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An Ethnographic Study on the Relationship Between Andragogy and Perceived Ability
of Hybrid and Virtual Employees to Live Corporate Values

by

Laura Van Iseghem

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

An Ethnographic Study on the Relationship Between Andragogy and Perceived Ability
of Hybrid and Virtual Employees to Live Corporate Values

by

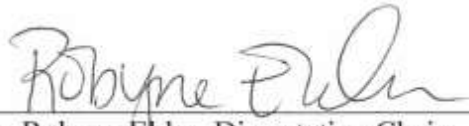
Laura Van Iseghem

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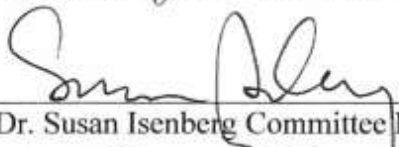
at Lindenwood University by the School of Education



Dr. Robyne Elder, Dissertation Chair

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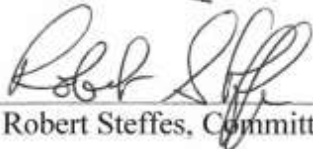
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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Laura Ann Van Iseghem

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Ann Van Iseghem". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

Acknowledgments

I am truly thankful for all the people involved in helping me finish my dissertation. This includes my remarkable chair and committee members; my wonderful and devoted husband; my amazing, understanding, and giving parents; my beautiful, helpful, wiser, older sister; and my amazing workplace that is truthfully one of the best places to work.

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Abstract

As several businesses and organizations push to be profitable and successful, many lack efforts in enforcing and maintaining an effective vision and mission as part of the business strategy. This qualitative, ethnographic study aimed to identify the relationship, if any, between andragogy, an adult learning theory, and the perceived ability of the study company's hybrid and virtual employees to live the seven corporate core values (trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork and honesty and integrity) based on Knowles' (1973, 1995) six assumptions of the characteristics of the adult learner and the eight process elements (theoretical framework) by which adults learn best. Participants for the study included hybrid and virtual employees from XYZ Technology Company. Demographic survey, interview, and focus group data were collected and analyzed to make comparisons and draw conclusions about employee perceptions on how living the XYZ core values relates to the andragogical theoretical framework. The demographic survey was utilized as a method to identify and understand each participant's background on a more personal level. As for the interviews and focus groups, the researcher was able to obtain in greater detail what specific core values were, either more or less, needed for each employee, whether hybrid or virtual, and how he/she aligned directly to Knowles' six assumptions and eight key business concepts.

The results of this study indicated there is a relationship between XYZ Technology company's hybrid and remote employees' perceived ability to live these core values and the unconscious daily application of the six assumptions of the characteristics of the adult learner and eight process elements. Results showed that having open

communication and collaboration, whether virtual or hybrid, was vital to employees and trust is needed in both the hybrid and virtual environment but is emphasized more in the virtual world. Also, virtual and hybrid employees both need to be self-directed and have the drive to want to learn on their own. Other emerging themes consisted of motivation, individualism, work-life balance, training, and relationship building. One recommendation to build up the trust in a strictly virtual environment is for teams to be fully reliant on that individual to complete his or her work. The results of this study will help other employers that have similar core values better prepare current and future employees, through a more thorough understanding of the andragogy concepts in helping employees, whether hybrid or virtual, live by a company's core values.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The world is an ever-changing, acclimatizing universal system where people must learn to live or be left behind. “Technology-mediated learning is a relatively new phenomenon in adult learning and is rapidly becoming a vital component of the current and future workplace” (Mancuso, Chlup, & McWhorter, 2010, p. 681). In recent years, the rise of technological advancements, such as virtualization, a software-based application, and technology-mediated learning, defined by educating individuals through technology, has been emerging prevalently in society. Each individual company, ranging from big business corporations to small business industries, had to adapt to this rapid-paced economic growth. Each industry had to transform its learning environment to be more acclimated towards the technological advancements. Transitioning a workplace environment into becoming a virtual work environment required due diligence, trustful management, leadership skills, and a vigilant understanding of the cultural environment in order to successfully become virtualized. “If you really want remote to be a thriving part of your organization, somebody from a leadership level has to own that culture and make sure the remote employees are engaged with everyone else” (Wood, 2015, p. 3).

Background of the Study

Andragogy is the study of how adults learn; pedagogy is the study of how children learn (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). It is important to understand that adults learn differently than children. “Promoting lifelong learning as continuous, collaborative, self-directed, active, broad in the domain, everlasting, positive and fulfilling, and applicable to one’s profession as well as all aspects of one’s life has emerged as a major global

educational challenge” (Collins, 2009, p. 613). Establishing this goal set ambitious standards for facilitators and trainers to reach the learner on a more personal level.

Being a virtual learner; some could see this as a challenge as learners were disguised behind a computer screen. Although these types of learners were distanced, meaning not physically present, they still had the capabilities and resources to interpret and receive information.

Distance teaching may be defined by the family of instructional methods in which the teaching behaviors are executed apart from the learning behaviors, so that communication between the teacher and the student must be facilitated by print, electronics, mechanical, etc. (Moore, 1973, p. 664)

This statement was applicable not only to the classroom but to the workplace as well.

According to Isenberg (2007), it seemed rational for adults who were not actually present to facilitate effective online learning by following andragogical principles presented by Knowles (1975, 1980, 1984a, 1984b). Knowles (1975, 1980, 1984a, 1984b) introduced the characteristics of learning (need-to-know, self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, motivation to learn) that shaped the term better known at the time of this writing as andragogy (the study of adult learning). This model implied that adult learners must be responsible enough to want to learn on their own. In today’s society, at the time of this writing, adults were engaged with learning by taking the initiative in a subject that peaked their interest. It was also significant to understand that most adults in modern society at the time, worked remotely.

The productivities of remote learning were fascinating — time was saved, money was saved, and seemingly instructive informative goals were surpassed (Isenberg, 2007).

“According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 24% of workers in 2015 did some or all of their work at home, which is up from 19% in 2003” (Zimmerman, 2016, p. 1). It was not required that one would go into the office to accomplish his or her daily tasks for the day. People could do the same amount of work and often times even double their amount of work while working from home or offsite. Moore (1973) stated, “The ‘distance’ a learner experiences is not a function of geographical separation, but rather a function of individualization and dialogue” (p. 665).

In a business setting, some employees conducted their entire work on campus, some conducted their work off and on campus (hybrid), and others worked entirely off campus (virtual). This caused a major debate and stirred controversy within the workplace, because perception in a work setting was everything, and some perceived that off campus employees were not doing real work. Some had not adapted to the idea of working off campus as quickly as others. One of the most fundamental challenges a company faced was transforming the right people into the right roles and eliminating the wrong people out of the business (Collins, 2009). Addressing the stigma associated with hybrid and virtual employees early within a company would help to create a positive and healthy culture.

