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Leadership Strategies: Developing Millennial Entrepreneurs for
Start-up Micro-gyms

A Thesis
of the Department of Leadership Education
College of Education
of Winona State University

by
Esdeina Gonzalez

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The International Health, Racquet & Sports club Association (IHRSA) has confirmed in 2018, the U.S. health club industry revenue has had a 7.8% growth from 2017 (Rodriguez, 2018). Although this is true, the health club industry is declining due to their poor standards in customer service (Parker, 2004). The industry continues to struggle with high employee turnover, poor staff training and the lack of systematic approaches to management (Scudder, 2002). Parker describes four main reasons for the lack of quality service in the fitness industry is a lack of training, predominantly young staff members, wrong recruitment policies, and attitudes of the gym's teams (Parker). These reasons may set the stage for less success for small startup gyms.

The comparison within different generational entrepreneurship has slowed down for the millennial generation, Daniel Wilmoth has reported that in 2014 less than 2 percent of millennials are self-employed while generation X is 7.6 and Baby Boomers is at 8.3 (2016). While capital is a requirement for a startup gym, the younger entrepreneurs also have other needs like mentoring and education for business owning that an older entrepreneur has developed from experience (Darby, 2001). Throughout history, there has been many theorists that have found the importance in understanding skills and qualities needed to be a successful leader (Gordon, 2009). This study will become an understanding of leadership strategies as a factor that will impact the business greatly and promote leadership development in millennial entrepreneurs interesting in constructing their own micro-gym. There will be an extra development priority that will include development of leadership within the beginning of the construction of the micro-gym.

Constructing the gym and understanding leadership importance during the process of the business may lead reducing the risk of failing in the business.

Statement of the Problem

As the small businesses in the United States continue to constitute a substantial part in the economy (Yallapragada, R. R., and Bhuiyan, M. 2011). Categorizing some health and fitness facilities as small businesses, determining the long-term success of the facility lies mostly on the owner and manager of these facilities (Grantham, 2008). Gerard Seijts expresses that there are many organizations that allow bad leaders to lead their business and the business has to suffer for the lack of leadership these entrepreneurs' poses (Seijts, 2016). When there is ambition to start up a micro-gym there should be a better understanding on how important the success of the business lies on the leadership of the manager before starting the business (2016). Research on different leadership strategies exists, but the focus of this research study is to examine best practice strategies to support a millennial entrepreneur in planning the start-up and the growth of a successful micro-gym with the experiences from leaders that have gone through the process of starting their business and growing their business.

Background of the Problem

While small business continues to increase in America, a well-known problem of the dissolution rate for new business is of 100 start-ups only 50 survive within the first three years (Van Praag 2003). The motive to create more small businesses is increasing but understanding that the ability to continue growing the businesses would be beneficial by understanding the leadership that needs to be contained before starting and will allow for the survival of smaller businesses such as micro-gyms to increase. The future growth of the business is impacted by the small business owner's personal abilities and motivation to lead the business (Walker & Brown, 2004).

There is a high level of frustration with upcoming young business managers' and owners' communication skills, teamwork, work ethic and nontechnical skills (Graves, 2013). In general, young entrepreneurs have a carefree attitude when it comes to school or education (Hulsink & Koek, 2014). With the increase of small businesses in America, it becomes concerning that these entrepreneurs may contain these unethical skills that will decrease productivity of the business and will continue to decrease the survival rate for these businesses such as micro-gyms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose for this study is to explore the experiences of small business owner's best practice strategies leading to successful business operations. Learning about these experiences will permit the millennial generation to understand what is needed for their business to start up their micro-gym. This study may be used as an introduction to millennial entrepreneurs for the survival of their own micro-gym setting a priority of importance in leadership development since research have explored the lack of development in the leadership area.

Theoretical Framework

This study will be conducted using qualitative research methodology. The foundation of this study will be founded on establishing theoretical perspectives that relate to the broader theoretical perspectives that exists (Lochmiller & Lester). Lochmiller and Miller (2014) describe qualitative research as focusing on the human experience that occurs and understanding of the social practices. An individual case study design will be used to gather the experiences of the micro-gym owners who started their own business. Online questionnaire will be sent out tot the prospect participants for an initial understanding of their view in leadership and how important leadership strategies have taken place in their own gym. Individual interview will follow after participants communicate their interest in participating. The key to a qualitative research method

is trying to maintain meaning from the awareness of one's own perspective and relating it to the literature about theoretical perspectives (Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon, & Chandler, 2002).

Research Questions

The following questions lead this study are:

RQ1: How do micro-gym owners manage professional training of staff, development of recruitment policies, facilitating generational difference among staff members, and promoting positive attitudes of their staff team?

RQ2: What are the successes and barriers experienced by micro-gym owners from their pre-opening to now?

RQ3: What do micro-gym owners identify as best practice leadership strategies necessary for starting a successful fitness business?

Procedures

This study will be a qualitative grounded theory research project (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Grounded theory is used in qualitative research to help illustrate the experiences of individuals surround a particular phenomenon (Lochmiller & Lester). For the purposes of this study a preliminary questionnaire will be sent electronically to participant group request demographic and further detail on education on leadership strategies developed from owning their own gym. Participants will be asked if they would agree to an individual interview to share their experience as micro-gym owners. Lochmiller & Lester (2014) have described that within the grounded theory, observations are coupled with interviews done during the study. These observations are done to consider multiple possibilities of achieving the same goal (Lochmiller & Lester).

Definition of Terms

Micro-gym- Smaller, independently owned businesses that specialize in training their clients with a more personalized connection than bigger gyms (Sweeney, B. 2012, February 11).

Millennial Entrepreneur- Those entrepreneurs that own a business from ages 20-40 (Lloyd et al., 2013).

Limitations of the Study

Limitations classified in this study will be with the participants that will be involved in their responses during the interviews and surveys. Participants may discontinue from the interviews or not answer questions on the surveys. The researcher will consider participant responses to be truthful. Findings from this research may be transferable only by the reader due to the small sample size. The survey used in the study is not for predictive purposes but for identify a rich sample for qualitative interview. All the participants must be guaranteed their identity will be confidential and their responses will be unshared. Participant's surveys will be submitted anonymously through Qualtrics. Participants agreeing to be interviewed will have pseudonyms assigned.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of this study will be the micro-gym owners that own their own gym located in a 50-mile radius of Houston, Texas.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study may be important to future millennial entrepreneurs and those in the beginning stages of building small businesses such as a micro-gym. The leadership strategies emerging from this study may prove beneficial by entrepreneurs in fitness or business fields. Ultimately, the goal is to allow new business entrepreneurs to have a chance to obtain the

ability to understand what leadership strategies will allow a gym to grow successfully prior to starting their own journey. This study will expose different experiences with leadership strategies that these business owners have practiced in their business that resulted in successful growth within their business. These responses may prepare those that are willing to start their journey into constructing their own micro-gym. The diverse in the participants will allow for different perspectives and possibly different scenarios each participant viewed differently. Being a leader and possessing the same role in a micro-gym can predict common themes within the participants and their experiences.

