate their high-potential reports for the program. She stated:

> The reason … we are so successful in North America I think is because of the participants who go through our programs and say, "When I become a manager, my high potentials are going through that class." … Because I think of a lot of that program feedback and (the thought) “I'm going to develop someone like they developed me because it was really impactful”.

This trend was also supported by data from the sample of participant surveys with 100% of the surveyed participants selecting the value of 8 or higher (out of 10) when asked if they would recommend the learning experience to others.

What are the differences/similarities in developmental outcomes globally? The last analytical question sought to gain an understanding of the differences in the developmental outcomes between the two global regions – North America and Southeast Asia. As is demonstrated by the participant recounts of their takeaways, participants from both global regions reported similar outcomes, however, there were slight differences in the context within which these outcomes were interpreted.

Impact of regional/cultural differences. The main difference in the nature of the participant outcomes that emerged from the data was that the participants from the Southeast Asia region tended to report more of their takeaways about understanding differences, challenging assumptions or navigating diversity referencing cross-cultural aspects, whereas the North American participants referenced more personality differences. For example, a Japanese participant mentioned his realization that the other participants made certain assumptions about him because of his nationality stating, "Basically so many (of my) colleagues in the … (program) told me … (that) Japanese are a very serious, no laughing, no smile, no joking … this image they have." A participant from the Philippines shared that during the program she realized that other cultures have a greater tendency to speak up stating:

> I think in terms of culture, the other countries are … more or less the same, … they are very kind, they are very nice. But in terms of the opportunities and how they talk to each other, they are more into sharing their ideas.

Participant SEA-B provided an example of his experience navigating different cultural norms:

> …for example, in Asian culture, it's very hierarchical. When I first came … they introduced me as the team leader … (and) then I found that nobody is talking back to me. I'm talking and talking and talking, (and) I get no answer. I'm not sure if they understand me or if we agree or if we disagree…

This variation in the interpretation of the frames of reference can be explained by the impact of the learning environment and points to the fact that learning outcomes are highly impacted by the individual context and the learning environment. While the program design and the delivery are identical across all the global regions, the participant cohorts are made up of employees from that specific global region. The North America (NA) region only includes the

countries of United States and Canada, and while still relatively culturally diverse, it does not equal in diversity to the Southeast Asia (SEA) region that includes numerous countries and cultures. In addition, several participants from the SEA region reported that they had moved from and worked in other global regions prior to working in the SEA regions, further increasing the cultural diversity of their cohort.

The Global Program Manager confirmed that the diversity of cohorts is inherent depending on the employee population of that region. Thus, naturally regions that are made up of several countries will have a greater cross-cultural diversity within their cohorts. As will be demonstrated in the next section, the make-up of the cohorts does impact the learning process and the collective sense-making of the participants. The observation of the onsites in the NA region revealed that there is a great inherent operational and geographic diversity within the cohorts, which includes some cross-cultural diversity due to the global nature of the organization. It also mirrors the gender diversity distribution of the organization. The Global Program Manager described the process of how the cohorts are created:

> We don't do anything to influence it. I think that there's such a focus on diversity across the board at the organization that the people that are promoting and marketing the program are trying to do a good job to talk about those things. But it just ends up being that way as a function of what our … HR people are seeing with talent and what's rising in the organization. And I think at the … organization in general, any time you walk into a room, you're going to be surrounded by a lot of people who come from different places than you, a lot of people that have different backgrounds and experiences than you.

This section sought to provide insights into the first research sub-question, presenting the main themes and outcomes of the “what” of developing future leaders in global organizations.

The next section will report the findings to the second research sub-question that is focused on understanding of the "how" of the participants' transformative experience.

Sub-question 2: How does individual transformation occur?

The presentation of the findings related to the second sub-question are similar in structure to the presentation of findings to the first sub-question. The findings to the second sub-question are organized in three different sections.

The first section describes the program design strategy referencing the data collected from the interviews with the global and the regional program managers, and from the review of the organization's internal program overview document. This data provides the context for the findings related to the learning experience reported by the program participants. The second section presents the major themes of the participants' accounts about the process of their transformative experience from the first-level leader development program. The last section presents the findings as they relate to the three analytical questions: (1) Which program elements (curriculum and process) facilitate individual development? (2) How do the various program elements facilitate individual development? (3) How does the impact of the various program elements vary globally? The questions are answered by triangulation of the various data sources.

Program design strategy. The data about the organization's program design strategy was derived from the interviews with the Global Program Manager and the Regional Program Manager for the NA region, and from the review of program documentation. This data will serve as a contextual reference for the findings of the themes derived from the focus group interview and the individual program participant interviews.

Program structure. The organization's internal program overview document and the interview with the Regional Program Manager provided the overview of the program structure.

The program has five main structured phases and a sixth phase that is completely self-directed by the participants.

The first phase consists of virtual "pre-work" session that involves a "kick-off" session, an introduction to the learning framework and to the content, as well as a behavioral tendencies assessment. According to the Regional Program Manager the virtual informational learning includes a combination of web-based e-learning, videos, resources, and articles. The second phase involves a 4-day onsite training session at the organization's regional training site. The third phase consists of a virtual "mid-session" that includes additional virtual informational learning. During the mid-session participants continue to virtually interact with each other and practice their takeaways in the workplace. At this time, the participants are also asked to complete a 360 assessment. The fourth phase consists of the second 4-day onsite meeting at the organization's regional training site. The fifth phase involves additional virtual informational learning and a program closing session self-organized by the participants. The sixth phase consists of a virtual meeting that is completely self-directed by the participants and that serves as a check-in for the participants to review the progress of the implementation of their learning takeaways from the program. The Regional Program Manager described the program as a "blended" approach that includes "self-based learning, group learning, (and) on-site instructor-led learning".

Learning model. The internal program overview document referenced an experiential learning model as the main framework for the learning process. The Regional Program Manager reported that the program is highly experiential with elements of "reflection, experience-based, hands-on activities, (and) simulations." The Global Program Manager also provided insights into the learning model, reporting that the learning process includes elements that offer a certain level

of challenge that mirrors real-world situations, specifically organizational challenges commonly experienced in a large matrixed organization. The Global Program Manager also confirmed the experiential nature of the program that allows the participants to learn about the theoretical concepts by applying them in practice stating, “We're teaching them about (the) theory behind it, and then we're immediately giving them exercises where they can start applying it.”

Another key element described by the Regional Program Manager is that the program requires a high level of self-direction on the part of the participants. She stated that the participants “do a lot of self-organization throughout the program”, and also at the end of the program as they organize and lead the closing session. The Regional Program Manager also pointed out that in the NA region, the participants have access to a separate social platform that they use to interact during, and upon completion of the program. This program element is region-specific and not required or implemented by all the other global regions.

The self-directed element is closely related to the form of facilitation during the onsite sessions. According to the Regional Program Manager, there is an expectation of a high-level of engagement by the participants, with the facilitators acting as subject matter “experts” and “guides”. She also pointed out that a key to creating a safe environment for the participants is to have external facilitators. She stated:

> I think another benefit of the program is that we do use external facilitators … So, there's no biasness, there's no reporting back. It's a safe, safe environment where they can really come out of their shells, come out of their comfort zones and take those risks.

Another defining feature of the program is the cohort element. The Regional Program Manager provided an overview of how the cohorts are created, stating:

> "… the cohorts kind of started organically because we allow participants to choose the dates that best suit their schedules … So they self-register for the program and we have 24 max people allowed in each program which then creates your cohort."

The goal is to ensure that the cohort participants remain connected throughout the whole program and beyond. The Regional Program Manager also pointed out that some of the learning content is determined by the cohort make-up, as the participants drive a lot of the discussions in the class thus determining the topics that are discussed. She provided an example of this individuality by discussing the focus on global or cross-cultural issues:

> They probably keep it more down to the participants and so if a lot of the participants are on global, virtual teams then of course that becomes a big part of the conversation throughout the class. But if they're not and they're more localized, then it's usually more localized.

The review of the program documentation and the interviews with the regional and global program managers provided an overview of the structure and the main learning concepts that inform the learning process of the first-level leader development program. The following section reports the findings of the most impactful elements of the transformative experience from the program reported by the participants.

Major themes of participants' developmental process. The major themes of the most impactful program elements of the "how" of the participants' learning experiences that emerged from the focus group interview and from the individual interviews include: value of cohort experience/learning from each other; challenge as an opportunity for growth; value of a safe environment/trust; practicing behaviors in real time; and reflection.

Value of cohort experience/learning from each other. The main element of the participants' learning process that emerged from the data was the value of the cohort experience, which led to the participants learning from each other's perspectives, their diverse backgrounds, and experiences, and also provided a foundation for a shared experience that left a lasting impression on the participants. The focus group participants discussed the value of learning from each other at length, with the accounts of their experience clearly pointing to the central role that their cohort interactions played in their learning journey.

Participant FG-E described the impact that the shared experience had on him:

> For me … a lot of the joy of the class came from interacting with the classmates … whether it's the shared experience or the differences in our experiences, you know, we are all there … to be better people or to advance in any of many different ways.

The focus group participants built on each other's points as they discussed the value of the cohort. Participant FG-H shared how having a diverse cohort allowed him to get a greater understanding of the organization saying, "I think it's interesting to get different people's perspectives on where they're at in the company and how different parts of the company handle what's important to their organization…" Participant FG-B agreed saying that "it's interesting to see … how people implement tactics." He added:

> I find a lot of value in that. That's part of the cohort, … that everyone has a different approach or take on ideas and it can be valuable to figure out … what aligns … with what you can do.

Participant FG-G discussed how his takeaway about the importance of effective communication and the need to challenge assumptions came from the realization of the organizational diversity and dispersity represented by the cohort. He stated:

> You know, our group is very dispersed. We're all over the country and quite often … conversations are had, or decisions are made and … not everybody is aware of that. So that's important to … take a step back and make sure we're communicating properly and making sure that ... we're all aware and not making assumptions …

The focus group participants also shared that they learned about the importance of understanding others by hearing other participants share their personal stories. Participants FG-B described this process saying, "…we just talked about people's personal situations ... the people share personal stories, … (and) you don't even realize how much extra work this stuff is. That was eye-opening me". Participant FG-E shared a similar experience:

> … you can absolutely see how that comes into play … and I can't remember his name now, … (he) had a personal example of the sick mom where ... there was a lot of background there and you learned again how beneficial it is to look into it more deeply.

Participant FG-D also acknowledged that the cohort kept him "motivated and inspired" stating, "… just to see other people that are …working hard and still plugging away and … try to make a difference in some cases making a difference."

The individual participants also extensively discussed the importance of the cohort for their learning. Several participants pointed out that they found the exposure to perspectives from other business units very "interesting" and "valuable". Participant SEA-A stated, "(It) was really interesting to get to know people from areas that I've never worked with and I probably wouldn't have discussion within my day-to-day work." Participant NA-B highlighted the value of the level of experience and knowledge of the other participants saying:

> I kind of felt like maybe the dumbest person in the room … you're in the room with engineers and people who have multiple master's degrees, and they're already leading groups. And you're like … How can I learn from you?

He also pointed to the fact that the cohort allowed him to practice what he was learning stating, "…the best part was 100% building the connections and the relationships and trying to put into practice the things you're learning …"

Participant SEA-C shared a similar point saying, "… everyone had their own strengths … and also of course everyone had their … weaknesses, but what I looked for (was) what … (I can learn from) their strength." He added that he got a lot out of the shared problem-solving with the other participants. Participant SEA-F reported that she got a lot of value by observing different cultural tendencies in the participants from other countries. Participant NA-A shared that he was lucky to have a culturally diverse cohort due to having several expatriates in his group which provided exposure to different perspectives stating, "having all of the diversity in the room helped us … (to) appreciate everyone's background, and take that into consideration when you're interacting with people …"

The participants pointed to the value of all different types of interactions with the other cohort participants, including group discussion, one-on-one interactions, and even "after hours" conversations that continued at shared dinners at their onsite meetings after the official class time ended.