Virtual workers could control when and where information was received, such as via emails, applications, phone, and video conferencing; and could control when and how they responded, depending on the importance of the information received. “Learning in virtual environments allows for individuals to gain experiences they may find impossible in the physical world and allows for one to represent one’s self in multiple ways” (Bennett & Bell, 2010). Communication was a viable tool that was used in the business

world that Moore (1973) referred to as ‘dialogue’ when using this transactional distance theory. “The term ‘dialogue’ is used to describe an interaction or series of interactions having positive qualities that other interactions might not have” (Moore, 1973, p. 24).

Trust was the issue that many had when working remotely. People tended to ask themselves, are people really working offsite or are they sitting at home and getting paid for it? One might wonder, how can I excel in the company if I am strictly a remote employee? Trust goes hand in hand with integrity and humility. Seeing is knowing and being open to others forms a bond of trust between two people that can be reached both physically and virtually.

According to Covey and Merrill (2006), one way to increase integrity was to be open to others. According to LaGuardia (2008), this kind of openness to adapt to innovative ideas and change could positively influence an organization’s culture. A company that revolved around the idea of freedom and responsibility would, in turn, build a constructive work environment (Collins, 2009). Research literature dealing with how adult employees performed and communicated, both on and off campus, and how adult employees learned in a virtual work environment was pertinent. Virtualization was becoming more relevant in every aspect of the world, from buying online items, receiving and distributing valuable information, paying bills, playing music, and watching streams, etc.; thus, research literature on perceptions of virtualization was important to this study.

Purpose of this Study

The first purpose for this study was to explore the relationship, if any, between andragogy, as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner and the eight process elements of adult learning, and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to

live by the XYZ Technology Company's core values. A related and relevant purpose was to investigate more about the personal perceptions and experiences of employees and to answer the following research question: Can the self-directed concept of andragogy be applied to both virtual and hybrid employees working within XYZ company?

The second purpose was to seek parallels and differences, if any, between the two groups of participants related to (a) the extent of telecommuting (hybrid versus virtual) and to (b) the extent of andragogy application in an employee's perceived ability to live the company's core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity.

Rationale

There seemed to be little research that explored the possible relationship between andragogy and online learning and even less that explored the relationship between andragogy and the hybrid/virtual employee; therefore, this study may add to the then-current research literature. First, "little is known about individual experiences of adult learning in the context of a virtual world" (Mancuso et al., 2010, p. 682). In the past, learners had to physically matriculate to schools/colleges where the resources resided. In today's era, at the time of this writing, the touch of a button achieved this. "The Internet has created a vast new medium of exchange for adults seeking educational opportunities; instructional resources are increasingly available which are ideally suited to the independent nature of adult learners" (Wilmarth, 2010, p. 8).

Secondly, "new developments in information technology constitute one of the most significant pressures regarding the way business is conducted and the nature of relationships within organizations" (Solomon & Templer, 1993, p. 22). Corporations

struggled to transition successfully to online workplaces. “In today’s knowledge-based economy where digitalization is seen to be the driving force, it is essential that organizations have the necessary resources to meet the ever-changing demands they face” (Nelis, 2014, p. 8). There was a deficit of inaccessible research literature linked to online employment. Reviewing this research literature could help leaders open new opportunities in the workplace and create new practices and procedures for performing work and employing the most up-to-date applicants. Research practices, such as traffic monitoring, more effective collaboration and communication, effective use of time, and establishing a properly engaged active environment would help improve the learning experience (Oproiu & Chicioareanu, 2012, p. 398). Taking advantage of this channel of communication was vital in order to interact with the younger generation.

It was important to research the virtual workplace concept, because it was on the rise and changing then-current and future employment. “Global pressures and the rapid escalation in the pace of change has entailed the recognition that new models of adaptation are required on the part of business organizations themselves and their methods of learning” (Solomon & Templer, 1993, p. 21). Research on this topic may result in changes to hybrid and virtual work environments and new employee development standards.

Effective and efficient virtual working heavily depended on the communication and collaboration throughout the team’s cultural environment. Furthermore, the results of this study may help employers that have similar core values (tacit or implicit) better prepare then-current and future employees through a better understanding of the possible

role of andragogy application in helping employees, whether hybrid or virtual learning, live the company's core values.

Research Questions

Research Question #1: What is the relationship, if any, between andragogy and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live by the XYZ Technology Company's seven core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity?

Sub Questions:

- 1) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live the core value *trust* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980, 1995) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
- 2) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *humility* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980, 1995) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
- 3) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live the core value *embracing change* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980, 1995) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
- 4) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *passion* and andragogy as

- measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980, 1995) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
- 5) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *positive attitude* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980, 1995) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
- 6) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *teamwork* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980, 1995) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
- 7) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *honesty and integrity* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980, 1995) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?

Research Question #2: How do hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees compare in their perceived ability to live by the seven core values?

Research Question #3: What is the role of leadership at XYZ Technology Company in helping hybrid and virtual employees perceive they are able to live by the seven core values?

Research Question #4: What is the role of the individual hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employee in helping him herself perceive he or she is able to live by the seven core values?

Limitations

“Change is either intentional or unintentional; human changes occur as a result of both” (Isenberg, 2007, p. 10). Adapting to this change could be difficult, depending on the individual's background, knowledge, and resources. This study emphasized the intentional efforts to learn in a virtual environment. It focused on the process of acquiring knowledge by utilizing the technology resources each individual had at hand.

Delimitations

Participant perceptions, virtual or on campus, were subject to participant observations. These perceptions varied due to the observer's personal experiences and background.

Assumptions

There were three assumptions. First, it was assumed that all individuals/employees at XYZ Company were considered adult learners. Adult learners strive to know why they should learn something and value their lifelong learning education; they had a deep need to be self-directed; they had achieved their own initiative as adults to become self-dependent and responsible for their own decisions; they had created a motivation to learn and reflect psychologically on their past experiences to grow as adult learners (Knowles, 1984a, pp. 255-258).

Second, people in the study were assumed to come from different cultural backgrounds. Both virtual and hybrid employees cultivated their learning methods, based on their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds.

Last, it was assumed that virtual communities were constructed by people sharing a common language of communication and common rules for the conduct of such communication (Mason, 2001).

Definition of Terms

Adult Learner/Employee – For the purpose of this study, a learner/employee who is over the age of 18, currently holds an associate degree or more, and has the equivalent knowledge and experience required for that position. Also, as assumed by Knowles (1980), “a person is an adult to the extent that that individual perceives herself or himself to be essentially responsible for her or his own life” (p. 24).