Summary

This first chapter will consist of the introduction, statement of the problem, background of the problem and purpose for this study. The study will follow with explaining the theoretical framework, research question, limitations and delimitations, definitions of the terms of this study, and the significance of this study. Chapter two will covers the literature review and will recognize relevant studies related to this study. Chapter three will be an overview of the research questions and understand the choice of research design for this particular study.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This qualitative research studies the leadership strategies that micro-gym owners have experienced for their success in their small business. There are several sections presented in this literature review. Section one covers the importance of the impact leadership has within smaller businesses. Section two reveals the strategies that have allowed entrepreneurs success in their business. Section three contains the summary of the literature review.

Impact of Leadership

Small businesses have periods of growth affected by periods of crisis and one of the first crisis to explore is 'crisis of leadership' (Cope, Kempster, & Parry, 2011). Simply containing a higher job position and given the responsibilities of a leader does not automatically make one a leader (Hyatt, Hyatt, & Hyatt, 2007). The decrease of start-ups businesses maturity is caused by the leadership team not being able to accomplish a few things such as engaging their team, feeling guilty of micromanaging employees, and setting unrealistic goals for the business (Mohammed, 2018). If companies focused on creating leadership talent, it would be very evident in the success of the business but instead there has been high rates of CEO turnover because of poor performances (Ready, 2003).

There is difficulty in finding CEO's of larger companies who do not speak of the importance of evolving the upcoming leaders (Ready, 2003). Protecting the business is always a huge concern for the business owners and attempting to adapt new leadership practices appears as a frightening advancement because they are afraid of letting go of their traditional operations (Cope, Kempster, & Parry, 2011). Due to poor performances and the growth of owners understanding the importance of the leadership strategies, upcoming business owners should be

considering making big investments in creating programs that will allow them to develop, learn and manage leadership skills with their leaders, in order to run a successful business (Ready, 2003). The lack of leadership development within the individuals and organization, business performance becomes negatively impacted due to ineffective leadership strategies that many leaders do obtain (Aboyassin & Abood, 2013).

Dess and Picken (2000) quote Xerox PARC guru John Seely Brown as saying: ‘The job of leadership today is not just to make money: it’s to make meaning. Effective leadership ‘wins people’s souls’ (Gill, 2002, p. 311). There is argument that the practice of entrepreneurship leadership is learnt through social interaction within characteristic experiences that develops different leadership concepts, but the sensation of leadership is argued to be global presence (Cope, Kempster, & Parry, 2011). When this is not practiced the poor personal traits of leaders, skills shortage, negative strategies, and their ability to only focus on short-term goals (Aboyassin & Abood, 2013; Kellerman, 2004). A person in charge of the leadership program that provides a more traditional personnel professional quality but is not an expert in leadership development will allow a lower opportunity for success in the business (Ready & Conger, 2003). When employees have a lack of confidence in their leaders it pushes employees to no longer consider it mandatory to believe what their leaders tells them or follow instructions from their leader (Mitchell, Scott, & Mitchell, 1987).

Successful Leadership Strategies

The success or failure of a business is determined critically on the ability on being an effective leader and manage people in the correct way (Mohammed, 2018). Historical research on leadership literature does not cover leadership suggesting leaders’ feelings may play an important role in the growth of the organization due to the leadership (George, 2000). Effective

leadership has been impactful by motivating employees, raising their morale and making a positive impact on individuals and organizational performance (Aboyassin & Abood, 2013).

There have been successful leaders which implement a high level of personal skills that lead into having effective interpersonal relationships with their employees and increases their organization performance (Hyatt et. al., 2007). The importance of leadership development has increased because even in tough economic times, top executives focus on investments in these leadership programs in order to continue growing as a business (Ready & Conger, 2003).

Obtaining a position which requires leadership does not automatically allow you to gain successful leadership skills but having the ability to retain the knowledge of leadership and containing the personal ability to implement these skills effectively increases value to the business (Hyatt et. al., 2007). Arguments are made which state the most difficult challenges occurring today are making sure people in the organizations are adapting to change and the leader obtaining the ability to see where the business stands and where the business should be in the economical market (Gill, 2002). When there is a movement towards focusing on the employee's strengths and not the employee's weaknesses allow organizations to manage their performance improvement (Harter et al., 2002, Luthans, 2002). The abilities to account for success come with intellectual and cognitive abilities to identify and understand information and this leads you to produce vision, purpose, and 'win' people's minds (Gill).

Leadership development is such an important part of the business industry and when is considered as the core business process, the whole business will be addressed with positive improvements (Ready & Conger, 2003). There is a tremendous difference in businesses when effective leadership adapts to change, which happens occasionally, and the preparation these leaders conduct allows for management to be planned, organized, directed and controlled (Gill,

2002). When considering the personal skills of leader's ability to affect the improvement of a business, emotional intelligence (EI) is a factor that may influence one's leadership skills in a positive manner (Hyatt et al., 2007).

Emotional Intelligence

According to Mayer and Salovey, emotional intelligence is 'the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth' (George, 2000, p 1033). Leaders that obtain these high levels of emotional intelligence have been characterized as being very effective in their organization (Fall, Kelly, MacDonald, Primm & Holmes, 2013). Emotional intelligence may take part in developing a constructive vision if the leader is capable of presenting a high level of emotional intelligence (George, 2000). Hugh explains if leaders would like to pursue a happier life, it is advised to explore and develop emotional intelligence, it allows the ability to motivate our own life, relief stress, and resolves conflicts with others (Hughes, Patterson, & Terrell, 2005). Developing emotional intelligence training for entrepreneurs may increase their effectiveness in their future workplace (2013).

We misunderstand our interpersonal relationships due to our culture constructing our perception of the world to not value the relationships appropriately (Hughes, Patterson, & Terrell, 2005). The misunderstanding of the relationships created become an impact when working with a group of people in your business. The positive relationships created in a micro-gym may be a factor on the impact of the business growth. When the owner understands adapting to the changes that rise within the business, it becomes important to create the environment for the institution to contribute to open communication when there is change

happening within the organization allowing these emotional intelligent leaders to succeed (Mohammed, 2018). The leader of the business is in a position of adapting to changes daily and the leader is capable of promoting a positive atmosphere for the members in hard times for the business. Understanding the emotional impact, which the changes have towards the members and staff can give the leaders an advantage towards constructing positive feedback. Maintaining excitement and enthusiasm within the organization, leaders need to understand how their followers are feeling and be knowledgeable about how to influence these followers (George, 2000). Leader's ability to deal with variety of feelings that they encounter conclude how successful their business will be (Scott, 2013). The consideration needed for emotional awareness could be increased for an improvement in gaining positive relationships towards the members within their micro-gym.