Challenge as an opportunity for growth. The next theme that emerged from the data as an important part of the learning process was the presence of a certain level of challenge that served as a vehicle for growth. The participants overwhelmingly acknowledged the impact of

challenge on their learning. The focus group participants discussed several aspects of the presence of challenge as the vehicle for their learning outcomes.

Participant FG-G reported that there was an inherent element of challenge present during the program that increased the engagement of the participants saying, “there's probably more pressure to … I don't want to say it was a competitive atmosphere, but there was definitely a sense … (that) you really want to prove yourself … more so than I typically would experience.” He also shared that he felt a sense of accomplishment engaging in the learning process. Participant FG-A shared how her experience of overcoming a challenge during an exercise helped her develop a new understanding of the importance of adaptability:

> I felt at the beginning (that) I failed. But then on the other side I was like, well, maybe it's not the best place for me to do things, maybe I can do a different role. So that ability to be flexible sometimes and adapt, we really need it in this kind of jobs.

Individual participants reported various times when being challenged led to breakthroughs in their understanding or in other outcomes. Participant NA-B reported a collective sense of accomplishment after one of the challenging exercises that led to the participants’ increase in self-confidence recounting, “It was fun, because you … did the activity first, and you struggled with it, and then you got the lesson afterwards …”, later adding “… by the end we all felt very confident that we could take on more challenges.” Another participant described an experience of going through a challenging exercise as “cool and … uncomfortable at the same time.” Participant SEA-C shared that during the experience he realized that in order to learn, he has to get outside of his comfort zone stating, “I tried to learn and I tried to force myself to learn … (because) I know …(that if) I want to achieve something, I'll have to … get … (outside) my comfort zone.” Participant NA-F also shared that some of the exercises made her

uncomfortable “but in a good way” because it allowed her to learn to respond to situations she has never experienced before. Participant SEA-F described an occasion when she questioned herself during one of the exercises asking herself, “Am I doing a good job …?”, but through the process of collaborating with her team she realized that they could improve together.

In addition to experiencing and overcoming challenges during different exercises, the participants also reported the value of feeling challenged by the feedback they received from other participants that prompted them to reflect on their behaviors and tendencies. Participant NA-A stated:

> I could take criticism … (but) in the back of my mind I'm thinking, "Well, I did that because of this. I do that because of this," right? I'm getting defensive even though I don't mean to be, and I'm giving myself excuses for my behavior. So one of the things that … I wouldn't say it … it made me uncomfortable, but it was one of the things that my peers in the program did was … remind me to stop and listen …

Participant SEA-B stated that during the feedback session he was outside of his comfort zone because “you don't receive feedback daily” but that it was “good” because “you can learn some things that (are) unknown to you but visible to others.” Participant NA-E also reported that a feedback session was “the most uncomfortable” but that it was “good to go through it” because it challenged her to take action.

Value of a safe environment/trust. Another element that played an important role in the participants’ learning process was the value of a safe environment and high level of trust among the participants. Focus group participant FG-E pointed to the benefit of increased trust due to the time spent together stating:

> … a lot of the conversations and the best parts of the learning … especially in the second week, it was interesting because … it was more open to discussion than the first week and you just got to hear a lot of different viewpoints and a lot of different ideas.

Participant NA-A also highlighted the benefit of the increased trust that occurred overtime, providing an example of the constructive feedback he received from one of his teammates, "… she finally got to the point by the second onsite … she would kick me, she would be like, "Shut up. You're talking too much." It's like, "Oh, yeah. Sorry." Participant SEA-A shared a similar impact of an increased trust on the learning process saying, "I think that comfort and understanding of each other after a while just makes it a lot more comfortable to voice what we feel. … Especially … (at) onsite two, I felt that we had a closer bond." Participant NA-B also shared a similar point, stating, "… you have 10 days with these people, … at some point people's filters end up going down, and it's just really encouraging seeing how people connected on that".

Participants also highlighted the importance of a friendly and positive environment. Participant SEA-B stated that he was able to receive and accept feedback from his cohort because he felt safe:

> I think the environment … was really friendly … and then you feel comfortable, so I don't feel like I'm (being) attacked or I don't feel like they are trying to humiliate me. Then I realized that this feedback is really fun. So you really learn something about you which you are not aware of or you don't know.

Participant SEA-E shared that normally he would be a "little bit scared" to receive feedback, but after he built up trust with his cohort, he didn't feel scared and was even able to receive constructive criticism. Participant NA-F shared a similar experience saying, "I used to be very scared about giving feedback and also receiving it. But, you know, it wasn't as difficult as I

thought. It was just a conversation." Participant NA-C also shared the importance of a safe environment on being able to receive and absorb the learning lessons from feedback:

> If you're dealing with folks within your direct structure, it's hard to sometimes … take … criticism from there or it's hard to go out, and ask them like, "What do you think I'm doing here? Because then they can be running off to management … So … let's say you don't have a full trust, but if you're going to … make yourself vulnerable; if you find someone in that class to say, "We're just going to get together and talk, and how do you think I behave? How do you think I do?" That … to me is the most important part.

Participant NA-A shared a similar insight, stating:

> …there were people there …from (different industries). We will never work together again, right? Or it's very unlikely that we will work together again, so it's kind of easier to just … come out of the gate, and tell someone, "Dude, shut up. You're talking too much," right?

Other participants agreed that honesty and vulnerability were key elements that impacted the learning process. Participant NA-D stated that "once the honesty started flowing, it was really good." He also added that the experience provided an opportunity "to (have) management experience without … consequence." Participant NA-E stated that the safety and vulnerability of the cohort allowed her to be more vulnerable stating, "I think because everyone else was so open with me, it allowed me to be more open with everybody else". Participant SEA-C also shared that the learning environment allowed him to feel safe to "make mistakes" and be vulnerable, which increased his "confidence level".

Practicing behaviors in real time. The next major theme that emerged as an important aspect of the participants' learning was their ability to practice behaviors and experience

consequences of implementing new concepts in real time. The participants extensively discussed their ability to practice behaviors and actions in different contexts as an important element of their learning.

Focus group participants reported that several of their takeaways emerged during the simulation and the role-play exercises. Participant FG-A described going through one of the simulations triggered her understanding of the importance of adaptability stating, “When we were doing … (the activity), I was the last one to … (complete it). And I was like, oh my gosh, for the next day we said, okay, we need to shift.” Participant FG-E described an activity that helped him understand the importance of listening. He stated, “We had like a three-person group conversations where you're really trying to … understand what the person is getting at, understand what they're trying to communicate to you.” Participant FG-C described an exercise that led to her understanding that she needs to be more aware of her assumptions, saying:

> When we did the exercise … I felt like, okay, I need to not make assumptions as far as what I just see (but) we need to talk it out with the employee because you never know what could be really going on.

The individual participant interviews also revealed the value of the different activities that allowed the participants to practice their behaviors. Participant SEA-A reported that the role plays were “quite interesting” and “valuable”. She also mentioned that the role plays allowed her to observe the actions and development of the other participants stating, “It was interesting to see various people's reactions and how people reflect … after the role plays. … And … we could see that people took feedbacks from the first session and applied them to the second on-site.” Participant SEA-E discussed the superiority of experiential learning to informational learning,

saying, "… we can study … the textbook, but … the actual doing (it) is not so easy. So that's why the role-playing session (was) very good for me".

The individual participants discussed many different occasions when their "aha" moments occurred during a simulation or a role play, and described different outcomes that were facilitated by the real-time practice, from learning to ask the right questions or how to develop relationships and work together as a team, to developing a deeper self-awareness. Participant NA-E described and instance when she experienced being misunderstood during a simulation which led to an increased self-awareness of how her behaviors impact others. She stated:

> I got feedback that people thought I was super intense and thought that I was going to be super upset if we didn't win … and at one point, I just took a step back and said, "Um, well, you guys just do this how you want to do it. Like, we're not communicating effectively and that's fine, but I'm going to just remove myself from the situation." And I did that because I felt like I was maybe part of the problem and the communication, right? Like, something wasn't working so I'll step out and just follow what someone else says. No big deal. But then, again, to others, that came off more as, like, "Oh, you're really upset with us"…

Participant SEA-B also discussed the value of being able to apply and practice his learning takeaways during the mid-session. He stated that he found the ability to practice and reflect on his new behaviors "very useful".

Giving and receiving feedback. One distinct category that emerged from the larger theme of practicing behaviors and actions in real time that the participants reported as a key aspect of their learning journey was the practice of giving and receiving feedback.

According to the participants, practicing receiving feedback allowed them to become more aware and to better absorb their learning takeaways. In addition, practicing giving feedback forced them to focus on others and learn from their interactions. Participants used some of the following statements about the value of feedback, “I received really incredible feedback”, or “feedback from my peers ... the feedback I was hearing about myself but also about what others were learning about themselves, that was really valuable”, or “that direct feedback … from your peers … I think that was kind of … eye opening, which is a good thing because you just didn't know about the blind spots.”

Participant NA-A provided an example of receiving feedback saying, “I'm on a team of six people, having five other people tell me what I needed to work on was really eye opening.” Participant NA-E shared that the value of feedback surprised her, stating:

> … getting one-on-one feedback in the class was really, really valuable to me, in how people perceive me and what they felt I could improve upon and things like that. … So that was something I did not expect at all but was really valuable.

Participant SEA-F shared that the practice of giving and receiving feedback was very valuable because it is not a “common practice” in her culture. She elaborated on how receiving feedback helped her become more self-aware:

> … when you receive feedback, you receive feedback of the personality … and there are things that you do not see in yourself … like mirroring, ... you look at the mirror (but) the mirror will not give you feedback. You just see it. But … (by) receiving feedback, it's giving value to what you (should) do as a person.

Reflection. The last important theme related to the participants learning process was engaging in reflection. Reflection was the one theme that most participants reported as very

useful, but a couple of participants reported it as being challenging or "overkill". Participant NA-B stated that he appreciated the structured reflection exercises for developing deeper self-awareness, stating:

> I really appreciated the heavy emphasis on reflection. … detaching, and just sitting and pausing, and kind of diving into … when that came up, why was I frustrated in that? Why did that bother me? … Why did it bother me they responded that way? … that really healthy to do.

Participant SEA-B also appreciated the process of reflecting and carried the practice into his everyday life:

> (I appreciated) the reflection part because after each activity we did some reflection. … (I consider it to be) like personal feedback … And after the course, I also purchased … a (reflection) book and I tried to do a couple of … reflections.

Participant SEA-D stated that reflection helped him absorb the learning takeaways, saying: "I think … (reflection) helps us to learn and strengthen what we have learned from the … (program). It's important. Sometimes what you have heard … does not mean … (that) you have accepted it." Participant NA-F reported that reflection was a key part of her learning process, stating:

> …It was really valuable for me just to sit and actually walk through all of the different concepts … (and) just to be able to take some time to reflect on all of it. I would probably say reflection was honestly the most important thing … something I don't do normally. So that was really good for me.

Participant NA-E described an instance when a group reflection helped her team improve in one of the activities:

> One of the things that our team started doing before they ever told us to was … having our own reflections right after the simulation ended. So, we talked about what was going on, what we think we can improve on. And … we started to strategize then for the following day …

However, not all participants found the reflective exercises equally helpful. Specifically, one of the participants reported that he struggled with reflection staying, “It was probably the hardest thing for me to do was to be quiet, and just reflect, and write down my thoughts on paper. That's something I've never been able to do.” Participant NA-F stated that while some of the structured reflections were very “beneficial”, but some were “overkill”.

This section reported the main themes of the second issue of the research phenomenon, the “how”, of the transformative experience of the participants of the first-level leader development program. The following sections will provide further insights into the second issue of the development of future leaders in global organizations by answering the analytical questions that guided the research process.