Andragogy – Andragogy is “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, p. 43). Andragogy “focuses on the adult learner and creation of an independent, adaptable individual. Self-concept, learner’s experiences, readiness to learn and learner performance are taken into context” (Forrest & Peterson, 2006, p. 115). “The term andragogy defines the concept that adults are capable of adapting to change in a way that will revolutionize the educational industry” (Knowles, 1980, p. 40).

Core Values – For the purpose of this study, core values indicated the value and belief system of XYZ Technology Company: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity. Employers indicated what kind of company they were, how they operated, and how decisions were made within the company.

Hybrid Employee – For the purpose of this study, any full-time employee who worked from a virtual environment 50% of the time was considered a hybrid. These

employees could work from their home, a public place, or anywhere they could be online, utilizing Wi-Fi, and conducting their work in an effective manner with the correct securities and applications. The other 50% of the time these employees were physically on the campus of XYZ Technology Company (pseudonym). Even though these employees were physically on campus, they could still use virtualization technology to attend meetings, but were strongly encouraged to attend in person. According to Potter (2003), hybrid employees were “employees who spend part of their time working from home with electronic links to the office” (p. 76).

Telework/Telecommuting – “Work arrangement in which employees perform their regular work at a site other than the ordinary workplace, supported by technological connections” (Fonner & Roloff, 1997, p. 65).

The Eight Process Elements of Andragogy – Knowles (1973, 1995) described elements of the adult learning process: (a) prepare the learner, (b) establish a climate conducive to learning, (c) create a mechanism for mutual planning, (d) diagnose the needs for learning, (e) formulate program objectives that will satisfy these needs, (f) design a pattern of learning experiences, (g) conduct these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials, and (h) evaluate the learning outcomes and re-diagnose learning needs.

THE PATH – This acronym represented XYZ Technology Company’s core values: Trust, Humility, Embracing change, Passion, Positive Attitude, Teamwork, and Honesty and Integrity.

The Six Assumptions of the Adult Learner - Knowles (1980, 1995) based andragogy on six assumptions of the characteristics of the adult learner: adult learners (a)

were increasingly self-directing, (b) were a rich resource for learning from each other, (c) learned as a result of developmental tasks of social roles, (d) wanted immediate application of learning to solve a problem, (e) were internally motivated, and (f) needed a reason to learn that makes sense to them.

Transactional Distance – “Distance education that occurs between a teacher and students in an environment that has special geographical characteristics of separation” (Moore, 1973, p. 22). For the purpose of this study, transactional distance was any amount of physical distance between an employee and the workplace. The medium of communication was one of the most important elements of this theory. “The term ‘dialogue’ is reserved for positive interactions with the value placed on the synergistic nature of the relationship between the parties involved” (Moore, 1973, p. 24).

Trust – It is the meaning of having confidence in one another to the fullest. This means integrity and credibility played an important factor in one person’s character (Covey & Merrill, 2006).

Virtual Employee – For the purpose of this study, a virtual employee was one who worked from a remote site 100% of his or her time, while being a full-time employee. These employees could work from their homes, a public place, or anywhere they could be online, utilizing Wi-Fi and conducting their work in an effective manner with the correct securities, certifications, and applications.

Summary

In summary, the ultimate purpose of this ethnographic study was to discover the relationship, if at all, between andragogy and the perceived ability of employees to live the core values (trust, humility, embracing change, passionate work ethic, positive

attitude, teamwork, honesty, and integrity) while doing their daily duties at XYZ Technology Company. By utilizing andragogy as the theoretical framework, this study, aimed to illuminate how adults actually learned in a virtual workplace environment. It was vital to keep in mind that each participant had a different perspective on how he or she learned. Understanding how these values related, if at all, to virtual adult learning based on the participant's status as either a virtual or hybrid employee was the potential outcome for this study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Two reviews the framing literature on nine topics in the following order: employee concepts and future direction of XYZ Technology Company, virtualization and employee adaptation, pros and cons of telecommuting, trust, leadership and cultural aspects of a virtual team, employee evolution and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, self-directed learning, and theoretical framework - andragogy.

Employee Concepts and Future Direction of XYZ Technology Company

To understand how XYZ Technology employees learned and executed their duties, exploration of then-current employee adaptation along with virtualization, telecommuting, trust, leadership and application of andragogical concepts, needed to be analyzed. Each topic primarily related back to how adults learned and what was needed to be a self-directed learner. Self-direction was a key component to successful work at XYZ, thus it was explored in this literature review, as well as other andragogical concepts.

Virtualization and Employee Adaptation

The research literature on the virtual work environment related to andragogy was limited. The researcher was able to obtain much information pertaining to primarily the virtual work environment, such as how the adult learner was valued, the e-learning corporate setting, how teaching to learn in the workplace was carried out, and self-directed social learning and individual differences (Consuelo & Barbara, 2005; Rowland-Jones, 2012; Tams, 2008). However, the literature on aligning the two concepts, andragogy and the virtual work environment together, was scant.

Isenberg (2007) conducted a study on how to apply andragogical principles to Internet learning and was one of the closest studies that related to the topic of andragogy and virtual learning for adults. The definition of ‘virtual’ was said to include “significant enhanced effects or actions, physical behavior of non-physical entities, and the supporting use of telecommunications and computing technologies” (Igharia, 1999, p. 64). Telecommunication represented transaction of communication from a distance. Overby (2008), a professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology, extended this definition as “a virtual process is a process which physical interaction between people and/or objects has been removed” (p. 278).

In the past, operating an organization in the traditional manner of physically being located within an office space was the norm. Employees clocked in, clocked out, and advised the managers/upper administration of their whereabouts at all times. Johnson and Levine (2008) stated one of the main focuses of any virtual community was to ensure all parties interacted within the environment together. According to Petkovic, Orelj, and Lukic (2014), “Nowadays, the supreme goal of most organizations is left the same; to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage through technological or social innovation” (p. 227). This allowed for a more flexible environment.

In today’s era, at the time of this writing, several businesses and professional organizations were transitioning to the virtual world. Over the decade previous to this writing there had been extreme advancements rising in telecommunication technology (e.g., Internet, extranet, applications, mobility); therefore, becoming easily accessible and universal (Kanuka, Jugdev, Heller, & West, 2008). “Evidence suggests that several million U.S. workers telecommute (National, 1995, p. 37). The number of telecommuters

continues to increase as technological barriers fall” (as cited in Reinsch, 1997, p. 343). As new generations grow, so will the technological advancements, thus presenting new ways to learn and conduct business.