Theoretical Background

Leader- Member Exchange

Trust, liking and respect are ways leaders create close and high-quality relationships with their own subordinates but there are other relationships between leader and members that are created through formal and distance relationship (Li & Liao, 2014). In contrast, if the leader and member are under low-quality leader-member exchange stress only formal work role relationship (Loi, Chan & Lam, 2014). The constrains leader-member exchange theory may encounter are the leaders not having the necessary time frame or resources to grow these relationships with their members (Eisenberger, Karagonlar, Stinglhamber, Neves, Becker, Gonzalez-Morales & Steiger-Mueller, 2010). When there is coordination throughout the team there will be a greater opportunity for more fluidity within the organization and allowing for a collective goal to be achieved (Li & Liao, 2014). This study will be assisted with the theory of Leader-Member

Exchange to understand the leadership strategies the participants developed in order to create successful relationship with their members. The relationships with their members indicate a positive environment for the micro-gym.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen (1990) has explored the theory of planned behavior and explains that the different behaviors can be predicted depending on the attitudes, subjective norms and behavioral control of humans. The intentions of the person are researched to be a factor to influence their behavior because they are indications of how driven the person is to get what they want (Ajzen, 1991). The theory has a path model showing all the factors that are included in the theory of planned behavior which intentions is included. There is an direct factor to predicting the behaviors of people and it is perceived behavioral control and it indicates, if the person believes to have low control because of limited resources, then it is possible that they would have low intentions to perform which allows a prediction to their behaviors (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). The theory of Planned Behavior will support the understanding of the behaviors of the leaders to predict the productivity of their micro-gym.

Summary of the Literature Review

The research completed in the past about leadership has been very beneficial to understand the importance of the impact it contains towards the growth of business. With the previous research attempts there is current gap in understanding the leadership needed for entrepreneurs to obtain from the beginning of the start of their own micro-gym in the millennial generation to reduce rate of failure in micro-gyms.

Chapter two includes information about the different strategies that have allowed businesses to succeed or fail in their businesses, but it also covers sections that allow these

leadership strategies to be developed in areas that seem to be the issues. These different strategies are in need of research for understanding the problem for the decrease in failure of businesses for young entrepreneurs that have started their own small business.

Chapter III

Methodology

The research done in the past about leadership is very informative, but the focus of this research study is to examine best practice strategies to support millennial entrepreneurs in planning a successful micro-gym. Chapter three will cover the research design, method, rationale for research design, research questions, setting, sampling, selection of participants, role of the researcher, instrumentation and data analysis.

Research Design

A qualitative research is conducted to explore the leadership strategies that enhance the successful operations of fitness facilities. With the qualitative researcher being the primary research instrument, this study will be directed in the direction of the study of human experience (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). This study takes a phenomenology approach which Polkinghorne (1989) proposed that “the purpose of phenomenology research is to produce clear, precise, and systematic descriptions of the meaning that constitutes the activity of consciousness” (p.45) (Lochmiller & Lester. 2017 p.119). The phenomenology method explores the meaning of human experience which focuses on the science of structures of experiences (Sanders, 1982). This method will allow the researcher to learn from the experiences the business owners experienced through their journey of starting their own micro-gym. These experiences can assist upcoming millennial entrepreneurs into their new journey of the business industry with their micro-gym.

This study specifically explores how the leadership strategies of different business owners of micro-gyms impacted the growth of their business. The qualitative design collects information from participant’s interview responses, data analysis and the researcher construing significance from the data.

Rationale for the Method

The objective for study is for millennial entrepreneurs to understand the importance of leadership strategies assisting business owners to success in the growth of their micro-gym. The millennial entrepreneurs interested in starting their own micro-gym will have the opportunity to comprehend the strategies leaders should obtain before inserting themselves into the entrepreneurship. These business owner experiences may be helpful for those millennials that are trying to start their own micro-gym and can fully prepare before starting their own journey in the fitness industry. The final result of the study will allow satisfaction for the researcher and could be helpful for those millennial entrepreneurs interested in starting up their own business (Donalek, 2004). The phenomenological approach is the best for this study because it allows the researcher to study the experiences the participants have encountered. The data collection will construct a clear structure of the experiences the business owners expressed in their micro-gym for their growth as a business.

Research Questions

The following questions guide this study in understanding the leadership strategies the business owners may have used towards their success in their micro-gym. As Saunders (1982) explains phenomenology method is the exploring of the chosen individuals for the study to be questioned about their lived experiences in the situation that is examined. These questions will allow the researcher to understand their experiences and draw conclusions to which strategies may assist millennial entrepreneurs.

RQ1: How do micro-gym owners manage professional training of staff, development of recruitment policies, facilitating generational difference among staff members, and promoting positive attitudes of their staff team?

RQ2: What are the successes and barriers experienced by micro-gym owners from their pre-opening to now?

RQ3: What do micro-gym owners identify as best practice leadership strategies necessary for starting a successful fitness business?

Setting

The setting for this study will be set in the micro-gyms that will be in a 50-mile radius of Houston, Texas. These four locations are different micro-gyms operated by different individuals allowing for different perspectives regarding views on success. With a city of 2.3 million people, these locations are from different areas in Houston, Texas. Each micro-gym owner will share their experiences about what leadership skill they needed to conduct considering the high-populated city does provide different diversity between the people. The different locations will also give different perspectives regarding leadership due to the types of surroundings they have in their own smaller town. All these participants may encounter completely different issues that will allow for different views on how to respond to different situations.

Sample

The sample presented for this study will consist of micro-gym owners who are a) maintaining their start-up micro-gym, b) have once had a micro-gym of their own but couldn't keep it running, or c) started as a partnership for a micro-gym start-up. There will be opportunities to learn from all these samples because the audience may encounter a similar situation the participants have had and could relate to their experience. They could learn about their difficult experiences and the participants could advise for a better solution for upcoming entrepreneurs. These samples will present different responses because they will have different characteristics and may allow for different perspectives but with the achievement of continuing to grow their

business. The sample will be chosen due to personal connections with the owner and is a convenience sample. These cases may not allow for rich, deep experiences found with a purpose sample but do provide specific voices of fitness facility owners.

Selection of Participants

In this study, the importance of the selection of the participants is based on their ability to start up the fitness facility. The researcher will conduct research on five owners in Houston, Texas and find a sample of participants that fits the criteria for this study. The researcher will select four owners and the researcher will reach out to the owners through communication through email to ask if they would be willing to be a volunteer in this study. There will be a formal consent if the participant is willing to participate in this study. The information of the participants will be kept secure.

Participant 1

Participant one is a male owner that started owning his own gym at age 25 and currently still owns his gym at age 34. His gym is located in downtown Houston. His gym has received worldwide attention and has hosted huge events that allowed him to gain a great amount of memberships. The demand of his gym increased and his ability to continue the success is seen in this attention brought to his gym. The information provided by the questionnaire sent was a great indication that he started at a young age and learned great strategies during his process.

Participant 2

Participant two is a male coach that started his journey in starting up his own gym at age 39 and currently 46 years old. His gym is located in Fulshear, Houston. His journey started later than the other participants but had similar experiences and it allowed him to expand on his knowledge. He continues to own a gym but in a partnership and his decision was made because

of his past experiences and his process. Before he owned part of the gym, it wasn't doing too great, but now it seems to be growing more and more because of what he learned in owning his first gym.

Participant 3

Participant three is a female owner that started her gym at age 29 and is currently 35. She continues to own her own gym and is successfully growing it every year. Her gym is located in Katy, Houston. She has even entered some competitions and has received certificates on nutrition while investing more of her time into the industry. Prior to owning the gym, she did not have an idea of anything but knowing that she wanted to open the gym. Her leadership skills were not acknowledged before starting the gym but after a few encounters she realized that she was part of leading her gym to success.