Analytical Questions. The analytical questions sought to develop an additional layer of understanding of the “how” of developing future leaders in global organizations. The first analytical question is focused on understanding the specific program elements that helped facilitate the participants’ transformative experience, while the second analytical question is focused on the process through which the experience occurred. The last question sought to understand any differences in the impact of the program elements between the two global regions.

Which program elements (curriculum and process) facilitate individual development?

The data that helped inform the first analytical question was derived through triangulation of data

from multiple data sources. The main themes of program elements that emerged from the data included: focus on deep learning, focus on participant engagement and self-directed learning, learning environment that supports relationship-building and trust, cohort format that supports mutual learning, and relevant learning content.

Table 4.5 lists the main themes and the corresponding program elements that emerged from the data as the defining program characteristics that facilitated the participants' transformational experience. The next section that answers the second analytical question provides further information about the individual elements and will describe the process that facilitated the participants' transformative experience.

Table 4.5

Main Themes and Program Elements of the Learning Process

Theme	**Program Elements**
Focus on deep learning	Experiential activities
	Challenge
	Feedback
	Reflection
	Focus on emotions
Focus on participant engagement/self-directed learning	Style of facilitation
	Participant-led exercises
	Self-organization
	Participants responsible for development
	Dialogue
Learning environment that supports relationship building and trust	Informal/safe atmosphere
	Participant socialization
	Program format
	Personal experiences

	Confidentiality
Cohort format that supports mutual learning	Diverse cohort
	Shared experience
	Team/group exercises
	Participants as mentors
	Social platform
Relevant learning content	Foundational skills
	Individual/personal experiences
	Real-world applications
	Organizational context

How do the various program elements facilitate development? The next analytical question sought to develop a deeper understanding of how the program elements specified in the previous section facilitated the participants' transformative experience. Triangulation of data from all data sources was used to develop these findings. Table 4.6 summarizes the main themes, the different elements and the aspects of these elements that facilitated the participants' learning process. This section also provides insights into the moderating variables that impacted the learning process.

Focus on deep learning. One of the key features that emerged from the data that facilitated the participants' transformative experience was the focus on deep learning. The triangulation of data from the focus group interview, the individual interviews and the observation suggested that the program elements that facilitated deep learning included experiential exercises, presence of challenge, feedback, reflection and focus on emotions.

Participants repeatedly referenced the experiential exercises as "powerful", "impressive" and representative of real-world situations. During the interviews the participants discussed the impact of the different experiential exercises, including role-plays, simulations, and team-

building activities. The review of data from the observation journal notes corroborated the findings reported by the participants, noting that during the experiential exercises the participants were fully engaged suggesting that they found the exercises interesting and useful. The observation journal notes also referenced forms of play or games that engaged the participants in their learning.

The presence of challenge was also supported as one of the design elements highlighted as impactful by the participants, which was described in the previous section that recounted the main themes or the participants' learning experience. The observation journal notes also referenced challenging assignments, as well as an inherent challenge of the program that required the participants to engage with other participants without prior knowledge of each other and to work together as a team. The observation journal notes also captured numerous occasions where the participants appeared to be outside of their comfort zone, which was always followed by the overcoming of challenges independently and as a team.

The impact of feedback and reflection as part of deep learning was clearly reflected in the participant interviews. The participants, as well as the observation journal notes described feedback as an ever-present element of the program. The concept of feedback was introduced by the facilitators as an essential part of leader development. The process of giving and receiving feedback included one-on-one feedback sessions, group feedback, feedback on activities, feedback on performance, as well as facilitator feedback. The observation journal notes recorded that the feedback sessions included both positive and affirming, as well as constructive feedback elements. Just like feedback, reflection was an essential part of the learning process and included individual reflection, group reflections and reflection on action. The observation journal notes recounted different types of individual and group reflection, including reflection on activities,

reflection on the day's activities or reflection on content/concepts. An example of reflection on action was the reflection on the participants' applying their learning during the midsession.

Another element of deep learning that emerged from the interviews and the observation journal notes was the focus on emotions. During the interviews the participants described different emotions they felt during the program, including feeling energized, excited, uncomfortable, scared, motivated, among others. The observation journal notes referenced several occasions when there was a clear and intentional focus on the participants' emotions that were highlighted as an element of the development process or as a fundamental part of overcoming challenges. Some of the examples included the facilitators asking the participants to reflect on how they felt during an exercise, or to discuss emotions that emerged when they thought about the challenges or management or leadership. The facilitators also affirmed the participants' emotions during the exercises, letting them know that experiencing a range of emotions is a normal part of the learning process.

Focus on participant engagement and self-directed learning. The next theme that emerged from the data as an essential for facilitating the participants' transformative learning experience was the focus on participant engagement and self-directed learning. The program elements associated with this theme include the style of facilitation, participant-led exercises, self-organization, participants' responsibility for their own development and dialogue as a tool for learning. Collectively, all these elements contributed to the participants' engagement and self-directed learning.

The style of facilitation as an element of the learning process emerged from the triangulation of the participant interviews, interviews with the regional and global program managers and the observation journal notes. According to the regional program manager the

primary role of the facilitators is to act as guides and subject matter experts allowing the participants to shape the learning process. During the interviews, participants referred to the facilitators as “very good” and suggested that the facilitators were there to mostly support and stimulate the participants’ engagement. Focus group participant FG-E described the role of the facilitators as follows: “ Often the instructors were really just nudging us around a little bit and letting us talk about our own feelings and our own experiences and to develop the depth of the conversation and the learning and to increase it”. This facilitator role was corroborated by the observation journal notes that referenced facilitator activities such as “guiding” or “leading” but “not controlling”. Facilitators were also observed having an active role in some of the activities and acting as part of the group.

The observation journal notes also referenced instances when the facilitator either did not feel at ease explaining concepts or when the facilitation became more directive and forced. During these occasions the energy in the room dropped, and the participants seemed less engaged. Participant NA-E echoed the impact that facilitation can have on the learning process, saying:

> …the other facilitator was a little newer, and I only say that in that she seemed a little more uncomfortable with the actual engaging and training, and I think some of the sessions that she led, you could see people wouldn't open up quite as much.

The next element of self-directed learning that contributed to the participants’ engagement was the incorporation of participant-led exercises. The observation journal notes included several references to participant-led exercises that supported the participants’ engagement. Participants also led their final feedback session that was not attended by anyone outside of the cohort. Many participants referred to this session as “powerful”.

Self-organization was another element that emerged from the data as an important aspect of the participants' learning experience. Self-organization included the element of individual accountability within the learning process, as well as a level of freedom in how the participants choose to conduct certain exercises. For example, the observation journal notes reference the ability of the participants to choose their preferred location for certain team activities and well as freedom in how they chose to conduct those activities.

Closely related to the element of self-organization is the importance of the participants responsibility for their own development. Participant NA-A shared an example of the participants setting development goals for themselves as well as for their peers. He stated, "We were asked to identify things that we wanted to work on, and then, separately, we were asked to identify things for our teammates that we thought they needed to work on." The observation journal notes confirmed this element of the program, referencing several occasions when the facilitators discussed the importance of the participants' engagement and of taking responsibility for their learning and development.

Another important element that contributed to the participants' learning experience was the extensive use of dialogue between the participants and between the participants and the facilitators that allowed the participants to shape their learning experience. Focus group participant FG-E also discussed the benefit of dialogue during the learning process saying, "We were all processing the same information and chatting back and forth; that amount of that social level of having other people there to talk through it was very enjoyable as opposed to … being dictated to." The observation journal notes referenced an extensive use of dialogue during the program. The different forms included engaging the participants in discussions to teach concepts,

guided discussions about activities, and dialogue between participants about real-world problems.

Learning environment that supports relationship building and trust. The next main theme of program elements that facilitated the participants' learning experience was a learning environment that supports relationship building and trust. The specific elements within this theme that emerged from the triangulation of data from the different data sources include informal and safe atmosphere; participants' socialization; format of the program; personal experiences; and confidentiality.

The first element that seemed to have contributed to the supportive learning environment was an informal and safe atmosphere during the program. The observation journal notes referenced an informal and positive atmosphere with the participants appearing comfortable and engaging openly. The interactions between the facilitators and the participants, and between participants themselves, appeared informal and friendly. This friendly atmosphere helped participants feel comfortable during the learning process and allowed them to exhibit vulnerability.

Participant socialization was another aspect that emerged as an important contributor to the participants' developing relationships and trust with each other. The participants made a mention of a networking dinner during one of the onsite meetings that the participants' self-organized. According to the program documentation, the networking dinner is a planned element that allows the participants to interact outside of the structured training sessions. The observation journal notes also referenced the participants' socialization during breaks and during lunch sessions where participants set together in a designated area.

The format of the program was another aspect that contributed to the participants developing deeper relationships and building trust which in turn strengthened their shared learning experience. On several occasions the participants mentioned that the in-person training was a key aspect of their learning. Focus group participant FG-F highlighted the importance of in-person training, stating:

> …because it includes at least to some extent a feedback loop. If I, for example, read a book or watch a web-based training, I can think that I've understood it and … if there are tests, I can answer those questions. But I think the reflection and the feedback isn't as deep or as useful as it is in a classroom environment.

Participant SEA-E reported that while logistically challenging, the two-session format improved communication and trust among the participants. The observation notes also corroborated this finding referencing a greater level of comfort and interactions among the participants during the observation of the second onsite training session.

The last two elements under this theme include sharing of personal experiences and confidentiality. These two elements are closely related as one supported the occurrence of the other. The observation data referenced the facilitators highlighting the importance of confidentiality on several occasions during the program. This allowed the participants to be more comfortable and vulnerable in sharing their personal experiences that were imperative for the participants' learning from each other's experiences.

Cohort format that supports mutual learning. The next theme is closely related to the last theme but includes intentional elements that facilitated the participants' mutual learning. These elements include an operationally diverse cohort, focus on a shared experience, focus on team

and group exercises, importance of the role of the participants as each other's mentors and a social platform that allows the cohort to stay connected throughout the program.

The first two elements under this theme are closely connected. As is reflected in the main themes from the participant interviews, the participants expressed great value in drawing on the diverse experience of their cohort peers. Participants described their cohorts as "very diverse group of people" with diverse backgrounds. One participant described his cohort as an interesting group of "high performers". Other participants pointed out that the cohort diversity was representative of the organizational diversity within the regions, which included the gender diversity being slightly underrepresented. The observation journal notes referenced the observed cohorts as being very cross-functionally diverse which provided a rich learning environment for the participants and mirrored the real-world complexity and matrixed environment of a large global organization.

While diversity of the cohorts was an important element that facilitated the learning process, another element related to the cohort format was an element of a shared experience. The shared identity of being from the same organization but different functional areas allowed for the learning takeaways to be more relevant and applicable. Also, overcoming challenges together as a group and learning from each other within an intimate cohort allowed the participants to create bonds and be more vulnerable with each other leading to an enhanced learning experience.

The next element that supported mutual learning was a strong focus on team and group exercises. The observation journal notes referenced many occasions where participants worked in groups that allowed them to share their feedback, personal stories, or reflections that facilitated their mutual learning. Another aspect referenced in the observation journal notes was the participants' building on each-other's points or ideas, stimulating further discussion.

Another interrelated element within this theme included the participants acting as mentors to each other by providing constructive feedback throughout the program. This element was strongly reflected in the participants' theme of learning from each other. The observation journal notes as well as the participant interviews also referenced a mastermind exercise geared towards the participants developing mentoring relationships. One of the participants confirmed this saying, "I think the idea is to build such a community … (during this program) … (so) these people also support each other doing their career."