Adapting to this cultural change could be a challenge and not all companies were in the position to adjust. “Focusing time, energy and precious resources in the right areas can propel organizations past these obstacles and advance their business performance” (Greene, 2012, p. 1). In agreement with the CEO of World Wide Technology, Kavanaugh (2015) stated, in many business models, if you do not adapt to change, you will then be left behind; the concept of ‘Adapt or Die’ applies. This concept was also stated by Grove, Intel Corporation (as cited in Townsend, DeMarie, & Hendrickson, 1998, p. 17). If workers were not prepared in advance, for example in college, this could pose a barrier to the workforce industry (Long & Meglich, 2013). Townsend, DeMarie, and Hendrickson (1998) found the limits of geography, time, and organizational boundaries were enhanced, as well as productivity, flexibility, and collaboration within a virtual workplace.

According to *The Journal of Labor Research*, “The Employment Policy Foundation” research estimated, “that roughly 65% of all jobs are amenable to telecommuting at least on a part-time basis” (as cited in Potter, 2003, p. 73). There were several initial positive and negative reactions that arose when considering the option of telecommuting for employees. The question an entrepreneur should ask is, ‘Does telecommuting fit the culture of the company, employee, and the customer needs in order to continue the successfulness of productivity?’ Technology for remote workers may not be for every company. “Although information technology is hailed as the chief enabler

of virtual teamwork, technology can also be a barrier to effective teamwork” (Karlene, Robey, & Zigurs, 2007, p. 462).

Employers found that for some, learning how to use the new virtual community applications could be a bit of challenge. Learning to embrace new technology could evidently put a strain upon or slow down the training of learning virtually (Nelis, 2014). “The unreliability of technology can deter individuals and simple usability problems can make life difficult for both the trainer and the learner” (Nelis, 2014, p. 9). It was critical that employers had some sort of professional development to facilitate learning in an open environment about their own technological advancements.

A major drawback of becoming a strictly virtualized company included the nemeses of being anti-collaborative. For a company that was strictly interacting remotely, and not interacting face-to-face, it could be missing out on the most personal relationship-building communications among society. Virtual team members must learn how to rebuild social interaction through technology and communication with others (Townsend et al., 1998). Workers who interact and visually see others on a day-to-day basis have more access to unlimited frequencies of communication and, therefore, a better chance of enhancing the social lives of each employee (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976).

“Day to day interaction with other employees in an open common space can help build trustworthy relationships with one another” (Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002, p. 275). “The secondary contact of passing someone in the hall, lunchroom, or entering and leaving work has significantly been impacted by the adoption of telecommunication” (Block, 2014, p. 12). By having the brief social interactions around the workplace,

workers will subconsciously build stronger relationships. It was the unplanned or unscheduled encounters with coworkers that would motivate a positive relationship. “Stimulating the positive impact of the virtual embodiment, research into . . . body language has shown it is important for people to see their body and the bodies of others” (Bray & Konsynski, 2007, p. 20). Conversing and collaborating were key when working in a virtual environment. It was important to learn and know how to use the technology resources at hand, while also maintaining relationships with fellow colleagues.

Although several corporate offices adapted to the virtual world, some companies chose to adapt to a more hybrid advancement. For example, by having a more hybrid environment, it opened the doors to meet face-to-face more often. Face-to-face meetings were initiated to create stronger ever-lasting relationships among coworkers who were normally divided (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). “Several studies of virtual teamwork show that it is difficult for distributed team members with no prior relationships to develop trust” (Karlene et al., 2007, p. 461). This level of virtualization allowed for a more gradually adaptation into the computer-generated environment.

Technology alone could not resolve the issue of virtual environments. “Ubiquitous technology of the virtual/digital world and the preeminence of the business perspective have their grip on us” (Block, 2014, p. 11). People were constantly questioning what technological advancement was culturally right for their own work environment. “While technologies such as web-conferencing are available that allow for some visual interaction, this does not solve all the challenges of working in a virtual team” (Long & Meglich, 2013, p. 8). Per Townsend et al. (1998), virtual teams, linked primarily through advanced computer and telecommunications technologies, provided a

potent response to the challenges associated with today's (at the time of their writing) downsized and lean organizations, and to the resulting geographical dispersion of essential employees (p. 7). Moreover, everyday life as an online employee changed the aspects of work life. For example, Block (2014) specified in the *Organization Development Journal*, the 40-hour work week would be no more, due to the fact that people were accessible at all hours, thanks to technology.

On the contrary, “projects that take advantage of the social aspects of virtual worlds can provide powerful learning experiences and establish lasting connections that are not bound by usual geographic constraints” (Johnson & Levine, 2008, p. 164). Although the electronic connection for many businesses was extremely valuable, it could have its negative effects, primarily with the individual alone. Isolation was a key disadvantage for employees seeking to adopt a strictly virtual environment and is be discussed throughout this research study. However, a discovery made by Fouche (2006) introduced a person’s implications of isolation could massively be reduced when the correct collaboration and teamwork was introduced.

Collaboration was changing heavily in the virtual work environment. The article “Preparing Students to Collaborate in the Virtual Work World” (Long & Meglich, 2013) stated, “The impact of advancing technologies, the expanding geographic reach of many organizations, the growing number of remote workers, and the increased reliance on teams lead to workplaces where workers will at some point collaborate with unseen colleagues” (p. 7). Due to the rapidly growing new technological advancements amongst our society, most companies should be able to overcome this challenge. However, technology was an obstacle for many human beings. Research in the past illustrated that

almost 90% of corporate virtual worlds failed within 18 months (Gartner Group, 2008, p. 1).

“Employees collaborate via virtual media to share information, build social networks, create new ideas, and make decisions” (Long & Meglich, 2013, p. 6). According to research conducted in 2010, “Employees with a diminished presence in the office and an increased reliance on technology may experience lower levels of appropriate communication, accurate information sharing, discussion quality, and communication richness” (Lowry, Roberts, Romano, Cheney, & Hightower, 2006, p. 633). By utilizing only a virtual work environment, some users could feel secluded and detached from the reality of the workplace. On the other hand, some companies/employees felt that if the right tools and virtualization software was within the work environment, employees should experience no problem by being collaborative in cyberspace. According to researchers who studied virtual environments, “leaders should be accessible and responsive, keep confidences, communicate openly and frequently, and be honest, consistent, and predictable, doing what he/she says he/she will do” (Short, 2014, p.1017). “It is through social interaction that one’s confidence in the virtual world is reinforced, and through which the virtual world’s cultural norms for respect and achievement are communicated” (Johnson & Levine, 2008, p. 168). Building new relationships within the virtual community was not an easy task. Paoli and Ropo (2015) reported that the virtual workplace environment tended to make employees more focused on the day-to-day tasks, rather than realize the importance of building positive everlasting relationships with team members.