Participant 4

Participant four is another female owner that started her gym at age 22 and currently still owns it at age 30. Her gym is located in Cypress, Houston. She is a professional athlete and will be competing in the Crossfit Games for 2020. She has managed to become a professional athlete while continuing to manage her gym and her process has allowed her to grasp great leadership skills.

Role of the Researcher

Considering that the researcher is the primary instrument for this study, their role holds importance in gathering all the information through the experiences of the participants. The researcher is considered a millennial with an interest in constructing their own micro-gym. The importance of leadership has been a global factor that is not considered in developing which motivates the researcher to understand ways developed entrepreneurs have worked with building

their micro-gym. The researcher will contain bias throughout the study and when conducting a qualitative research, it is advised to keep honesty and opened mindedness because of the different perspective given by the different participants (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Instrumentation

The study is divided into portions; the first is interaction through email that will provide a total of five questions that will discover the amount of knowledge towards leadership, the second contains individual interviews in order to achieve understanding of the different leadership strategies taken for a startup of a micro-gym. The questionnaire will be used to gather information before continuing with the one-on-one interview. The individual interview will be driven with a semi-structured interview protocol, which will allow for the questions to be introduced as topics, ideas, or comments (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). This gives the researcher more flexibility to conduct this interview more as a conversation (2017).

The Semi-structured Open-ended Interview Guide (SOIG).

Introductory paragraph here

Question 1: What made you believe you were prepared in starting your own micro-gym?

Question 2: What characteristics of leaders, that you encountered, did you apply in your own micro-gym?

Question 3: What top leadership skills did you find the most beneficial to the growth of your business?

Question 4: What kind of awareness did you have towards leadership?

Question 5: Did you have goals when starting your micro-gym?

Question 6: What situations made you feel like a leader and what situations allowed you to develop or perfect your leadership skills?

Question 7: Do you believe leadership development programs would be helpful for those starting a micro-gym?

Question 8: When you began your micro-gym, were you able to grow positive member relationships?

Question 9: Please add any additional thoughts you have about the leadership strategies necessary for starting up a successful micro-gym?

Thank you for your participation.

Institutional Review Board Process

The approval of Institutional Review Board Process from Winona State University for data collection allowed the researcher to start the process of recruiting, selecting and contacting the participants. The recruiting of the participants included a research done by the research of micro-gyms in a 50-mile radius of Houston, Texas. The contacting of the participants will include an email regarding the acceptance of volunteering in this study. If approved by the participant, a formal date will be placed by email or phone but if the participant contains further concerns or questions a phone call will be made. The researcher completed an educational module, completed the packet and submitted the package for approval.

Data Collection

Collecting the data for this study will include the researcher contacting the participants through email and in the email it will include a small questionnaire about their knowledge of leadership prior to owning their gym. There will be a formal email explaining the research study that the researcher will be conducting and explain the reason why these participants were the ones to get chosen. If they would approve on participating, there will be formal consent form included as an attachment and would need their form of consent before continuing. After

receiving their approval, the researcher would contact them through a phone call for a formal date set for the interview process. During the interview the participant will be recorded, and the researcher will also make notes if needed.

Email Questionnaire

Small questionnaire prior to the one-on-one interviews will be given to understand their position in their knowledge towards leadership prior to obtaining a leadership role and their current knowledge of leadership compared to when they began. The questionnaire will also reflect how important the participants believe leadership can be towards their business. The questions will be close-ended questions the responses will rate their knowledge and will be beneficial before the one-on-one interview. It will provide background into their knowledge and understand their further interview responses.

Individual interviews

Thorough structured interview is taken place to formulate a cohesive understanding of the leadership strategies and skills the business owners were able to apply towards the growth of their business. The questions will lead the participants to answer questions about their experiences that made them better leaders or allowed them to obtain better leadership skills. These questions will allow the participant to share thoughts or stories about their ability to create a growing micro-gym in a competitive city. These interviews will last a max of an hour.

Triangulation

Creswell defines triangulation as the researcher seeks to gather information from multiple lines of data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation is considered as using different data collection to build a solid case (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). The different data collection used in this study will be the individual interviews and the questionnaire sent before the individual interviews to

understand their ratings towards leadership. The data collection will allow the researcher to formulate conclusions based on the participant's personal experiences. These data collections will allow for the further investigation determining researcher's base triangulation strategies on the connection in reference to research questions (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2008).

Data Analysis

In a phenomenology approach it applies a philosophical perspective to explore the study of the human experience (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). There will be four participants that will be interviewed with in-depth questions about their experiences on starting a micro-gym. The information from these participants will be collected and recorded. The data will be analyzed by finding common themes between the participants and coming to a conclusion of the skills each participant used. Qualitative research can guide researchers to understand the thoughts and feelings of the participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The data will be analyzed and will allow the researcher to adopt a different viewpoint in understanding the experiences of the different participants (Sutton 2015). After this study, the data directs confidence to millennial entrepreneurs because the data collection will be analyzed to communicate the best leadership strategies these participants developed. The analyzation of the data will conclude of finding common themes between the participants, finding common skills the leaders obtained, and the common learning experiences that are applicable to millennial entrepreneurs interested in constructing their own micro-gym. This data collection may provide good information towards preparing leadership skills as a priority for entrepreneurs.

Summary

Chapter three consist of the research methodology for the study. The introduction of the research questions and selection of participants are presented. Instrumentation is included in this

section to view the data collection being used for this study. A phenomenological approach will be used in this study in order to guide young entrepreneurs with leadership strategies and leadership skills for the opening of their own fitness facility. Chapter four will contain the results of the study.

Chapter IV

Results/Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore leadership strategies within young entrepreneurs in the fitness industries specifically micro-gyms. These results will allow for current millennial entrepreneurs to have a higher rate in being successful in starting their micro-gym. In chapter four, the collection of the information within the one-on-one interviews, questionnaires, and document review will result in gathering our research findings. Chapter four will conclude the problem, summarize the design of the research and demonstrate the results and findings of this study. With the data collected by the participants, key themes will be analyzed using the participant's one-on-one interviews and questionnaires. The data collected will be evaluated for millennial entrepreneurs aspiring to open their own micro-gym, it will allow for them to understand the importance of leadership strategies.

Review of the Problem Statement

As the small businesses in the United States continue to constitute a substantial part in the economy (Yallapragada, R. R., and Bhuiyan, M. 2011). Categorizing some health and fitness facilities as small businesses, determining the long-term success of the facility lies mostly on the manager of these facilities (Grantham, 2008). Gerard Seijts expresses that there are many organizations that allow bad leaders to lead their business and the business has to suffer for the lack of leadership these entrepreneurs' poses (Seijts, 2016). There should be a better understanding on how important the success of the business lies on the leadership of the manager (2016). Research on different leadership strategies exists, but the focus of this research study is to examine best practice strategies to support a millennial entrepreneur in planning a growthful and successful micro-gym.