The last element within this theme, a social platform for participants' interactions, was also part of the greater goal of connecting the cohort participants throughout and after the completion of the program. According to the Regional Program Manager, this program element is regionally specific, meaning that not all global regions choose to implement it. However, most of the interviewed participants acknowledged the benefit of having a social platform as a way of staying connected with the other participants. Some of the activities utilizing the social platform reported by the participants included supporting each other in implementing their learning takeaways, checking in on each-other's progress, or just saying hello.

Relevant learning content. The last theme that emerged as an important aspect of the participants' learning process was a relevant learning content. The program elements under this theme included focus on foundational skills, focus on the participants' individual and personal experiences, real-world applicability, placing the learning within a larger organizational context, and the utilization of a personality assessment.

A key element of this theme was the program's focus on content related to foundational leadership skills. During the participant interviews, the focus group participants as well as the individual participants shared their opinions about the skills and the mindset that are required to

be successful in a global, matrixed organizational environment. The main skills the participants listed were effective communication, self-awareness, questioning of assumptions, focus on others, transparency, motivating and inspiring others, ability to communicate across differences, ability to align people around strategy, and developing others. Based on the program goals described previously in this chapter, much of the program content was focused on skills that overlapped with the skills mentioned by the participants. This is reflected in many of the participants reporting that they found the program "relevant". However, the evidence suggests that it was the participants engaging with the content collectively rather than the content itself that emerged as an impactful element of the participants' experience.

Another important element of the relevant learning content was the focus on soliciting the participants' personal experiences. The observation journal notes referenced many instances where exercises included focus on the participants' personal experiences. By tying the learning process to the participants' individual experiences, the participants became co-creators of their learning experience. The use of a personality assessment also helped the participants understand the differences of other personalities in relation to their own. While several of the participants noted that the personality assessment and their results were not new to them, it was helpful for them to learn what their results meant in relation to the results of other participants. Thus, while reviewing their personality assessments was "interesting", it was the engagement with the other participants and the discussion of differences in the personality tendencies that was more meaningful. Some participants also mentioned that they would have liked to spend more time on what the personality differences mean in the context of interacting with- and leading others.

The next element of real-world applicability was closely related to the previous element, but in addition to drawing on participants' prior experiences, the program also tied the learning

process to potential real-world challenges or situations. The observation notes referenced different instances of discussions of real-world applications of concepts, both by the facilitators and by the participants.

The last element under the theme of relevant content was that the learning was embedded in the larger organizational context. The observation notes listed several occasions when the facilitators tied the learning process to the organizational context, referencing the organizational values and the organizational culture. One element that was mentioned by the participants as impactful was the focus on ownership culture, which was modeled throughout the entire program.

Table 4.6 provides a summary of the main themes, the corresponding program elements and the aspects of the learning process that facilitated the participants' learning process.

Table 4.6

Main Themes, Program Elements and Aspects of the Learning Process

Theme	**Program Elements**	**Aspects of the Learning Process**
Focus on deep learning	Experiential activities	Simulations, role-plays, play/games, team building, applying learning
	Challenge	Team building, ambiguity within exercises, time-constraints, vulnerability
	Feedback	Individual and group feedback, feedback on activities, feedback on performance, facilitator feedback
	Reflection	Self-reflection, group reflections, reflection on action (praxis)
	Focus on emotions	Discussions about emotions, affirming emotions
Focus on participant engagement/self-	Style of facilitation	Facilitating but not controlling the process, involving participants in facilitation, storytelling, continuous engagement of participants

directed learning	Participant-led exercises	Participants leading certain activities, certain activities are only attended by the participants (no facilitators)
	Self-organization	Individual accountability, freedom to move around, freedom to choose location for activities and in how activities are carried out
	Participants responsible for development	Participants identify their own development goals, co-creating learning experience
	Dialogue	Learning through a dialogue, facilitator/participant discussions to teach concept, participants determine learning content through dialogue
Learning environment that supports relationship building and trust	Informal/safe atmosphere	Facilitators outside contractors, encouragement of engagement, affirming participants' points, informal interactions, casual atmosphere
	Participant socialization	Physical space supports interactions, participant interaction outside of class, networking dinner
	Format of program	2 onsite meetings create familiarity, focus on teambuilding during 1st onsite session to develop trust and build relationships
	Personal experiences	Sharing of personal experiences, vulnerability affirmed
	Confidentiality	Participants responsible for rules of confidentiality, confidentiality continuously re-affirmed by facilitators
Cohort format that supports mutual learning	Diverse cohort	Learning from each other's experiences, rich learning environment, building on each other's points, boundary-spanning
	Shared experience	Shared organizational identity, sharing and overcoming of challenging experiences, learning together
	Team/group exercises	Team-bonding, group work, mingling, team discussions, small group exercises
	Participants as mentors	Participants act as mentors to each other during feedback, maintaining of peer relationships
	Social platform	Connecting, sharing of challenges with implementation, personal connections
Relevant learning content	Foundational skills	Tying content and exercises to immediate leadership/management needs.
	Individual/personal experiences	Soliciting participants' experiences, relating learning to participants' own contexts, deriving meaning from own experiences, personality assessment
	Real-world applications	Simulations mirroring real-world challenges/situations, discussions of real-world applications, reflections on real-world applicability

	Organizational context	Modeling organizational values, tying in organizational context, discussions of organizational differences/commonalities

Moderating variables - andragogy. As mentioned in the research case overview, the research study utilized the andragogical assumptions as moderating variables for the developmental process. These moderating variables were considered during the data analysis to determine their impact on the participants' learning process and the learning outcomes. The moderating variables include the learner's self-concept, previous experience, developmental readiness, practical implications, level of intrinsic motivation/self-actualization and awareness of the learning gap (need to know).

The moderating variable of learner's self-concept was affirmed as an important facilitating variable of the participants' transformative experience. It is reflected in the second theme – the focus on participant engagement and self-directed learning.

The second moderating variable of the impact of previous experience was also affirmed, as the learning process of the participants was greatly impacted by the participants' diverse backgrounds and experiences. In addition, the learning outcomes were highly individual and dependent on the participants' individual contexts and developmental needs.

The next three moderating variables of developmental readiness, practical implications and intrinsic motivation are closely related. During the interviews the participants were asked about why they decided to attend the program. The participants listed several reasons that pointed to their developmental readiness, their motivation and the practical implications of the program. The reasons included being nominated by their manager, needing to learn leadership skills because of being promoted, wanting to get ready for the next step (management role), a desire to create impact, personal development, the program being recommended by others and an

interest to learn, or creating value for the organization. The reasons reflect a mixture of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for learning and for the participants' self-actualization. While some of the reasons for the participants' participation were extrinsic, the transformative experience itself seemed to have triggered an intrinsic motivation of the participants to learn and grow.

The high level of engagement that was reported by the participants also suggests that developmental readiness of the participants was well aligned with the program. The data also revealed that the self-directed element of the program allowed the participants to apply the learning to their own developmental level. Participant NA-E provided an example of how the understanding of the difference between the concepts of management and leadership differed among participants that impacted their takeaways, saying:

> I definitely noticed some other students in class seemed to be getting a lot out of that. I've had a few conversations about how surprised people were at hearing that concept. I noticed that especially with some of my older colleagues. That had never crossed their mind that that could be something.

Also, the theme of relevant learning content demonstrates that practicality was an important aspect of the participants' experience, affirming the importance of practical implications as a moderating variable of the leadership development process.

The last moderating variable of the awareness of the learning gap was also affirmed. It was reflected in the participants' being responsible for setting their own development goals, which made their learning more impactful for their individual contexts. However, the interviews with the participants suggested that often the participants did not become aware of their learning gap until they were confronted by it during the program, often by engaging in an activity that

provided a certain level of challenge. Thus, while the awareness of the learning gap facilitated development, the awareness often occurred during the learning process.

Moderating variable – relational learning. In addition to the moderating andragogical assumptions that were affirmed as moderating variables for the learning process, there was one additional variable that emerged as an important aspect of the participants' transformative experience. When asked about the specific content of the program, several participants reported that they did not remember as much of the content, referencing predominantly the learning process as a vehicle for their learning outcomes. Specifically, most of the participants did not remember any takeaways from the virtual part of the program that was mostly focused on informational learning. Some of their statements included "I definitely wasn't as engaged … for the virtual portion", "I thought it was interesting but … it didn't meet requirements for my storage capacity", "I don't remember a whole lot about it", or "doing it just to check the box". Also, several participants referred to the content of the program as familiar or as something they have been exposed to before but reported that it was the process of going through the program with their cohort that facilitated their development. Participant NA-B summed up this point by saying:

> I don't remember tons of the frameworks. I don't remember any of the pre-course study. I remember a little bit of mid-session break. But hands down, the relationships you build was great. … As much as the framework is nice, and what they're trying to teach you is nice, … really … the best part was 100% building the connections and the relationships.

The participants also reported that the best part of the virtual part of the program was the ability to stay connected with the other participants. Some of the participants who did not stay in regular communication with other participants after the program expressed disappointment in

that it is difficult to remain connected with the participants after the program. Participants SEA-E stated that "it is a pity … (not to communicate as often) anymore." Participant SEA-F reported that she wished she could stay in more frequent contact with her cohort, suggesting that the virtual collaboration element could be improved because "there's no accountability".

As these statements suggests, the element of relational learning was an imperative aspect of the transformative experience of the participants of the fist-level leadership program.

How does the impact of the various program elements vary globally? The last analytical question sought to develop an understanding of any potential differences of the program elements globally. Based on the interviews with participants from the two different global regions, no significant differences in the learning process emerged during the data analysis. The only difference in the learning process between the two regions mirrored the difference reflected in the learning outcomes and was related to the greater cross-cultural diversity of the SEA cohorts, confirming the importance of the inherent diversity of the cohort, impacting the learning environment and thus the learning process.

One additional element related to the difference between the two regions is that the program in the SEA region is conducted in English, which is not the first language of most of the participants in that region. One of the participants pointed out that it was helpful for him to interact with his cohort peers in English as it is the language required for a lot of his business interactions.

Summary of findings.

This research study focused on developing a deeper understanding of the development process (conceptualized as transformation) of future leaders in global organizations by investigating the "what" and the "how" of the transformative experience of participants of first-

level leader development program in a global organization. The data collection consisted of several data sources with the goal of triangulating the data to achieve a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

The findings suggest that leadership development programs in global organizations can facilitate deep learning that leads to the participants 'expanded *way of being* and *way of knowing*. The main themes of the "what" of the transformative experience of participants that emerged from the data include an increase in self-leadership; effective communication; value of giving and receiving feedback; understanding and leading others; challenging assumptions, valuing other perspectives and navigating diversity; and understanding of leadership. Additionally, the data suggests that there are specific individual demonstrated outcomes of the transformative experience such as the participants creating a mentor network, having an intentional approach to their careers or implementing their new takeaways as behavioral changes in their professional and personal lives. The findings suggest that the participants' transformation can also have organizational implications that include improved team and project outcomes, and a positive impact on the overall attendance in the organization's leadership development and training programs.

Further the findings suggest that transformative experience is embedded in relational learning; includes challenge as an opportunity for growth; occurs in a learning environment that fosters trust; and involves the practice of behaviors in real time. Further analysis identified the key themes and associated program elements that facilitated the participants' transformative experience. The main themes included a focus on deep learning, focus on participant engagement and self-directed learning, a learning environment that supports relationship building and trust, a cohort format that supports mutual learning and a relevant learning content. The data collection

and analysis also provided an insight into specific aspects of the process through which the program elements facilitate the learning process.

The goal of Chapter Four was to present the research findings as they relate to the research question and the sub-questions, and to help develop a deeper understanding of the research phenomena. Chapter Five presents a discussion of the research findings and their implications within the larger context of leadership development in global organizations.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Research Findings

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to develop a deeper understanding of leadership development in global organizations, by exploring the "what" and the "how" of the transformative experience of participants of a first-level leader development program in a global organization. The context within which the case study was conducted was key as it represents the complexity of the global organizational environment that has implications for leadership development in global organizations.