Pros and Cons of Telecommuting

Global pressures and the rapid escalation in the pace of change entailed the recognition “that new models of adaptation are required on the part of business organizations themselves and in their methods of learning” (Solomon & Templer, 1993, p. 21). Telecommuting was “performing job-related work at a site away from the office, then electronically transferring the results to the office or to another location” (Cross & Raizman, 1986, pp. 3-4). Fitzer (1997) stated, “Telework is an arrangement in which employees perform their regular work at a site other than the ordinary workplace, supported by technological connections” (p. 65). Telecommuting was becoming more and more acceptable in society. “The impact of telecommuting has been empirically evaluated — it seems to boost productivity, decrease absenteeism, and increase retention” (Noonan & Glass, 2012, p. 38). The benefits found among many researchers included highly adaptable strong communication, self-motivation, comfort with solitude, flexibility to allow workers to better balance both their work and home responsibilities, employee and employer trustworthiness, lower costs for both employer and employee, improved resource utilization, significantly more positive attitudes within the workplace, ability to attract and retain employees, saving cost and time on commute, attracting a young workforce, employees can escape workplace interaction, increase in productivity, high globalization (Meinert, 2011; Mowshowitz 1997; Nardi & Whittaker, 2002; Potter, 2003; Solomon & Templer, 1993).

“Virtual collaboration allows more individuals to contribute to projects and work processes thereby increasing group diversity” (Long & Meglich, 2013, p. 6). Upholding business-to-business relations, open communication lines, and having complete

cooperation coordination were just a few major benefits of telecommuting (Petkovic, Orelj, & Lukic, 2014). Oproiu and Chiciooreanu (2012) acknowledged other benefits in the cyber environment, such as encouraging one-on-one contact and cooperation, active learning, and immediate feedback and allowed for different learning styles virtually (p. 396). However, if management poorly executed telecommuting, it would create ambiguity throughout the industry, resulting in underperformance and an unfulfilled mission (Potter, 2003).

Even though there were several foreseen benefits on why employers should implement telecommuting, there was also a wide range of disadvantages that should be considered. The cons implemented by telecommuting had not gone unnoted. Some common challenges posed by research state, lack of trust, insufficient collaboration, cultural repercussions within the work environment, new ways of hiring, training and evaluating employees, new ways for employees to learn, new lines of communication, less chance of promotion because employees will be 'invisible' due to working at home, harder to build relationships, decrease in social interaction, computer literacy issues, elimination of personal interaction, attitudes of people, broadband issues, and lack of visibility, just to name a few (Nelis, 2014; Meinert, 2011; Potter, 2003; Solomon & Templer, 1993).

In addition to the above-mentioned disadvantages of the virtual work environment, work interruption was another contributing factor. Intrusions, breaks, distractions, and discrepancies could all be interpreted into so-called disruptions (Jett & George, 2003). "It has been suggested that the potential for interruptions is greatly increased through technology delivered instruction" (Nelis, 2014, p. 10). Furthermore,

workers were easily distracted when trying to complete a certain task. Unexpected personal visits or phone calls were just a couple of prime examples of intrusions that may happen while working virtually (Jett & George, 2003). “In addition, unexpected conversations, telephone calls, e-mails, and background noise may inhibit employees’ ability to be totally involved in the task at hand” (Jett & George, 2003, p. 340).

Another hindrance to telecommuting or working remotely was measuring employees’ hours. According to Noonan and Glass (2012), “telecommuters were significantly less likely to work a regular schedule and were more likely to work overtime, regardless of how overtime is defined” (p. 40). This presented the question of, should remote employees be measured strictly on how many hours they work? Or should it be based on a scale that is more directed toward performance (Wood, 2015, p. 4)? Per Sproull and Faraj (1997), “There are three distinct differences between face-to-face and virtual environments that include the following: (a) physical location is irrelevant for participation, (b) participants are almost always seen as invisible, (c) costs are extremely lower” (p. 39).

Trust

Trust was a key fundamental aspect in any relationship. In most cases seeing was knowing, thus leading to the foundation of trust between individuals. Management must be able to extend trust completely to all employees. “The global marketplace has become both more competitive and more depends on employees’ creativity, commitment, and initiative to maintain a strategic advantage” (Caldwell, Hayes, & Long, 2010, p. 497). Giving the nature of online environments, without prompts of face-to-face interaction,

trust could be eliminated from any relationship if not established up front (Ridings et al., 2002).

The added notation distinguished in a person's voice and face-to-face interaction that was passed by variations in the signals, apparel, attitude, body language, and other cues was absent (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991). "Unless trust permeates all facets of an organization, productivity will fall, creativity will decrease, and stress will abound" (Bader & Liljenstrand, 2003, p. 3). When establishing trust in a work environment, having the leadership and development tools were imperative. Without it, the trust would never be established.

In a trusting environment, people tended to be more willing to share their own opinions openly, without the doubt of judgment. In fact, "as a result, they will share knowledge . . . and this will eventually lead to virtual team effectiveness" (Pangil & Joon, 2014, p. 93). Constant interaction between others in the virtual environment with a debate about messages and conversations would help establish trust within the cyber community (Ridings et al., 2002). In addition, reciprocity was held at its highest when facilitated in a virtual environment. For example, if a person posted a comment in a virtual community and no one responded or shows interest to what was posted, then trust would not develop within that community (Ridings et al., 2002). When employees attacked the task at hand together and concisely, with clear and open communication, the trust would arise (Petkovic et al., 2014).

Per Covey, co-founder and CEO of CoveyLink Worldwide, in the book, *The Speed of Trust* (Covey & Merrill, 2006), there was one thing that was common to every individual, relationship, team, family organization, nation, economy, and civilization

throughout the world — one thing in which, if removed, would destroy the most powerful government, the most successful business, the most thriving economy, the most influential leadership, the greatest friendship, the strongest character, the deepest love. That one thing was trust (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. 1).

One of the biggest challenges companies encountered when adapting a virtual team was trust (Pangil & Joon, 2014, p. 92). “Characteristics of virtual communities may hinder trust development, such as the lack of face-to-face contact and visual cues” (Ridings et al., 2002, p. 275). These characteristics were highly important, especially in the virtual community. “The virtual world, in fact, works against trust and relatedness with surveillance capacity” (Block, 2014, p. 12). As mentioned by Short (2014) in the *British Journal of Educational Technology*, “Trust is increasingly recognized as important to both business and education, and it is the focus of increasing attention in relation to the virtual environment” (p. 1014).

Focusing solely on technology would not bring success to an organization; trust must be facilitated. Virtual team growth and trust creation were conquered by multiple personal dynamics and reliant on social connections intermediated by a supercomputer mainframe (Daft & Lengel, 1984). The lack of trust affected results, stressing that formation and growth were difficult in virtual teams (Short, 2014, p. 1016). In agreement with Short, Johnson and Levine (2008) noted in most virtual communities, a common concern shared among most upon entering this new world was trust (p. 164).