Review of the Research Design

This study is qualitative in design and will analyze the experiences of micro-gym owners during their journey towards building a successful environment for their start up gym. An interview process was done to obtain as much information as possible from participants selected and the interview protocol identified the purpose of the study, confidentiality discussed and analyzed the benefits that could be originate from the study. Participants were also informed of their rights to discontinue the interview or their participation in the study. Four participants were involved in this study and provided information during the interviews and questionnaires through email. Participant responses were used to answer the research questions:

RQ1: How do micro-gym owners manage professional training of staff, development of recruitment policies, facilitating generational difference among staff members, and promoting positive attitudes of their staff team?

RQ2: What are the successes and barriers experienced by micro-gym owners from their pre-opening to now?

RQ3: What do micro-gym owners identify as best practice leadership strategies necessary for starting a successful fitness business?

Data Collection

Four questionnaires were sent out to the participants to collect information about their prior knowledge on leadership skills and how important they find leadership to be towards their gym's success. Four in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with micro-gym owners, each generating a data collection beneficial for this study. Micro-gym owner participants were presented 9-10 in-depth interview questions, which inquired experiences within owners that

lead them to great leadership knowledge and unleashed the success of the gym. Triangulation of this research is completed with document review.

Triangulation

Creswell defines triangulation as the researcher seeks to gather information from multiple lines of data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Within this study, the researcher conducts three different approaches to explore the varying leadership strategies gym owners practiced. These three methods included in in-depth one-on-one interviews, online questionnaires, and document review. Triangulation is considered as using different data collection to build a solid case (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Participant Demographics

Table 1:

Demographics of Participants *N=4*

Participants	Identifier	Gender	Participant Level
OOO1	P1	Male	Business Owner/Coach
OOO2	P2	Male	Business Owner/Coach
OOO3	P3	Female	Business Owner/Coach
OOO3	P4	Female	Business Owner/Coach

OOO: One-On-One Survey Participants

Participant 1

Participant one is a male owner that started owning his own gym at age 25 and currently still owns his gym at age 34. His gym is located in downtown Houston. His gym has received worldwide attention and has hosted huge events that allowed him to gain a great amount of memberships. The demand of his gym increased and his ability to continue the success is seen in this attention brought to his gym. The information provided by the questionnaire sent was a great indication that he started at a young age and learned great strategies during his process.

Participant 2

Participant two is a male coach that started his journey in starting up his own gym at age 39 and currently 46 years old. His gym is located in Fulshear, Houston. His journey started later than the other participants but had a similar experiences and it allowed him to expand on his knowledge. He continues to own a gym but in a partnership and his decision was made because of his past experiences and his process. Before he owned part of the gym, the status of the gym wasn't at good place but now that he has taken over, it has indicated to be growing more and more because of what he learned in owning his first gym.

Participant 3

Participant three is a female owner that started her gym at age 29 and is currently 35. She continues to own her own gym and is successfully growing it every year. Her gym is located in Katy, Houston. She has even entered some competitions and has received certificates in nutrition to guide the healthier lifestyle to all her clients of the gym. Prior to owning the gym, she did not have an idea of anything business related or leadership but her motivation in knowing that she wanted to open the gym allowed her to start her gym. Her leadership skills were not developed before starting the gym but after a couple years she realized that she was part of leading her gym to success and has developed leadership skills to guide her into growing her gym.

Participant 4

Participant four is another female owner that started her gym at age 22 and currently still owns it at age 30. Her gym is located in Cypress, Houston. She is a professional athlete and will be competing in the Crossfit Games for 2020. She has managed to become a professional athlete while continuing to manage her gym and her process has allowed her to grasp great leadership

skills. She contained very little leadership and business knowledge prior to starting her gym but has participated in many situations that have allowed her to grow into the great leader she is.

Findings

Online questionnaire was designed to examine participant’s knowledge and understanding towards leadership skills and strategies prior to starting their own gym. The researcher identified a triangulated data set to identify emerging themes. Once the researcher received the results of the online questionnaire, we continued with a one-on-one interview and transcribed the data from each participant. Participants were purposefully selected depending on their experiences in owning their micro-gym.

The selected four participants consisted of two males and two females. These participants were selected due to their status of micro-gym and personal experience within the realm of owning a business at a young age. Participants completed compliance form and agreed to be audio recorded for transcription purposes.

Table 1

Research Questions and corresponding Interview Questions

Research Question Numbers	Interview Question Numbers
1	1, 3, 4
2	2, 5, 6
3	7, 8

Participants answered individualized background questions through questionnaires and in-depth one-on-one interviews that concluded with deeper understanding of each participant’s experience towards the growth of their own micro-gym and their current status of what knowledge they

gathered over the years. A total of 9-10 semi-structured one-on-one interview questions were posed to each of the participants to explain their journey towards success explaining their different experiences, encounters, and growth in knowledge of leadership.

Data Analysis

The data collected by the researcher will be analyzed and will allow the researcher to adopt a different viewpoint in understanding the experiences of the different participants (Sutton 2015). Online questionnaire and one-on-one interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed for theme similarities. Document review was also utilized in the triangulation of the collected data and all collected information was reviewed and organized thematically.

The researcher gathered the data and obtained 10 codes from participants' responses. Preliminary codes were analyzed, and the researcher discovered several occurrences of reiteration and overlap. Collected the themes in this study were analyzed thematically and it helped develop themes from the identified codes, linking to the research questions. The organizations of the codes were made into groups similar to each other and developed themes that were discussed by participants.

One-On-One Interviews

Table 2

Emerging themes from one-on-one semi-structured interviews

Theme	Theme Description	% Participants referencing theme
Theme 1	Lack of leadership management prior to starting the gym	85%
Theme 2	The impact of emotional intelligence towards relationship building	100%
Theme 3	Lack of awareness on the importance in planning	85%
Theme 4	Difference in the mindset of the female and male owners	50%
Theme 5	The influence of outsources	100%

Themes identified in table 2 are recognized through individual participant responses from one-on-one interviews. These themes represent the experiences of entrepreneurs that own micro-gyms and become very successful over the years.

Emergent theme 1: Lack of leadership management prior to starting the gym

Leadership strategies and management is very important prior to starting your gym and it is a valuable element towards the success of a business. When taking into consideration the success of an organization or business, leadership behavior, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and employee performance are important elements (Chen, 2004).

Interview questions that lead to the development of emergent theme 1 are as follows:

Interview Question 1: What were the indications that allowed you to consider starting your own micro-gym?

Interview Question 4: What kind of awareness did you have towards leadership prior to starting your gym?

The questions provided the opportunity for the participants to respond freely about their experiences and their responses were selected to elaborate the emergent theme 2 listed below:

P1: Um, there was nothing that made me feel I should start my business. But alright there is two part to this question. I really didn't have an idea of starting a business; we kind of just went into it. I wouldn't recommended it, there wasn't any business planning, we just did it and it worked out. A lot has changed since then, I had experience but we never sat down and tried to figure out how to do this.

P3: Well, I needed some kind of career path and my brother actually owns a crossfit gym and he encouraged me to start my own. One of the main reasons why I wanted to start a gym was because I wanted to be in the fitness industry and because I have 10 siblings and most of them are obese. Including my dad and everything. And so I didn't want to go that route and so I wanted a healthy career path. I have even got a nutrition license three years ago.