The global organization that provided access to the first-leader development program is a multi-national conglomerate with over $90 billion in revenues, operations in more than 200 countries, and around 375,000 employees world-wide. This specific context is central to gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of developing of future leaders in global organizations. As an instrumental case study, the goal of the research was to use the particularities of the case to develop a holistic understanding that can be utilized to provide insights and implications for the general phenomenon.

The environment within which global organizations operate is inherently complex, which has implications for the development process of future leaders (Petrie, 2011; Prewitt et al., 2011; Salicru, 2015). These implications suggest that leaders in global organization require a unique set of competencies in order to effectively navigate the challenges associated with complex global environments, which in turn requires a specific approach to leadership development that is grounded in transformational learning (Petrie, 2011; Salicru, 2015). As a result, this research study utilized the transformative learning and adult learning theories to develop a conceptual framework that served as a specific lens for the interpretation of leadership development in

global organizations. The goal of this case study was to utilize the particularities of the case to answer the following research questions and the accompanying sub-questions:

What is the transformative experience of participants of future leader development programs in global organizations?

Sub-questions:

- *What kind of individual transformation occurs as a result of future leader development programs in large global organizations?*
- *How does individual transformation occur?*

This chapter provides the interpretation of the research findings as they relate to the phenomenon of developing future leaders in global organizations by discussing the findings within the context of the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. The chapter will also discuss the applicability of the conceptual framework for the process of leadership development in global organizations, the implications for research and practice, the limitations of the study and opportunities for future research.

The "What" of Developing Future Leaders in Global Organizations

The literature presented in Chapter Two suggested that leadership in global organizations is highly contextual and not easily defined by any one definition of leadership. This presents a unique challenge for identifying the types of skills and a mindset that are necessary for leaders to be effective in a highly matrixed global environment. Global companies often operate in a mixed environment that has elements of both, a traditional hierarchical structure and a matrixed structure. This challenge was echoed by the Global Program Manager of the first-level leader development program. It is the highly complex organizational environment that makes it difficult to neatly categorize leaders, especially at the lower to mid- functional levels of the organization.

This challenge was also represented by the characteristics of the participant cohort of the first-level leader development program. While the program is geared toward first-level leaders, and is sometimes referred to as an "early-career" program, the participant population did not reflect a group of early-career employees. The mean of the participants' number of years that they had worked at the organization was 8 years, with the number of years ranging from 2 to 17. Thus, many of the participants, while considered first-level leaders are experienced individual contributors who have served in non-functional leadership roles as team leads or as subject matter experts for several years. In addition, due to the inherent complexity of the global organization, the organizational contexts of all the participants varied greatly. While most participants reported that they worked in some global capacity, the level of global engagement in their jobs varied. This poses a question about the types and the levels of leadership skills that these employees need in order to be successful in their current roles, and that also help them succeed in functional leader/management roles.

The findings suggest that focusing on foundational leadership skills that can be applied in different contexts is beneficial at the individual contributor level, as well as in first-level functional leader roles. This point was supported by the participants of the first-level leader development program who described the program as relevant for their individual contexts. The evidence validates the argument that leadership in modern organizations is a product of a *shared influence process* rather than a *specialized role* (Yukl, 2013). The findings also support the notion argued by some scholars that leaders in global organizations need skills that are represented by a mix of both, global leadership and contemporary leadership theories that consider leadership to be more process-based and distributed (Petrie, 2011). The next section

discusses the findings within the context of existing research about leadership in complex global organizations.

The foundational capacity of future leaders in global organizations. The findings of the program outcomes of the first-level leader development program suggest that leadership development programs can provide a transformative learning experience to program participants that can lead to an expanded capacity in the participant's *way of being* and the *way of knowing*. This finding is instrumental within the context of leadership in global organizations, as this type of development is considered necessary for future leaders who need to navigate the challenges of complex global business environments (Geller, 2009; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013; Salicru, 2015).

Foundational leadership capacity. The case study findings provided an insight into the leadership capacity that can be developed by participating in structured leadership development programs. This is encouraging, especially because developing a strong leadership pipeline has been shown to be highly contingent on an effective leadership development strategy (DDI, 2014; DDI, 2018; i4cp, 2015; UNC Executive Development, 2015). However, research shows that many leadership development initiatives are not effective in delivering the desired outcomes (DDI, 2014; i4cp, 2015; UNC Executive Development, 2017). One of the reasons why these initiatives fail is due to the lack of understanding of the critical competencies that leaders need to effectively navigate the complex global environment (Mendenhall et al., 2017). The evidence presented by this research provided an insight into some of the foundational leadership competencies and the mindset that increase the leadership capacity of future leaders in global organizations.

The research findings demonstrate that leader development programs in global organizations can facilitate an increased level of self-leadership. Some of the elements of an increased capacity in the area of self-leadership include a growth in mindset, an increased self-awareness and self-management, and continuous learning and leveraging relationships. Self-management has been identified as one of the key foundational global leadership competencies (Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, and Oddou, 2010). Other elements of self-leadership such as a specific mindset that includes cognitive complexity (Cogner, 2014), or self-awareness (Jokinen, 2005) were also identified by scholars as foundational to leadership in global organizations. In addition, Prewitt, et al. (2011) suggested that the practice of continuous learning was central to effective leadership in twenty-first century global organizations. Thus, it could be argued that developing an increase in self-leadership that leads to an increased capacity and continuous learning should be a fundamental element of future leader development in global organizations.

The case study findings demonstrated that a big takeaway for the participants was learning effective communication techniques. Creating an open communication was identified as one of the main skills important for international leaders (Thorn, 2012). The participants of the first-level leader development program reported that they realized the importance of effective communication for increased collaboration and for improving team outcomes. They also highlighted the importance of effective communication in navigating and managing conflict. Research supports the importance of effective communication. It indicates that open communication and collaboration develop trust that is especially important in the context of complex environments that are defined by a high level of uncertainty (Psychogios & Garev, 2012). Collaboration has also been identified to be crucial for achieving outcomes in global

matrixed environments (Petrie, 2011). The findings thus support the importance of effective communication as a foundational skill for future leaders in global organizations.

The findings suggest that the ability to give and receive feedback is an important element of development. The participants of the first-level leader development program discussed the importance of feedback in the context of their growth. The evidence demonstrated that because of their experience in the program, the participants became more open to receiving feedback and enthusiastic about the value that feedback could provide for their continuous development. In addition, the participants realized the value of feedback for helping others grow and to improve organizational outcomes. It is important, however, to emphasize that the participants did not report equal transformative effect of the 360 feedback they received during the mid-session. The research on multi-source feedback as a catalyst for leadership development is mixed (Dai, De Meuse, & Peterson, 2010). The evidence of this research suggests that it is the constructive personal feedback that has the greatest impact on leadership development. Kegan and Lahey (2009), suggested that cultivating an intrinsic motivation for growth should be an integral part of an effective organizational learning strategy. It could be argued that personal feedback can provide such intrinsic motivation for leaders to continuously learn and adapt, especially when they are receptive to it and are consciously aware of the value of feedback on their development. Ability to give and receive feedback should thus be an essential skill for leaders to support their own growth as well as the growth of those they lead.

According to the participants of the first-level leader development program, the importance of understanding of- and connecting with- others was a key takeaway for them as leaders. Several participants reflected on how their new appreciation for understanding others shaped their approach to leadership. Having a relational orientation is believed to be essential for

creating a safe and collaborative climate that supports adaptability and innovation (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). Fostering of fine-grain interactions within complex environments supports generative leadership where leaders can act as catalysts for innovation (Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2015). Scholars also suggest that the focus on others is important for developing a relational mindset that is necessary to achieve outcomes in complex modern organizations (Geer-Frazier, 2014; Martin and Ernst, 2005). Relational mindset also supports collective mindset and encourages distributed participation in the leadership process (Geer-Frazier, 2014). Due to the increasing complexity and interconnectedness of the global organizational environment, developing a relational mindset and adapting an empowering leadership orientation should thus be at the center of leadership development programs in global organizations.

Challenging one's assumptions is a key skill that allows leaders to increase their understanding of complex situations (Geller, 2009). The challenging of assumptions, valuing of other perspectives and an increased ability to navigate diversity was another outcome of the transformative process of the participants of the first-level leader development program. Critical thinking has been identified as an essential competency for leaders in global organizations (Boyd, et al., 2011; Yershova, et al., 2000). Further, critical thinking has also been identified as an important element of continuous development for twenty-first century leaders. In addition, the ability to manage and leverage diversity in today's diversified environments is central to organizational success (Büyükbalcı, et al., 2014). The research findings suggest that critical thinking and the ability to navigate diversity can be developed though structured leadership development initiatives and should be one of the targeted outcomes of leadership development programs of future leaders in global organizations. Additionally, evidence from the case study indicates that future leader development programs in global organization should expose

participants to different types of diversity and focus on the broader understanding of differences, giving the participants the opportunity to make sense of the concept of diversity within their own contexts.

The research study findings support the notion that leadership occurs in different forms, often without formal authority. The participants of the first-level leader development program demonstrated an understanding in the differences between management and leadership, a distinction that is often difficult to draw (Mendenhall, 2018). Gundling, et al. (2011) pointed out that the difference between the concepts of leadership and management often create a certain level of ambiguity in leadership development programs. This was also observed in the first-level leader development program where the focus was blurred between the concepts of functional management and *leadership at all levels*. The participants' responses suggested that they were able to draw the distinction between the concepts, however, while motivated to implement their takeaways in their current contexts, some participants were also discouraged about not being able to implement their learning takeaways in an actual functional leadership role.

The evidence thus suggests that while drawing a distinction between management and leadership is helpful, leadership development programs in global organizations should provide exposure to the concept of *leadership at all levels*. This concept is grounded in the complexity leadership theory (CLT) that frames leadership as a process rather than a function of individual authority. CLT does not eliminate the role of formal leaders but does suggest that leadership in complex organizations is more distributed. The role of formal leaders is not to control outcomes but rather to enable them (Drew, 2010; Hazy, 2006; Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Surie & Hazy, 2006; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). Therefore, future leader development programs in global organizations should provide a learning experience

that leads to development of a combination of foundational leadership skills and a mindset that would encourage the participants to participate in the leadership process, regardless of their formal position.

As is represented by the experience level of the participants of the first-level leader development program, future leaders are not only limited to the early-career employee population. It demonstrates that leadership in global matrixed organizations is distributed at different levels, an element of complex organizational environments. It is thus important that organizations focus on increasing leadership capacity within their workforce, regardless of the experience level.

The goal of transformative learning is to increase one's ability to handle complex phenomena (Johnson, 2008).The research findings suggest that leadership development programs grounded in a transformational learning experience can facilitate development that leads to an expanded leadership capacity, represented by changes in shifts in frames of reference as well as shifts in form.

Individual and organizational impact of leadership development. The findings of the research study demonstrated that the first-level leader development program facilitated specific demonstrated outcomes in individual and organizational contexts. In an individual context the experience facilitated the participants' ability to create and maintain a mentor network, apply their takeaways in personal and professional contexts, and take an intentional approach to their careers. In an organizational context, the transformative experience of the participants led to improved team and project outcomes and an increased participation in leadership development and other skills training programs.

The findings from the case study thus suggest that leadership development programs can have positive impacts at both the individual and the organizational level. Leadership development programs that can facilitate greater connectedness of the participants across functional, geographic or cultural boundaries can support boundary-spanning activities. As such, the peer network can serve a dual role of a master-mind environment for the leader's continuous development and as a network of resources that can help the leaders achieve organizational goals. It could be argued that in the latter case, a network of resources could also support generative leadership that fosters innovation and adaptation in complex environments.