Working in virtual team environments could create both a strenuous building relationship and everlasting trust (Long & Meglich, 2013). Setting clear goals and expectations on the initial meet and greet would enhance results. Interaction in a team

environment right from the start would help grow engagement of trust amongst each other. In 1986, founder of TQM emphasized that “organization leaders needed to demonstrate their personal competence at managing resources and making effective decisions if they hoped to be perceived as trustworthy” (Caldwell et al., 2010, p. 499).

In the New York Times novel, *The Speed of Trust*, Covey and Merrill (2006) elaborated on the influence trust had in both the business and personal world of each individual by basing reflections on Covey’s (1989, 2004, 2013) *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. “As we move rapidly into an even more transparent interdependent global reality, trust is more career critical than it has ever been” (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. xxv). Furthermore, it was important to understand Covey’s Five Waves of Trust model. This tool was used to present how trust should be utilized in people’s daily lives. Self-trust, relationship trust, organization trust, market trust, and societal trust were the key influences on how to start building high trust within an organization (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. 41).

Gaining trust virtually could be a bit of a challenge in today’s era, at the time of this writing. “Trust is increasingly recognized as important in both business and education and is the focus of increasing attention in relation to the virtual environment” (Short, 2014, p. 1016). Most people felt that having that face-to-face interaction with others was the only way to gain trust with one another. Distance working/learning had caused somewhat of a hindrance to establishing trust within a cyber environment. Although certain technological tools and advancements were implemented in the virtual world, it still might not be enough to maintain a healthy trust status quo. Most companies tried to prevent the virtual trust debacle by instating some sort of core value standard and

mission statement. For example, XYZ Technology Company had the core values and also implemented its management and leadership initiatives. These included eight key business concepts, job performance matrices, and coaching tools. Each of these initiatives aligned directly back to the core values.

Leadership and Cultural Aspects of a Virtual Team

Leadership was another essential key that should be applied when building a virtual team. Having managers and key executives invest in their employees was an extremely clever approach and was used by many successful firms, at the time of this writing (Garfinkle, 2017). To be able to provide the most efficient Internet learning concept to learners, leaders must be able to understand, innovate, and continually support the e-learning concept (Waight & Stewart, 2005). Being open and honest with the team leader using the virtual lines of communication was a must.

Apparently, referring to Reinsch (1997), bodily separation from the main place of work could potentially deteriorate relationships with colleagues and executives. “Daily communication between a team leader and individual team members is the glue that holds a virtual team together” (Blaise, Erich, & Phillip, 2006, p. 429). Having a relationship with a team leader was imperative in the virtual world. Partaking in a great social and working relationship with a manager could positively influence task competence, provide a more trusting work environment concerning employee performance and goals, and create lower levels of disclosure between manager and employee (Reinsch, 1997). “The manager can usually assume that informal communication will provide employees with information about tasks and goals; the same

manager may also receive information about workers through informal channels” (Kraut, 1987, p. 131).

According to Ross (2008), setting up an initial face-to-face meeting with potential virtual employees to go over goals and key expectations was critical. These meetings should not only be with leadership but with the entire team, as well. Conducting team meetings for all virtual and hybrid employees together improved the ability for teammates to understand each other’s learning and communication styles (Ross, 2008). Zander, Mockaitis, and Butler (2012) said maintaining communication, building relationships, and handling confrontation were critical in the virtual environment. Leaders that “connect distant members, find ways in which individuals can be associated with others within the organization and bond employees via means of communication, can structurally lead to a feeling of belonging” (Petkovic et al., 2014, p. 230).

Managers needed to learn to embrace the change of business and how it adapted to a telecommuting culture. “Thus, one ingredient that is needed if telecommuting is to work is that managers need to shift from being enforcers to managing by results” (Potter, 2003, p. 77). Leaders must be viewed as trustworthy individuals who employees feel they can confide in and rely on, not someone who tells them how to conduct their duties.

Leadership performed at any level within the company set leadership apart from management. According to Khan and Gorard (2012), to be an effective leader at the lower level, the leader's primary goal was to be an effective motivator above anything else. Communication was a necessity at all levels throughout the organization because as a result, it would bring a positive impact as a whole (Khan & Gorard, 2012).

Several different aspects of one's cultural background needed to be taken into consideration when trying to assess a successful virtual team. "Culture is not a characteristic of individuals; it encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 43). Time, language, communication, race and ethnicity, nationality, morals, and values were just a few effects of cultural diversity on a virtual team (Staples & Zhao, 2006). Understanding the personal background and persona of each team member was vital when trying to create relationships in the virtual world. "Virtual team members must learn new ways to express themselves and to understand others in an environment with a diminished sense of presence" (Townsend et al., 1998, p. 23).

A litany of different viewpoints and background knowledge could help provide new and exciting information to the virtual team. "Leaders' thoughts and skills are manifested in actions, structures, and processes that enhance or impede change, further strengthening the linkage between their behaviors and effectiveness in implementing change" (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009, p. 78). An extensive amount of compelling ideas and information would help stimulate critical thinking skills throughout the team (Staples & Zhao, 2006). Benefits of having a "global virtual teams provide access to wider pools of talent and promote internal competition, improve quality and reduce cost" (Gurung & Prater, 2006, p. 24). Telecommunication technology increased the ability to acquire teams located around the world (Brandt, England, & Ward, 2011).

Global collaborative virtual environments presented new tools and applications, solved problems faster, and provided a vast idea of how the business runs. This, in turn, would create an initiative for cultural acceptance in the team environment. For example,

Pendergast and Hayne (1999) discovered that creative thinking in virtual teams improved the overall outcome, rather than face-to-face brainstorming; this, in turn, made innovation rise. However, managing a culturally diverse team could pose a challenge for management in some instances. For instance, cultural factors, such as geographic location and linguistics could be an intimidating mission for one to take on (Ebert & Neve, 2001). “Cultural and language differences become magnified, as do conflicts; it is much easier to hide errors and problems, sweep misunderstandings under the rug, and make erroneous assumptions when you are communicating via phone and e-mail rather than in person” (Ross, 2008, p. 1).

Furthermore, time management could be both looked at as an advantage and as a challenge in the virtual world. “On one hand it may add more working hours . . . on the other hand it may add problems in coordinating meetings” (Gurung & Prater, 2006, p. 30). According to Potter (2003), “managers are more likely not to give telecommuters the same promotions and performance reviews as employees who remain strictly in the office” (p. 77). This indicated that managers were more focused on the socialization aspect of the workplace.

One process utilized by several leaders was coaching. Gilley and Boughton (1996) emphasized that relationships could be built when the process of coaching was implemented in improving performance through employee development, counseling, conflict, and mentoring. Coaching provided the concept of feedback and open communication between both employees and management. Feedback was information that linked observations and behaviors to how it impacted others (Handy, 2016).