P4: Yeah, so I started my gym with my now husband. It's actually pretty cool and weird because things kind of just fell into place like meeting the right people and getting lucky. Our indications came from everything just falling into our paths and we just went for it. There wasn't much of the business planning.

P1: I wouldn't say I'd had no awareness. It was just, it isn't what it is now like I didn't realize what kind of position I was in when I started, I had an idea. You know, but if I look back and think about it. I'm like, I thought I knew but I really didn't I was aware of it, but I really didn't understand it

P2: I had about zero to none awareness of what a leaders should obtain a growing business. Yeah I honestly don't think I ever thought of myself being a leader. It just never crossed my mind that way.

Emergent theme 2: The impact of impact of emotional intelligence towards relationship building

Lunenburg (2011), identifies emotional intelligence to be a factor in the prediction in the success of leaders towards relationship building in businesses containing characteristics as self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, social awareness and relationship management

Interview Question 8: When you began your micro-gym, was it difficult creating relationships with all of your members? What helped creating these relationships?

The questions provided the opportunity for the participants to respond freely about their experiences and their responses were selected to elaborate the emergent theme 2 listed below:

P1: I've always had a personality that really got along with everybody, so no, it wasn't really difficult creating those relationships. What I did learn was that there is a difference between being a friend and being a coach/leader and sometimes that line is tough to distinguish. I do my best to try to be a coach first and then a friend because I can't honestly be friends with everyone. I see it as I can't be friends with everyone and give everyone that same attention I give to my friends. I am very friendly but I think that was something I did learn pretty important was that there is a difference in being friendly and being friends. When building your business you always have to understand that line because it can get complicated if you don't understand it. I learned this while I was owning my business I had no clue of it at first because I wanted to be everyone's friend at the beginning but it then got complicated and began to be very draining on myself.

P2: When I first started it wasn't hard to create relationships with my members but one thing I did find out was taking things too personally like if I have a member that's going to leave, I can't take that personally. I viewed my gym and my members as a family so it was hard for me not to take it personally but I have definitely changed that part about myself.

Emergent theme 3: The mindset when having very little knowledge

Interview Question 5: Did you have goals when starting your micro-gym? If so, what were they?

P1: Honestly, to get to hit three months we put all our money together. I was able to pay out three months. Our goal was to get as many clients in, to be able to pay our fourth month and we did surprisingly. That's all we really cared about. At the time, is just get some people in here. We had no long term goals. We had no business plan. It was kind of like let's figure this stuff out and at the time, I believed we were very organized but now looking back, and it wasn't what I thought it was at the time.

P3: Ummm well when we first started our goal was to make money and to grow the business so it would become our primary source of income. But it then quickly became just a hobby for us and we just would have it as a form of income. We didn't have our goals set for a timeframe like reaching a certain month or number. We didn't have much of the planning until we started and consulted outsources

P4: Oh man, we really didn't understand the business part at the beginning. So to us back then we wanted a huge gym and want the most recognition from everyone. The mindset really was about wanting to help but we were distracted into thinking about the flashy things like having the coolest gym. The money never was really a concern it honestly made us feel good that our goal would be to help others but we did want the best looking gym.

Emergent theme 4: The difference in the mindset of the female and male owners

Interview Question 6: What situations made you feel like a leader and what situations allowed you to develop or perfect your leadership skills?

P1: I believe I became a better leader when I would switch from coaching adults and kids. I don't know what it is but I have realized that it is quite challenging coaching kids and if you are able to get kids to do what you want them to achieve. There is a different type of communication you should have with these different types of generations. Figuring out that communication really helped me feel like a leader and helped me develop really cool strategies that enhanced my leadership.

P2: Yeah, situations where I found validation and within the athletes really presented my leadership that I had created towards the athlete. When I moved gyms it was the validation I had from my athletes that continued to ask and miss my guidance, presence, and knowledge is what made me feel like I was leading as a good leader.

P3: Honestly, situations like this COVID-19 have made me kind of realize I am a leader because since we can't open our gym we have had to make some decisions in how to keep everyone active since they have a contract with us. Everyone would rely on me to make the decisions of still continuing or what. When I have to make decisions that can affect other people it's like okay I'm kind of feeling some sort of leader. Yeah, I've never really thought of myself as a leader, never really put myself out to be a leader I don't know what it might be. It actually makes me very nervous leading people so I try not to think of it, I try to think of it as having fun with people and getting fit together. The mindset of thinking I am a leader is very intimidating to me so I don't think it that way.

P4: Since I am in the Crossfit games and I have qualified gives me that sense of being a leader for my gym. The support that the community gives me is a big one for sure. At the competitions that I compete in they bring about like 60 people to come and support and that makes me realize that they are supporting my dream just as much as I am. But I honestly don't really think of that stuff you know. Like I don't view myself as a leader.

Emergent theme 5: The influence of outsources

Interview Question 7: Do you believe leadership development programs would be helpful for millennial entrepreneurs starting a micro-gym?

P2: Yes, I believe that I had good enough mentors that showed my really good characteristics of good leaders so it allowed me to understand what was needed but I did lack in understanding different types of leaders. Since I was co-owning with a guy with the a strong personality we didn't align quite well and if I would've had that leadership development I believe I could've made better decisions in how to hand certain situations or deal with different types of leaders better.

P3: Yes for sure, I didn't realize until way after that I needed planning. We honestly only found out about consulting because of the coach we brought in. If I would've known earlier I definitely think I could've grew my gym sooner and it would've been ran better. The consulting we did first wasn't very informative for us but then we tried another and they work wonders. We are still currently using them and it has been great. I didn't realize until about 4 years into it and I was still able to maintain it but it was very overwhelming trying to learn it while I was still running it. So yes it would be best to have a good plan before starting it and understanding the roles of everyone involved.

P4: Oh absolutely, especially if you look at how I started I mean I thankfully had someone to guide me through it all that has already done it. I see it now, one of my friends just opened her gym and she's connecting with me asking me all the same questions I had when I started.

Document Review

The researcher collected relevant documents relating to the knowledge of leadership strategies and management. These resources were produced to enhance the importance of addressing leadership within businesses and understanding the impact of what leadership contains towards a business. A detailed description of each report is listed below.

Document One: The association between organizational culture and leadership behavior and organizational commitment, job satisfaction and employee performance

This document makes a note of the importance of the business success based on the leadership that it presents. The positive influence comes from the leadership given and with the knowledge of understanding the importance of leadership can drive the leader to seek employees with the correct characteristics it takes for good leadership. The positive influence starts from the employer and begins to seek for those that are similar to his mindset and goals. There has been researcher on leadership but there hasn't been one way to be a successful leader but there have been some common characteristics within the leaders. Organization becomes a priority in predicting the success in the businesses and creating positive relationships with employees

comes right behind organization. Bad relationships towards employees would build a negative atmosphere in the business and could motivate employees towards negative mindsets.