The evidence also supports the notion that leadership development programs can develop an intentional mindset that leads to the participants applying their new skillset in both their personal and in their professional lives. This shift that leads to increased intentionality is representative of an outcome of transformative learning (Dirkx, 1998). The research demonstrated that in an organizational context this can translate to improved team or project outcomes and to an increased organizational leadership capacity that is the result of an overall higher engagement in development and training programs. As such, the findings affirm the claim that transformative learning can enable organizations to more effectively manage organizational complexity (Watkins, et al., 2012).

Summary of the "what" of developing future leaders in global organizations. The research study offered valuable insights into the "what" of developing future leaders in global organizations. The findings suggest that leadership development programs can facilitate specific transformative outcomes for the program participants that are demonstrated in individual as well as organizational contexts. The findings also demonstrate that global organizations are inherently complex and thus the goals of leadership development programs should be informed by both, the

global context and the inherent complexity of the organizational environment. This means that the leadership concepts that underpin the development of program goals in global organizations should be informed by the global leadership construct as well as contemporary leadership theories such as the complexity leadership theory (CLT).

Furthermore, leadership development programs for future leaders in global organizations should focus on developing a mix of foundational leadership skills and an intentional leadership mindset that can be implemented in a context of *leadership at all levels*, including at the individual contributor level. Based on the findings, the goal of future leader development programs in global organizations should focus on developing the participants' self-leadership, effective communication, the ability to give and receive feedback, a relational leadership orientation, critical thinking and the ability to navigate diversity. The programs should also focus on creating an understanding of the differences between management and leadership, with focus on *leadership at all levels*.

The "How" of Developing Future Leaders in Global Organizations

Research indicates that research design and the learning process significantly impact the efficacy of delivery of meaningful outcomes of leadership development programs (Institute for Corporate Productivity [i4cp], 2015; Simmonds & Tsui, 2010; Terrell & Rosenbusch, 2012). Scholars argue that in order to deliver such meaningful outcomes, leadership development programs should focus on vertical development that is grounded in transformational learning and leads to an expanded mindset and an increased ability to lead in complex environments (Petrie, 2014; Salicru, 2015). This research study identified certain aspects of the learning process that facilitated the participants' transformative experiences and that led to the expanded leadership capacity discussed in the previous section. In addition, the findings offered an insight into the

program design elements and the learning aspects associated with these elements that shaped the transformative experience of the participants. Thus, the research provided valuable insights about the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations.

The process of developing future leaders in global organizations. The findings demonstrated that key aspects of the transformative learning process include the ability of participants to learn from each other, presence of challenge that provides an opportunity for growth, ability for participants to practice behaviors, and the practice of reflection. In addition, the findings suggest that the learning process is facilitated by a safe learning environment that supports trust.

Developmental process. The research findings furnished valuable insights into the learning process of participants of leadership development programs. The main theme reported by the participants as central to their learning process was the value of the cohort experience that created a rich learning environment and provided an opportunity for mutual learning. Relational learning is believed to support the process of transformative learning (Cranton, 2016). Transformative learning has been shown to be enhanced by a communal setting that fosters group dialogue (Yoshida et al., 2005). The findings support this aspect as an essential element of the participants' development as it created a supportive context for their learning, provided access to diverse perspectives to learn from, and built a sense of shared experience with the other cohort participants.

Rook and Torbert (2014) suggested that transformational learning includes the process of overcoming personal and professional challenges that helps leaders grow, pointing out that transformational development can be facilitated by structured leadership development programs. Transformative learning has been described as inherently challenging (Cranton, 2016). Scholars

also argued that transformative learning can be fostered by challenging experiences and by reflecting on these experiences (Johnson, 2008). The findings of the research support this notion. The evidence demonstrated that overcoming challenges within the context of the leadership development program itself aided in the participants' transformative experience, provided them with a sense of accomplishment, and increased their engagement. It can be effectively argued that structured leadership development programs should include elements of challenge to provide an opportunity for growth.

The research findings highlighted the importance of a safe learning environment that fostered trust among the participants. Trust has been shown to play an important role in leadership as it encourages development of strong relationships and fosters collaboration which help leaders navigate the uncertainty of complex environments (Psychogios and Garev, 2012). This impact of trust is also mirrored in the learning environment. Cranton (2016) pointed out that due to the inherent challenge of transformative learning, learning environment should provide the needed support and safety for the transformative learning to take place. The findings or the research affirmed the importance of a safe learning environment that enhanced the learning outcomes for the participants.

The value of experiential learning has been highlighted in prior research as a fundamental aspect of adult learning, and as an essential element of the transformative process (Cranton, 2016; Knowles, 1989; Wuestewald, 2016). The findings of the research supported this argument. The participants of the first-level leader development program referenced the ability to practice behaviors through simulations and role-plays as a key aspect of their learning. This included their ability to practice giving and receiving feedback that demonstrated the importance of feedback in their personal and professional lives. The findings thus support the argument that in

order to deliver a transformative learning experience, leadership development programs should be highly experiential and provide an opportunity for the participants to practice giving and receiving feedback.

The research study findings also demonstrated the importance of reflection as a key element of the transformative experience. The participants of the first-level leader development program often found reflection challenging but important for the development of self-awareness, as a tool for developing deeper understanding of concepts, or for improving of group processes. Reflection has been deemed to be at the center of transformative learning in individual and in group learning contexts (Geller, 2009; Schapiro, Wasserman & Gallegos, 2012; Yoshida Geller, & Wasserman, 2005). The research findings supported the importance of reflection as an essential aspect of the transformative learning experience. Therefore, future leader development programs that seek to deliver learning process that facilitates meaningful developmental outcomes should include opportunities for reflection.

Program elements. The key to understanding the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations in the context of structured leadership development programs is the ability to determine the specific program design elements that facilitate the developmental process described above. The findings of the research study provided valuable insights into the program elements and the aspects of the learning process that can facilitate a transformative experience that can develop an expanded leadership capacity in program participants.

Scholars argue that leadership development in complex global business environments should be grounded in transformational learning because this type of learning delivers the kinds of outcomes that can help future leaders navigate the challenges of the inherent complexity of global, matrixed organizational contexts (Geller, 2009; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013; Salicru,

2015). The findings from the triangulation of data indicated that the key program design features that facilitated the participants' transformative experience were a focus on deep learning, focus on participant engagement and self-directed learning, a learning environment that supports relationship building and trust, a cohort format that supports mutual learning, and a relevant learning content. These design features clearly reflect key aspects of transformative learning.

The findings from the triangulation of data suggest that focus on deep learning is reflected in the program's experiential activities, the inclusion of elements of challenge, the practice of giving and receiving feedback, reflection, and the intentional focus on emotions. A key aspect of transformational learning, or vertical development is a focus on deep learning that is fundamentally different than informational learning or technical learning (Salicru, 2015). The goal of transformative learning is grounded in objective and subjective reframing and involves double- and triple-loop learning (Mezirow, 2012). The findings of the research study provide a greater understanding of the program design elements that facilitate deep learning in the context of structured leadership development programs.

The findings indicated that another program design feature that facilitates a transformative learning experience is the focus on participant engagement and self-directed learning. Transformative learning is fundamentally informed by adult learning theory (Cranton, 2016, Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Merriam & Bierema, 2014). One of the key aspects of adult learning is the idea of self-concept that includes the notion that adult learning is inherently self-directed. The aspect of self-direction does not, however, eliminate the importance of facilitation but rather redefines it (Knowles, 2005). The evidence affirmed this notion showing that while the participants' learning was largely self-directed, the form of facilitation and the comfort level of the facilitators can impact the learning process. The research study provided an insight into the

specific design elements that support participants' engagement, which included a form of facilitation, use of participant-led exercises, elements of self-organization, participants' responsibility for their development, and the use of dialogue as a tool for learning. All these specific design elements were shown to support the participants' self-concept and increased the participants' engagement in their learning process.

Another feature that emerged from the data related to program design was the importance of a learning environment that supports relationship building and trust. As previously discussed, relational and collaborative learning can greatly enhance the transformative experience (Cranton, 2016; Schapiro et al., 2012). The findings suggest that for this type of learning to be maximized, the learning environment needs to foster development of trust among the participants, which positively impacts their engagement and supports their mutual learning. The findings also suggest that future leader development programs should include elements of an informal and safe atmosphere, opportunities for participant socialization, have a format that allows enough time for the participants to develop deep relationships that increase trust, and encourage the participants to share personal experiences that create a sense of vulnerability and in turn also increase trust with other participants. Finally, the evidence shows that programs should emphasize the importance confidentiality.

Mutual learning was discussed earlier as a key element of the participants' learning experience. Within the context of program design, the findings suggest that future leader development programs in global organizations should have a cohort format that supports mutual learning. To maximize this learning, the evidence shows that the operational, geographic and cross-cultural diversity all positively impact the learning process by creating a rich learning environment. This element is especially important in the context of global matrixed

organizations as it provides the program participants with access to diverse perspectives. In addition to the diversity of the cohort, other program elements that support mutual learning include a shared experience, group exercises and activities, peer mentoring, and a social platform to support the connection of the participants during and after the program.

The discussion of the "what" of developing future leaders in global organizations pointed to specific skills and a mindset that are necessary to navigate complex global environments. The findings suggest that the "what" of leadership development also impacts the "how", which in turn impacts the participant outcomes. The evidence also demonstrated that in addition to the relevant content focused on foundational leadership skills, leadership development programs should focus on relating the learning to the participants' personal experiences, highlight real-world applications, and should tie the learning to the larger organizational context.

Summary of the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. The second sub-questions of the research study sought to develop a deeper understanding of the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. This sub-question was guided by previous research that demonstrated that while transformative experience is central for the development of today's leaders, there is a lack of understanding among scholars and practitioners about how the process of transformation occurs (Ciporen, 2010; Fisher-Yoshida, Geller & Wasserman, 2005; Geller, 2009; Johnson, 2008; Mendenhall et al., 2017; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013). The goal of the research study was to provide an insight into this problem and to develop a deeper understanding of the program elements that facilitate the transformative process.

The findings of the research study show that a learning experience that develops the participants' expanded leadership capacity, reflected in their *way of being* and a *way of knowing*,

is a product of mutual learning, requires a certain level of challenge, occurs in a safe environment that fosters development of trust, allows the participants to practice behaviors in real time, and includes elements of reflection. Within the context of program design, the research findings suggest that future leader development programs in global organizations should have specific design features including, a focus on deep learning and a focus on participant engagement and self-directed learning, a learning environment that supports relationship building and trust, and a cohort format that supports mutual learning. The programs should also provide relevant content and offer a process of delivering the content that makes the learning relevant for the participants' individual contexts.

Global Implications for Leadership Development

Leadership development practitioners in global organizations are presented with a unique challenge as global organizations need to deliver their programs in different global regions that are defined by diverse cultural norms and customs. Some scholars argued that adult learning has predominantly been studied from the western perspective, suggesting that the process of adult learning is impacted by cultural contexts (Merriam and Bierema, 2014). Other scholars believe that adult learning does not vary across cultures apart from the culture shaping the learning context within which the learning occurs (Henschke, 2005).

One of the goals of the research study was to gain an insight into any differences in the outcomes or in the learning process of the participants of the first-level leader development program in the two global regions. The findings of the study affirmed the role of the cultural context as a factor of the outcomes and of the learning process, but did not reveal any differences in the learning process as it related to program design. The evidence also suggests that the value of the transformative experience was not impacted by the different cultural norms.

The role of the cultural context was represented by a greater focus on cross-cultural differences reported by the participants of the SEA cohorts. The participants still discussed other types of differences but tended to mention cross-cultural differences more than the participants from the NA cohorts. It is important to note that the evidence showed that the NA cohorts still exhibited relatively high level of cultural diversity due to the global nature of the organization. The Global Program Manager reported that while the design and the delivery of the program are consistent across all the global regions, the self-directed element of the participants influencing the topics of their dialogues determines certain aspects of the learning process and in turn impacts the participants' takeaways.