“Understanding goal-oriented, self-directed and active linking between new knowledge and life experience as in adult learning, coaching addresses an individual’s need to know and readiness to learn” (Griffiths, 2005, p. 55). Performance coaching was the improved way of how managers should manage. “It is about developing the full potential of employees, helping to identify and grow the personality and performance strengths” (Gilley & Boughton, 1996, p. 1).

Ensuring that this change was implemented correctly required direct precise communication between the employee and the manager. “Leading change requires the use of a diverse set of communication techniques to deliver appropriate messages, solicit-feedback, create readiness for change . . . and motivate recipients to act” (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 79). By initiating the one-on-one challenge of coaching in a business situation, it allowed for the opportunity to discover more about the employee’s work life and builds a trusting relationship. For example, “coaching provides the manager with the opportunity to explore the nature and consequences of change before they embark on it” (Angelique, 2007, p. 283). However, it was the coach’s/manager’s job to ensure that all employees were proactively involved in understanding what the change was and how they were going to be affected by it (Griffiths, 2005, p. 56).

Coaching for success in a business required all parties to be consciously aware of one another’s feelings and emotions. Great coaches/leaders should know their own people. For example, they should know their own skills, limitations, potential, and aspirations. A coaching tool presented by Handy (2016) at XYZ Technology Company signified the right way to approach a conversation, conflict, or problem. This collaborative interactive process started with identifying the problem, briefly explaining

the situation, discussing what both parties think, agreeing on a solution together, and then finally acting and executing the outcome (Handy, 2016). In agreement with Handy, Webb (2003) realized the detailed importance of facilitating the role of coaching in the workplace.

It was important to be very specific when encountering a problem, so neither party was ambiguous about what was being discussed. Listening to understand and comprehend a situation allowed for the individual to reduce defensiveness, defuse emotional exchanges, promote self-esteem solving, and help enable people to become more engaged in productive problem solving (Handy, 2016). “A crucial benefit of coaching is that it provides the coachee with the opportunity to learn through action” (Angelique, 2007, p. 283). Furthermore, it was also important to understand that any one person could be the coach or implement the coaching. To facilitate a culture of coaching and teamwork required openness to receive and willingness to provide feedback on all levels (Handy, 2016). “A coaching culture expands coaching to a broader scope, impacting the entire organizational structure and energizing all employees from top to bottom and laterally” (Greene, 2012, p. 1).

Providing leaders with the right foundational tools for developing a coaching mindset and skill set was a necessity in any organization (Handy, 2016). “Smart managers recognize the importance of cultivating their top talent by providing leadership development coaching at all levels of the organization” (Garfinkle, 2017, p. 1). In addition, great coaches knew their people and created environments that allowed individuals to thrive and grow. Effective and efficient one-on-one coaching could directly influence the ability of an employee’s performance and enhance his or her

chances of retention (Greene, 2012). Imitating coaching in the work environment helped create a safe haven between employees and leaders. Coaching offered the ability for employees to be more knowledgeable and implement better decision making throughout the organization (Angelique, 2007). “By being sincere and giving real-time reinforcement, a coach demonstrates genuine concern for the person’s well-being and feedback is received more readily” (Handy, 2016, p. 17). Coaching opportunities came up in everyday activities and leaders should make coaching part of their daily agenda.

Leaders should also be aware of any uncertainty avoidance that may be presented in the group. According to Hofstede (1980), uncertainty avoidance occurred when a society was apprehensive about uncertainty or ambiguity. When a team actively tried to avoid certain situations, this presented a high level of anxiety throughout the team. “Individuals in these cultures prefer stability in their lives and careers” (Baker & Carson, 2011, p. 128). Furthermore, if the business culture was afraid of taking risks, and was at a stagnate level of success, then the ability to adapt to change was low and so was the innovative style of the company (Baker & Carson, 2011).

Employee Evolution and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

“Education is an activity undertaken or initiated by one or more agents that are designed to effect changes in the knowledge, skill, and attitudes of individuals, groups, or communities” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 10). The traditional style of learning in schools/universities had not adapted to change much over the last 200 years. Young adults continued to have to be present in a conventional classroom setting. People who took action in wanting to explore their own learning needs, goals, resourcing, implementation, and evaluation had the potential to have a self-directed learning style

(Knowles, 1975). “Goal setting implies the personal commitment of the learner and is an integral part of learning in life” (Collins, 2009, p. 615). An andragogical model operated on the premises that, when teaching adults, the instructor should be utilizing different teaching methods and practices than pedagogical (Minter, 2011, p. 9). High schools, colleges, and universities struggled to adapt over the years into the adult teaching method of andragogy. Learning was a necessity throughout a person’s lifetime in order to acclimate to life’s unforeseen conditions (Galbraith & Fouch, 2007). In today’s modern society, at the time of this writing, people of all statuses had the capability to pursue and be successful in both a personal and professional manner. Having the right resources and online learning tools could convey an interest in how and what individuals learned.

“Workers with a high self-directed learning orientation do not allow their learning to be held back by barriers and in turn are better able to cope with job demands” (Raemdonck, Gijbels, & Van Groen, 2014, p. 200). It was important to view students in the adult education community and the employees in the workplace as equals. Adult partnerships were critical for learning and growing in both society and the workplace.

“Communication regarding instructional content and methods allows students to become partners in the management education process rather than passive receptors” (Forrest & Peterson, 2006, p. 117). In addition, this emphasized the necessity of equality in the business. It was also important to take into consideration how each individual learned.

Everyone learned and perceived differently. In reference to Schleicher (2017), a statistician and researcher in the educational field, the education system had not improved much at all over the past century and primarily needed to start encouraging a better belief, effort, and interest in order to help individuals succeed. According to Keefe (1979), each

person had unique educational styles of learning that fell under three following concepts: cognitive, psychological, and effective. These concepts indicated how each person interpreted the information given to them. Visual, vocal, written, and the hands-on approaches were the most common techniques to learn. Table 1 displays some examples of each learning style.

Table 1

Learning Styles and Examples of Each

Visual	Vocal	Written	Hands-On
Pictures	Discussions	Textbook	Modeling
Posters	Debates	Readings	Role Play
Slides	Audio	Handouts	Guest Lectures
PowerPoint	Arguments	Essays	Demonstrations
Textbooks	Seminars	Dictionaries	Real Life Experiences

Note. Reprinted from *Student learning styles: Diagnosing and prescribing programs* by James Keefe, retrieved from Copyright 2010 by National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Identifying the differences in how each adult learned was crucial in order to “optimize instructional design and strategies, maximize learning opportunities for both online and virtual programs and courses, and address their diverse needs for learning” (Keefe, 1979, p. 114). Without this understanding, it was likely the facilitator would not connect or relate the information in a manner for the learner to understand. An intuitive innovative example of the educational game changer was the concept of an online learner presented by Khan (2017). Khan Academy provided learning online through YouTube sessions, on such topics as math and science, and functioned as a virtual classroom. Then when the class was held the next day, students reconvened to discuss problems or issues they were having, while doing their online homework assignments in class with the

teacher and classmates to help (Khan, 2017). This could also help the facilitator point out what issues they needed to address as the leader in the educational setting. This concept of ‘flipping the classroom’ (learn the lesson at home and do homework together in class) allowed for people to collaborate and interact, making the knowledge more easily accessible, practice at their levels of development and discuss together competency-based learning (Khan, 2017). Learning styles were presented in many different forms — learning style choice was imperative when trying to reach the adult learner and prepare individuals for society.