Document Two: Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace: Application to Leadership

This document reviews the significance in what emotional intelligence consisting of self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, social awareness, and relationship management can bring towards the success of becoming a positive leader to a business. The document comments on our best leaders of our time and describes the different characteristics they obtain in order to be seen as good leaders. They look over big leaders we see on the television but it is clear that if one is aware of obtaining these characteristics at any level, there will be success in the level of a smaller business. The document expresses that learning emotional intelligence can be done through living life and experiences. There isn't any indication that every great leader is born with these qualities. Connection with your peers becomes a big part in understanding what motivates your employees and clients and building those relationships with them will guide success into your business.

Document Three: The influence of information and advice on competitive strategy definition in small- and medium-sized enterprises

This document reviews the impact outsources guidance will promote success within your business. Having the direction from a mentor that has been in the same situation allows for better opportunities that can help the business increase the growth at a higher rate than without having the guidance. The importance of planning and understanding the strategy that must be taken towards growing the business is explained in this document. Containing that knowledge from the initial start of a business becomes crucial because of the when there isn't a plan things can get lost interpretation. Guidance in a business becomes very important and allows for a different

perspective, which can show you things that may come in the future and preparation towards those obstacles can save or ruin your business.

Summary

Chapter four presented information and themes that emerged from the study. Online questionnaire, one-on-one interview and document review were used to triangulate a data collection. The researcher interviewed five participants and the following themes emerged from their responses: (1) Lack of leadership management prior to starting the gym, (2) The impact of impact of emotional intelligence towards relationship building (3) The mindset when having very little knowledge, (4) The difference in the mindset of the female and male owners, and (5) The influence of outsources. Chapter V concludes the results collected from chapter IV, which will include a summary and discussion of the results of the study. Further applications and research opportunities will be provided due to the conclusions from this study based on the findings.

Chapter V

Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze perspectives of micro-gym business owners to help develop leadership qualities for upcoming millennial entrepreneurs. Chapter one arranged the introduction for this study. The background of the problem, problem statement, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research method, research questions, and the theoretical framework are included in chapter one. Chapter two contains the literature review, which includes leadership theories from other studies and current perspectives. Chapter three discovers the methodology of the study, research design, rationale of the selected research method, research questions, and research setting along with the selection process of participants,

sampling, instrumentation, informed consent, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four concludes the results and findings from this study. Reviewing the research design, restating the problem, analyzing data, displaying the demographics of participants, presenting emerging themes, and presenting findings. Chapter five will finish with discussions related to the research, conclusions from findings, and recommendations for further research.

Discussion

This research explored the proficiencies of micro-gym owner's knowledge towards leadership strategies and skills. Previous chapters discussed a review of the impact leadership can have within businesses and the importance of maintaining the knowledge in order to grow a successful business. This study establishes a significant importance within leadership that can develop a business to success.

Qualitative research is used to explore the data regarding the lack of knowledge in leadership towards the improvement of young entrepreneurs when starting up their gym. This phenomenological study provides research data examining the micro-gym owner's experiences with leadership within their gym. Three research questions guided this study.

RQ1: How do micro-gym owners manage professional training of staff, development of recruitment policies, facilitating generational difference among staff members, and promoting positive attitudes of their staff team?

RQ2: What are the successes and barriers experienced by micro-gym owners from their pre-opening to now?

RQ3: What do micro-gym owners identify as best practice leadership strategies necessary for starting a successful fitness business?

Setting, Participants, Data Collection

This study took place in a 50-mile radius of Houston, Texas. The selections of the owners were based on the success of their gym and the recognition of the owners of the gyms. Each owner started off their gym with very minimal clients and grew them over time to maintain 100 or more clients. The location of their start-up gym did change because of the amount of clients that began signing up.

Participants within this study represented two males and two females within the Houston area. A total of four participants partook the data group. The four participants responded to the emailed questionnaire along with a one-on-one interview that included semi-structured questions.

One-on-one interviews, online questionnaire, and document review concluded the triangulation of data collection. Five emergent themes evolved using thematic coding of the responses from the participants. The five emergent themes in the study include: (1) Lack of leadership management prior to starting the gym, (2) The impact of impact of emotional intelligence towards relationship building (3) The mindset when having very little knowledge, (4) The difference in the mindset of the female and male owners, and (5) The influence of outsources.

The findings allowed the researcher to gather information based on the participants responses and formulate the best answer to the research questions. The interview questions were driven to correlate the information to provide the best results for the research questions. This study was driven by the research questions and the researcher was able to gather positive information regarding the importance of leadership when starting up a micro-gym from gym owners themselves.

Theme Analysis

Themes addressed through the analysis of the gathered research data are listed below. These themes arose following a transcription of the collected information, coding of data, and analysis of how each theme relates to the research questions.

Theme 1: Lack of leadership management prior to starting the gym

Findings from online questionnaire and one-on-one interviews demonstrated a indication among the micro-gym owners to have maintained minimal knowledge prior to starting their gym. Leadership has taken over the years on a tremendous level that allows the prediction to take place in figuring out how successful a business will be depending on the type of leader (Daane, M). This theme correlates with the discovery of understanding how important leadership management is and connects with RQ3.

Theme 2: The impact of impact of emotional intelligence towards relationship building

Jordan (2006) explains in a team situation if team members or clients experience positive emotions it may contribute to them becoming more emotionally aware of their own behavior. They can also pick up the emotions that influenced the behavior and it will become more natural for them to also react that way. The success of owners depends on the quality of how positive creating those intrapersonal relationships and it contributes with being able to motivate others because of the ability of containing emotional intelligence (Caruso and Salovey, 2004). RQ3 questions the practices that the owners have taken for their ability to successfully run a business.

Theme 3: The mindset when having very little knowledge

Most responded within this study with very low education in leadership when started their own micro-gym but they were driven and ambitious which allowed the continuation of their

gym. Damon (2008) explains a study was done that long-term goals of American youth is primarily motivated to start business by containing ambition.

Theme 4: The difference in the mindset of the female and male owners

Two of my participants were female owners that addressed the lack of leadership mindset they possessed because it felt intimidating for them to view themselves as a leader. Women leaders need to understand the importance of their leadership and recognize the invisible forces holding these women back from fulfilling their potential as leaders (Beeson, 2012). The females have attributed leadership strategies within the years but it still never crosses their mind of being leaders. The men found it easier to understand their role as a leader and strive to always become a better leader.

Theme 5: The influence of outsources

Several participants who participated in online questionnaire and one-on-one interviews addressed their lack of influence from outsources but later found outsources that directed their business towards higher growth. When concerned of the probability of the survival of your business it is important to find outsources that will suggest proper support of business skills learning and development (St-Jean & Audet, 2012).

Theoretical Connections

Leader- Member Exchange Theory

Gerstner and Day (1997) explain that leader-member exchange theory has become a very interesting and useful approach towards predicting the linkages between leadership processes and outcomes. Traditional theories explain the connection as a function of personal characteristics of the leader but leader-member exchange theory focuses on the analysis of the dyadic relationship (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Graen (1976) suggests that roles are not determined

just on written descriptions, through a series of intrapersonal exchanges these individuals obtain the shaping of the member's behavior and resulting in prominent roles. In order to contain fluidity within an organization there should be coordination throughout the team and it allows for members to enjoy the positive environment for increasing growth and collective goal reaching (Li & Liao, 2014).