The findings thus support the notion that the learning process in itself does not vary across cultures, but rather it is the context within which the learning process takes place that shapes the particularities of the learning for the program participants.

The Conceptual Framework and Moderating Variables

The research study was guided by a conceptual framework that utilized the transformative learning (TL) theory as a conceptual metaphor for the development process of the participants of the first-level leader development program in the global organization, and the andragogical assumptions as the moderating variables for the development process. The conceptual framework guided the research process and the interpretation of the data by focusing on transformative learning defined by deeper learning that leads to an expanded leadership capacity represented by shifts in the participants' *way of being* and the *way of knowing*.

Utilization of the conceptual framework for the research study helped develop a deeper understanding of the development of future leaders in global organizations, specifically the type

of development that enables leaders, and in turn the organizations they are part of, to navigate the increasing complexities of the global environment (Watkins, et al., 2012).

As the discussion of the research findings demonstrates, the conceptual framework utilizing TL as a conceptual metaphor (Howie & Bagnall, 2013) for the learning process and the learning outcomes helped identify specific elements of the participants' change in perspectives and the change in form that were represented by their program outcomes. Global organizations that are defined by high level of complexity require new approaches to leadership development grounded in transformational learning (Salicru, 2015).

Utilizing TL as the conceptual metaphor for the research process enhanced the value of this instrumental case study, as the research findings can be used to draw more generalized conclusions about leadership development in global organizations. The research study thus affirmed the value of using the transformative learning theory as a useful lens for understanding the development process of future leaders in global organizations. It also demonstrated that transformational learning leads to meaningful outcomes for the participants and creates an expanded leadership capacity, defined by a combination of foundational leadership skills and an intentional mindset that is necessary for future leaders to implement their new skills in their professional as well as their personal lives. The evidence thus supports the utilization of transformative learning within the context of future leader development.

Moderating variables. The research study utilized andragogical assumptions as the moderating variables for the research study. These assumptions can help understand the variables that impact the process of transformative learning. Shaped by the humanistic approach, the andragogical assumptions define adult learning as personal, self-directed, problem-centered,

driven by intrinsic motivation and by the need for self-actualization (Johansen & McLean, 2006; Wuestewald, 2016).

The findings of the research study affirmed the applicability of the andragogical assumptions as moderating variables for the transformative process by demonstrating that the participants' learning was grounded in self-concept and was thus largely self-directed; it was shaped by the participants' previous experiences that enhanced the learning experience of the cohort; and it was relevant and practical. The moderating variables of intrinsic motivation, developmental readiness and the participants' awareness of the learning gap were also affirmed but the evidence showed that all these elements could also be triggered by the learning process. The designers of future leader development programs in global organizations should thus consider the andragogical assumptions when designing the programs but should also provide opportunities within the program that can trigger an increase in the participants' intrinsic motivation, developmental readiness and the awareness of the participant's learning gap.

The research study also indicated that relational learning was at the center of the participants' transformational experience and acted as a moderating variable for the process of transformative learning. This finding was supported by the participants' accounts of the impact of their mutual learning and by the participants expressing lack of impact of the virtual learning elements. The evidence thus suggests that while transformative learning stems from the larger concept of adult learning, development process that is grounded in transformative learning also requires an element of relational learning.

Considering the importance of relational learning, organizations should include elements of relational learning in virtual settings by providing an opportunity for the participants to engage in a dialogue about the virtual content. This could be achieved via a virtual platform that is

interactive where participants can post their reflections about the content and respond to discussion threads by other participants. To support the participants in applying and building on their learning after the program, organizations should provide additional opportunities for the participants to interact with their cohorts and with other global cohorts, which would give the participants access to a learning community after the completion of the program.

Practitioner and Scholarly Significance.

The research study offered valuable insights into the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations. The context within which the research was conducted was central for developing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The case study methodology allowed for the research to be conducted within a unique context that is representative of the greater context of the problem of practice. Structured as an instrumental case study, the findings of the research were used to develop a generalized understanding of the phenomenon of the development of future leaders in global organizations. The findings of the research project provide implications for the practitioner as well as for the scholarly domain.

From the practitioner perspective, the research provided valuable insights into the competencies needed by future leaders in global organizations and into the process through which these competencies can be developed. From the scholarly perspective, the research study offered a new insight about the construct of leadership in complex global organizations, advancing the scholarly conversation about the subject. Additionally, the research study advanced the understanding of the process of leadership development, specifically development that is defined by transformative learning.

Scholarly debate. As the review of literature demonstrated, there is a level of ambiguity that surrounds the concept of leadership in global organizations. Scholars argue that there is a

need to develop leadership paradigms that better address the understanding of leadership in global organizational contexts, and that can be used to inform the design of leadership development programs in global organizations (Holt & Seki, 2012). The research study utilized the global leadership construct as well as contemporary leadership theories to inform the understanding of leadership in global organizations and thus provided a deeper insight into the unique context within which global organizations operate.

The findings of the study advanced the understanding of leadership in global organizations by demonstrating that leadership in global contexts cannot be defined by a single definition of leadership but should rather be informed by a combination of the global leadership construct and contemporary leadership theories. The findings of the study suggest that the complex and matrixed environment characteristic of global organizations defines leadership as more process-based and distributed, warranting an approach to leadership at all levels. This element is addressed by contemporary leadership theories. The findings also suggest that leaders in global organizations require a high level of self-leadership, which included a high level of self-awareness, critical thinking and an ability to navigate diverse environments. These elements are often described in the context of global leadership theories. The study thus advanced the conversation about leadership in global organizations by demonstrating the impact of the complexity of global environments on the global leadership paradigm.

The study also advanced the scholarly conversation about the applicability of the transformative and the adult learning theories to the process of leadership development. The research study demonstrated that transformative learning (TL) theory is a useful lens for understanding leadership development in global organizations by focusing on deeper learning that leads to an increased leadership capacity. The research also affirmed the applicability of the

andragogical assumptions as the moderating variables for the development process, with the caveat that there is an added element of relational learning that needs to be considered as a moderating variable for the transformative process. The utilization of the conceptual framework also provided an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the transformative process within the context of leadership development programs by identifying the different aspects of the learning process that make up the transformative experience.

Furthermore, these research results create a bridge between the scholarly and the practical domains as they demonstrated that theoretical constructs can be useful to develop a greater understanding of the outcomes and the process of leadership development and in turn provide valuable information for improving the efficacy of leadership development programs in global organizations.

Practical Implications. Research suggests that the lack of understanding of the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations has serious practical implications. Having a strong leadership pipeline is central to organizational success and it is significantly impacted by the effectiveness of leadership development initiatives (DDI, 2014; DDI, 2018; i4cp, 2015; UNC Executive Development, 2015). Thus, developing a deeper understanding of the "what" and the "how" of developing future leaders in global organizations has significant practical implications.

The research study provided specific insights into the "what" of developing future leaders in global organizations. This information can be used by human resource development (HRD) and organizational learning (OL) professionals to identify the type of leadership capacity that is necessary for future leaders in global organizations and to inform the program goals of leadership development programs. Furthermore, the research study provided valuable insights

into the learning process that facilitates an expanded leadership capacity and identified specific program design elements that help facilitate the learning process. By utilizing the transformative learning theory to guide the research, the findings are especially useful as they inform the design of future leader development programs that should focus on deeper learning that is essential for effective leadership in complex global environments.

Understanding of the "what" and the "how" of future leaders in global organizations does not only serve organizations but also the participants themselves. Participation in leadership development initiatives requires a considerable time commitment on the part of the participants. It is thus important that leadership development initiatives deliver an experience and outcomes that are worthwhile for the participants. A positive experience for the participants in turn creates ripple effects that are reflected in a higher organizational leadership capacity, a higher employee engagement, resulting in a stronger leadership pipeline.

The research study provided insights about the development process and the elements that are necessary for continuous growth and learning. This information can be used by individual leaders for their continuous development. For example, leaders can continue to engage in mentoring relationships with their peers to foster mutual learning. Connecting with a diverse group of peers will continue to expose them to different perspectives and points of view. Leaders can also utilize feedback as a tool for continuous growth, especially within a trusted network of peers. Thus, an increased understanding of the process of development and the elements that are required for deep learning can provide tools for individual leaders that they can use to facilitate continuous growth.

Maybe the most important implication of future leader development programs that deliver transformative outcomes is the impact on the organizational environment as well as the

society as a whole. Leaders who are more self-aware, intentional, relational, who use critical thinking and are open to continuous growth create more inclusive working environments and act as positive change agents in the society. As the findings of the research study suggest, the benefits of transformative development also spill into the participants' personal lives which creates positive impact on many aspects of our society. Offering leadership development programs that foster meaningful outcomes is thus a great privilege and a responsibility of today's organizations.

Limitations of the Research Study

The main limitation of the study is related to the methodology of the research project. The research was conducted as a qualitative case study, with the researcher assuming the role of the interpreter of data. Case study research has sometimes been criticized for its potential lack of rigor and for being limited in its ability to provide generalized conclusions (Zainal, 2007). However, these potential limitations of case study methodology can be minimized by careful design of the study and by the triangulation of several sources of data. This research project was designed as an instrumental case study by carefully selecting a case (the program) that is embedded in a context that is representative of the larger context of the problem of practice. However, the case study was a single-case case study and only used data from one specific leader development program in a global organization. Thus, while the research helped develop a greater understanding of the phenomena, the research findings should be considered within the limited context of the research study.

Future Research.

As the research study findings indicate, the context within which the global organizations operate is increasingly complex and ambiguous. Organizations and individual leaders are

continuously faced with new challenges that have implications for leadership and for leadership development. This state of practice provides a vast opportunity for future research.

The study developed a more informed understanding of leadership in global organizations, but additional research is needed to more closely understand the implications of the complexity of global organizations on the leadership construct and on leadership development. As the research study findings indicate, there is no single leadership theory that effectively defines leadership in global organizations. Future studies should utilize a combination of emerging leadership theories to help advance the theoretical understanding of leadership in global organizations.

The research project utilized data from recent graduates of the first-level leader development program. Future opportunity exists to explore longer-term outcomes of leadership development programs, especially those that are informed by transformative learning to learn the potential compounding impact of transformative learning. This information could provide further insights for the design of leadership development programs and help inform the larger talent management strategy in global organizations.

The research study offered insights into the foundational leadership skills needed for future leaders in global organizations. Future research should explore the leadership capacity at different levels of global organizations to develop a holistic understanding of the types of skills and the mindset that are needed by different levels of leaders in global organizations.

Leaders are agents of their own development and while structured development programs provide an opportunity for leader development, not all leaders have access to these programs. In addition, after the completion of the program, employees are often left without support which can stop or even reverse their development. Future research should focus on developing an

understanding of the transformative process outside of structured program environments to offer tools for individual leaders to intentionally facilitate their own development.