Theory of Planned Behavior

Planned behavior theory (TPB) is a theory that identifies a person's performance can be predicted based on their behavioral intention to perform (Damron-Martinez, Presley & Zhang, 2013). This theory is based on an assumption that people behave in a practical manner considering the available information and the implications of their actions. Consistently, the theory also presumes that performance is connected to specific behavior as a function of the intention to perform such behavior (Ajzen, 1998). These behaviors become predictable depending on what they are surrounded by and can mimic all behaviors seen by their superiors. Wood and Bandura (1989) states, that positive encouragement will be seen as a great incentive to apply greater effort towards all activities.

Conclusions

Following the review of the collected data from the online questionnaire, one-on-one interview and document review, the researcher draws the following conclusions in reference to this study:

- Leadership knowledge prior to starting a business holds high priority amongst the other important elements towards starting a business

- 100% of the participants addressed the ability to understand the relationships with their clients. This characteristic or knowledge can be learned and can be developed prior to starting a business
- Participants addressed the specific mindset one should have in order to continue growing a business. The participants inquired a high level of ambition in making their gym the best gym.
- Female participants and male participants owners have different mindsets when it came to leadership. Gym owners should consider understanding their role before stepping into a leadership role.
- 100% of the participants addressed the benefit of having outsources guide through the process. Outsources were used if not prior to starting the business, then during their growth and after using outsources a tremendous growth happened.

Recommendations

It is observed that millennial entrepreneurs may benefit from gathering knowledge of leadership prior to starting their own gym. While the rate of millennial entrepreneurs is increasing, their success rate decreases because of the lack of knowledge and understanding the leadership strategies that can guide the business towards success. Preparation towards better leadership suggests an increase in growth at a faster pace.

Additional research may benefit regarding the characteristics the owners should obtain before started their business. Participant's responses indicated similarities in traits and characteristics that helped guide the business to success but further research may help understanding which characteristics and strategies may help the most. Further knowledge on how

to develop these characteristics will be essential for those that are interested in preparing for the opening of their own small business.

Influences such as gender are not overtly analyzed in much of the current research that exists in relation to this topic. The responses from the females did compare similarly compared to the males responses. Future research could be influenced by assessing the constructs of these characteristics in relation to leadership strategies prior to starting their own micro-gym.

The development of leadership programs that may lead these leaders into roles they are able to successfully obtain prior to starting their gym. Further research would be beneficial for all new businesses operations because of the importance that leadership has in the survival rate. Future research may influence these businesses and leaders.

Summary

This study explored the experiences that micro-gym owners encountered when first starting their own business. Chapter five provided an in-depth interpretation of the emergent themes from the qualitative data collection. The emergent themes from the online questionnaire and the one-on-one interviews are: 1. Lack of leadership management prior to starting the gym 2. The impact of impact of emotional intelligence towards relationship building 3. The mindset when having very little knowledge 4. The difference in the mindset of the female and male owners 5. The influence of outsources. Information relating to each theme is connect through leader- member exchange theory and planned behavior theory. Based on the identified themes, review of theories, and assumptions, the researcher drew five conclusions. The researcher identified recommendations for further practice and research.

Appendices

Appendix A

Research Study Letter of Invitation

Hello,

My name is Esdeina Gonzalez and I am a Graduate Assistant at Winona State University studying under the Leadership Educational Department. I am conducting a research study on micro-gym owner's leadership strategies that have been beneficial for the start-up of your gym and growth of your business. I am contacting you because I would love to hear more about your experiences since you have been a great example of a leader starting your business and successfully growing it. If you are interested, I have included a small questionnaire to fill out about how important you view leadership strategies and how much knowledge you had prior to started your gym. After receiving your email back, we can communicate when the best time for a one-on-one interview that will only take 30-45 minutes. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: esdeina.gonzalez@go.winona.edu or by phone: 713-416-0976.

Thank you for your time and hope to speak to you soon,

Esdeina Gonzalez

Appendix B

Research Study Consent Form

Consent Form: Leadership Strategies: Developing Millennial Entrepreneurs for Start-up Micro-gyms

What is this research study about?

This research study is designed to develop an understanding of how leadership strategies become impactful for the development of the start-up micro-gyms in order to prepare millennial entrepreneurs for a successful business journey. We hope to learn how owners drive their business with their leadership strategies and understand the importance of developing these strategies resulting in a successful micro-gym. All data collected for this study is anonymous and will not be linked back to any of your identifying information.

What activities will this study involve?

If you decide to participate, you will participate in a face-to-face, semi-structured interview, including questions regarding the acquisition of leadership knowledge, the value leadership strategies has towards a business, how they have been applied to the business. This interview will take about 30 minutes and only need to be done once.

How much time will this take?

Participation will require approximately 30 minutes of your time. Time and place of the interview will be chosen at your request.

Are there any risks for participating?

There are no appreciable risks from participating in this study.

Are there any benefits for participating?

There are no benefits from participating in this study.

What are my rights as a participant?

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may stop at any time. You may decide not to participate or to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. A decision not to participate or withdraw will not affect your current or future relationship with Winona State University of the researcher.

Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns about this study?

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, contact Douglas Callahan at 507.457.5200 or email DCallahan@winona.edu.

Who can I contact if I have questions about my rights as a participant?

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact Human Protections Administrator Brett Ayers at 507-457-5519 or bayers@winona.edu. This project has been reviewed by the Winona State University Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects.

Email for survey will include:

If you agree to participate, responding to the survey questions constitutes your consent. Participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time. Survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

Appendix C

Leadership Strategies: Developing Millennial Entrepreneurs for

Start-up Micro-gyms

Questionnaire

Name:

Current Age:

Age when started your gym:

1. Rate yourself on your knowledge on leadership/leadership strategies prior to owning your gym.

5 - High 4 - Average 3 - Neutral 2 - Very Little 1- None

2. Leadership strategies are a very important part of developing a successful gym.

5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agreed 3- Neutral 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

3. The leadership strategies I have obtained have made a positive impact on my gym and my members.

5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agreed 3- Neutral 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

4. Gym owners should consider learning about leadership programs before opening their own gym.

5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agreed 3- Neutral 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

5. I have become a better leader and have developed strong leadership strategies while operating my own gym.

5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agreed 3- Neutral 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

Thank you for your participation

Esdeina Gonzalez

Appendix D

Research Study Interview Questions

Question 1: What were the indications that allowed you to consider starting your own micro-gym?

Question 2: What characteristics of leaders, that you encountered, did you apply in your own micro-gym?

Question 3: What top leadership skills did you find the most beneficial to the growth of your business?

Question 4: What kind of awareness did you have towards leadership prior to starting your gym?

Question 5: Did you have goals when starting your micro-gym? If so, what were they?

Question 6: What situations made you feel like a leader and what situations allowed you to develop or perfect your leadership skills?

Question 7: Do you believe leadership development programs would be helpful for millennial entrepreneurs starting a micro-gym?

Question 8: When you began your micro-gym, was it difficult creating relationships with all of your members? What helped creating these relationships?

Please add any additional thoughts you have about the leadership strategies necessary for starting up a successful micro-gym

Thank you for your participation.

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