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Appendix A: Theoretical Framework

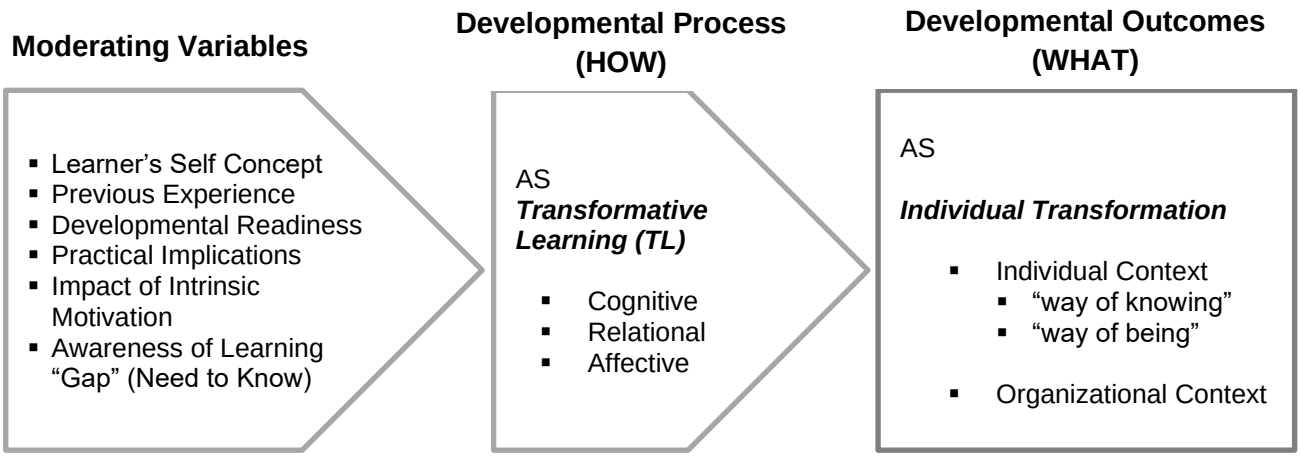

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of leadership development process in global organizations through the lens of Adult Learning (Andragogy) and Transformative Learning (TL).

Appendix B: Individual Participant Interview Protocol

Institution: Northeastern University

Interviewee (Title and Name):

Interviewer: Daniela Sebova

Part I:

Introductory Session Objectives (5-7 minutes): Build rapport, describe the study, answer any questions.

First of all, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as someone who can share insights about the first-level leader development program that you recently participated in. This interview will provide valuable data for my research project that I am conducting as part of my dissertation research at Northeastern University. As a reminder, the research project is focused on developing a deeper understanding of the type of individual transformation that occurs as a result of leadership development programs in global organizations, and on how various program elements facilitate this transformation. I would like to reiterate that my main goal during this research process is to accurately interpret your answers and your voice. My hope is that the findings from this research will provide you with beneficial information for your future individual and professional development.

Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today. Do I have your permission to record this interview? I can assure you that all responses will be confidential, and a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts.

This interview should last about 45-60 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?

Part I: Introduction (5 minutes)

Objective: To establish rapport. This section should be brief as it is not the focus of the study.

Please tell me a little bit about your professional background. How long have you worked in this organization?

Part II: Context

Objective: To gain understanding of the participant's interpretation of the global context and of leadership in global contexts.

1. Tell me about your experience of working in a large global organization.
   - Probe: What is unique/different, if anything, about it because of the global scope?
2. Based on your experience of working in a global organization, what kind of skills and mindset does a leader need to have to be effective in their role?
   - Probe: What makes these skills and mindset important?

Part III: Program

I am interested in learning about your experience of participating in the first-level leader development program to gain insights about your learning from the program and developmental outcomes. So, in this second part of the interview I will ask a few questions about the experience itself and about the impact of the program on your leadership capacity.

1. Why did you decide to participate in the program?
   - Probe: What were your main expectations?
   - Probe: How did the program fulfill these expectations?

2. Describe the program - the process, the individual stages and the timeframe.
   - Probe: What were your main impressions/takeaways from each "stage"?
   - Probe: Describe your experience with the virtual elements of the program. What did you find helpful for your learning/development and why?

3. How did this program help you prepare for a future leadership role in a global organization?
   - Probe: What specific insights, perspectives, understandings, skills, and/or behaviors did you gain, develop or learn as a result of the program?
   - Probe: How did this program equip you to handle challenges associated with global complexity?

4. When did these learning shifts occur?
   - Probe: Think back to specific experiences/exercises/encounters.

5. What was it about the specific program experiences/exercises/encounters that was so impactful?
   - Probe: Please provide as much detail as possible. What were you thinking? What were you feeling?
   - Probe: Tell me about any instances where you felt "outside of your comfort zone".
   - What were your takeaways from these instances?

6. How did this program and what we just discussed impact how you will approach leadership in the future?
   - Probe: How is this thinking different/new from how you thought about leadership before?

7. How has going through this process impacted you personally and professionally?

- Probe: Provide some specific examples.

8. Fill in the blanks in these statements (take 5 mins to think about your answers):
   Because of this experience I feel...
   Because of this experience I think...
   Because of this experience I see...
   Because of this experience I am…

9. Is there anything else about your experience with the program and your development that you would like to add?

Ask participant if they have any questions and thank them for their participation.

Appendix C: Regional Program Manager Interview Protocol

Institution: Northeastern University

Interviewee (Title and Name):

Interviewer: Daniela Sebova

Part I:

Introductory Session Objectives (5-7 minutes): Build rapport, describe the study, answer any questions.

First of all, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. You have been selected to speak with me today because as the Regional Program Manager for the … region, you have valuable insights about the goals, the design and about the process of the first-level leader development program. This interview will provide valuable data for my research project that I am conducting as part of my dissertation research at Northeastern University. As a reminder, the research project is focused on developing a deeper understanding of the type of individual transformation that occurs as a result of leadership development programs in global organizations, and on how various program elements facilitate this transformation.

Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today. Do I have your permission to record this interview? I can assure you that all responses will be confidential, and a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts.

This interview should last about 45-60 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?

Part I: Introduction (5 minutes)

Objective: To establish rapport. This section should be brief as it is not the focus of the study.

Please tell me a little bit about your professional background. How long have you worked in this organization?

Part II: Context

Objective: To gain understanding of the program manager's role in relation to the program, and their interpretation of the global context and of leadership in global contexts.

1. Describe your role in the organization and how it relates to the first-level leader development program.

- Probe: What are your key responsibilities?

2. Based on your experience of working in a global organization, what kind of skills and mindset does a leader need to have to be effective in their role?
    - Probe: What makes these skills and mindset important?

Part III: Program

I would like to understand in detail the early-career development program design and the program goals in order to gain insights about how the program creates transformative experiences for the participants. So, in this second part of the interview I will ask a few questions about specific design elements and the design philosophy.

1. Describe the first-level leader development program.
    - Probe: What are the goals of the program?
    - Probe: What are the participant selection criteria?
    - Probe: Describe the overarching design philosophy.

2. What are some program elements that address the global nature of the organization?
    - Probe: Describe the specific goals, the design elements, and the participants' engagement with these program elements.

3. How does the program provide a transformative experience for the participants?
    - Probe: Describe some specific elements/experiences/exercises/encounters that you consider transformative.
    - Probe: Why do you believe they are transformative?

4. How is this program (the process, participant feedback, outcomes) impacted by the cultural and regional context?
    - Probe: Think of specific examples of when culture played a role in how the participants engaged with the program (participation, interactions, outcomes, etc.)

5. Describe the "cohort" element of the program design.
    - Probe: How do participants benefit from being part of a cohort?
    - Probe: What is the purpose of the cohort during the development process?
    - Probe: What is the role of the cohort upon completion of the program?

6. In your experience, how would you describe the main outcomes of the program?
    - Probe: What is the overall official and unofficial feedback from the participants?
    - Probe: What are some specific examples of organizational impact from the program? (promotions, retention rates, employee engagement, etc.)

7. Is there anything else that could provide additional insight about the program that you would like to add?

Ask participant if they have any questions and thank them for their participation.

Appendix D: Global Program Manager Interview Protocol

Institution: Northeastern University

Interviewee (Title and Name):

Interviewer: Daniela Sebova

Part I:

Introductory Session Objectives (5-7 minutes): Build rapport, describe the study, answer any questions.

First of all, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. As you know, you have been selected to speak with me today because as the Global Program Manager, you can provide valuable unique elevated perspective about the first-level leader development program. This interview will provide valuable data for my research project that I am conducting as part of my dissertation research at Northeastern University. As a reminder, the research project is focused on developing a deeper understanding of the type of individual transformation that occurs as a result of leadership development programs in global organizations, and on how various program elements facilitate this transformation.

Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today. Do I have your permission to record this interview? I can assure you that all responses will be confidential, and a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts.

This interview should last about 45-60 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?

Part I: Introduction (5 minutes)

Objective: To establish rapport. This section should be brief as it is not the focus of the study.

Please tell me a little bit about your professional background. How long have you worked in this organization?

Part II: Context

Objective: To gain understanding of the program manager's role in relation to the program, and their interpretation of the global context and of leadership in global contexts.

1. Describe your role in the organization and how it relates to the first-level leader development program.

- Probe: What are your key responsibilities?

2. Based on your experience of working in a global organization, what kind of skills and mindset does a leader need to have to be effective in their role?
    - Probe: What makes these skills and mindset important?

Part III: Program

In this second part of the interview, I would like you to tell me in detail about the design and the goals of the early-career development program, as well as to learn about how the program fits within the organization's larger global leadership talent management strategy. So, in this part of the interview I will ask a few questions about specific design elements and the design philosophy. Please be as detailed as possible in your answers.

1. Describe the first-level leader development program.
    - Probe: What are the goals of the program?
    - Probe: What are the participant selection criteria? Do these vary globally? If so, how?
    - Probe: Describe the overarching design philosophy.

2. How does this program reflect the "global" context of the organization?
    - Probe: What curriculum or design elements address the challenges associated with global operations?

3. How does the larger global strategy inform the design of the program?
    - Probe: How does this program fit within the organization's talent management strategy?

4. What are the leadership paradigms that inform the design and curriculum of the program?
    - What are some of the organization's main espoused leadership values?
    - How would you describe the organization's global leadership culture?

5. Is there anything else that could provide additional insight about the program that you would like to add?

Ask participant if they have any questions and thank them for their participation.

Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Protocol

Institution: Northeastern University

Interviewees (Title and Name):

Interviewer: Daniela Sebova

Part I:

Introductory Session Objectives (5-7 minutes): Build rapport, describe the study, answer any questions.

Good morning/afternoon and welcome to our session. First of all, thank you all for agreeing to participate in this interview and discussion. You have each been selected to speak with me today because you are participating in the first-level leader development program and can provide valuable insights about your experience and learning outcomes. The purpose of this session is to collect data for my research project that I am conducting as part of my dissertation research at Northeastern University. As a reminder, the research project is focused on developing a deeper understanding of the type of individual transformation that occurs as a result of leadership development programs in global organizations, and on how various program elements facilitate this transformation. There are no wrong answers. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Getting an accurate interpretation and your differentiated perspectives is very valuable!

Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today. Do I have your permission to record this interview? I can assure you that all responses will be confidential, and a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts.

This session will last about 60 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?

Part I: Context – Round Robin

In this first part of the session, I would like to hear from each of you so let's go around one by one to answer these first few questions.

1. Tell me about your role in this organization. How long have you worked here and why did you decide to participate in the program?

2. Based on your experience of working in a global organization, what kind of skills and mindset does a leader need to have to be effective in their role? What makes these skills and mindset important?

Part II: Program

At this point I would like to change the format of session a little bit where it becomes more of a discussion. In order for this to be a rich discussion, it is important that you are as open as possible and that you engage with each other. I will do my best to make sure that everyone's voice is heard.

1. Considering the skills and the mindset we just discussed, what are the three (or more) main shifts or takeaways from this program thus far. Discuss how these answers resonate for each of you.

2. What have been some of the most impactful experiences/exercises/encounters in this program thus far? Why were they so impactful?

3. How has being part of a cohort impacted your experience in this program?

4. What have you learned from each other and the other participants about leadership during this process?

5. Has there been any time during the program when you felt "outside of your comfort zone"? If so, when and why? What was your takeaway?

6. How has participating in this program shifted your view of leadership (if at all)?

7. If there is one personal and one professional change that you think you will implement in the future because of this program, what will they be?

8. Fill in the blanks in these statements:
   Because of this experience I feel...
   Because of this experience I think...
   Because of this experience I see...
   Because of this experience I am…

Ask participant if they have any questions and thank them for their participation.