Fatehi (1996) stated, “Most management literature on motivation is psychologically oriented and is based on psychological models developed and tested almost exclusively in the United States” (p. 238). Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs demonstrated an excellent example of the basic needs of everyone in the business world. These needs were not based on where each person was located but was more of a common aspect of life that everyone could relate to. This hierarchy ranked each person’s needs from lowest to highest. Maslow (1943) on the seven needs that were known as the hierarchy of needs starting from lowest to highest included, physiological, safety and security, love and belongingness, self-worth and self-esteem, need to know, aesthetic needs, and self-actualization needs (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs was presented from high to low starting with deficiency needs to growth needs. The figure and note were each adapted from Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

This is a model for people of all races, backgrounds, and cultures. According to Hofstede (1980), "Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs postulates that a higher need will become active only if the lower needs are sufficiently satisfied" (p. 53). Maslow's (1943) lower needs pertained mostly to physiological, security, and social skills, whereas the higher level of needs exemplified esteem and self-actualization. Depending on one's personal background and values, importance would vary. According to Kimberly (2004), "it may be that people who emphasize these lower level needs over

higher-level needs can be motivated to perform as those reaching for self-actualization” (p. 28). Overcoming the realization that one’s talent or fulfillment has been achieved was the primary goal of reaching self-actualization.

In terms of a collectivist culture or virtual team environment, each individual member could exemplify Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, because the primary concern was looking out for the well-being of other immediate team members (Patrick & Cianci, 2003). Hofstede (1980) stated that a collectivist society was a group of people that were closely engaged with other parties within the group. It was important to discover what most people strived for in a team and what motivated them. For example, the most basic physiological need Maslow (1943) presented was formed of food, water, and shelter; without these no human being could survive. So once the individual had those necessities, what else did they need to succeed? Once those needs were met, the list continued by level of importance until all needs were met. According to Patrick & Cianci (2003), the development of relationships should be the first task that an organization tackles. Motivation was driven by each of these needs and as each was achieved the object was to maximize the potential of each individual. According to Henry (2011), Knowles (1973) strived to preserve an outstanding concept of individual validity, learn and demonstrate roles from others, and be ‘open and honest’ when expressing his viewpoints.

To do so, each team member must understand each member’s cultural background. Trompenaars (1993) suggested that people must understand the cultural differences between ‘global’ cultures versus ‘local’ cultures. By establishing these needs, each individual would find closure and stability in a comfortable work environment.

Adults were motivated to learn as growing individuals, whether it was professionally or socially. These types of individuals strived to learn from everyday situations, opportunities, conflicts, and experiences countless during their lifespan (Ghost Bear, 2012). This directly related to the andragogical approach to how adults learn. Moreover, andragogy was broadly defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles et al, 1998). According to Tough (1971), adults were inspired to learn by inquisitiveness, high level of interest, and pleasure. As adults grew, so did their ability to learn. Tough (1982) had a firm belief that teachers of change and willingness to learn could “help people see the effectiveness of their own natural change process” (p. 99). By implementing this need to change, the learner should become more aware of the necessity for this change. “A protocol that allows a facilitator to tailor an Internet learning experience to unique characteristics of the learner may improve learning” (Isenberg, 2007, p. 19). This was how the learner would optimize his or her own learning.

Self-Directed Learning

It was important to discuss the aspect of self-direct learning, one of the six assumptions of the characteristics of adult learners created by Knowles (1980, 1995), when incorporating one’s ability to learn as an employee in the business community. Benjamin Franklin emphasized the significance of being a self-directed individual and this directed him to the discovery of public libraries (as cited in Smith, 1982). “Self-directed learning, which is an individual learning approach where learners plan their own learning experiences, implement their own plans and evaluate their own learning experiences” (Firat, Sakar, & Yurdakul, 2016, p. 32). Tough (1971) elaborated that acquiring ‘knowledge and skill’ required improving a desire to learn, increased appealing

interests, obtaining a better understanding, open mindfulness, and cognitive and physical skills, along with capabilities and performance. Knowles (1975) described self-directed learning, as "a process in which individuals take the initiative without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and evaluating learning outcomes" (p. 18). The realization that one's goals could aspire amplified the outcome or reward (Collins, 2009).

For adult learners, there were several open-ended theories about how to facilitate the andragogy learning process. As mentioned by Tams (2008), "instead of relying on formal training and guidelines, people need to develop their abilities through the ongoing engagement with their task and social environment" (p. 196). Present theories/models provided an outline "which contributes something to our understanding of how adults learn" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 271). Knowles' (1980) theory had come under the most severe attack for its emphasis on the individual learner as free, autonomous, and in control of his or her learning. "Workers with a self-directed learning orientation discover learning opportunities, take the initiative to learn, and will persevere in their attempts to learn" (Raemdonck et al., 2014, p. 192). The meaning of being self-directed, according to Knowles (1984b), included his absolute understanding of having the need of adults to be dynamically involved in the choices that directly affected them as they grew and matured. This type of self-directed learning was displayed within the workplace. For example, "many businesses today provide their own extranet where employees have access to company policies, events, and activities as well as learning that can be shared through chat rooms and emails" (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 40).

Having these kinds of resources was pertinent when implementing the concept of self-directed learning style into the work environment. According to Firat, Sakar, and Yurdakul (2016), it was based on having the benefits of e-learning tools and applications, self-learning independent individuals who now had their own capabilities to expand their knowledge, and resources at their own control. “Self-determined learning is virtually a daily event as people decide what to read, listen to, and watch; people also self-regulate their frequency, duration, and responses to their individual interactions with media and information” (Nadelson et al., 2016, p. 220). Media resources must not be excluded when it comes to self-directed learning for adult learners. Understanding what resources adults utilized, how factual the information was, and the levels of trust in the sources were highly important (Nadelson et al., 2016).

When the andragogical concepts were used as the focus of learning, the instructor became known as the ‘transmitter of knowledge’ rather than evaluator (Taylor & Kroth, 2009). “When adults teach and learn in one another’s company, they find themselves engaged in a challenging, passionate, and creative activity” (Brookfield, 1986, p. 1). Becoming a self-directed learner in the business world, could and would further the benefit of both the employee and the business.

Theoretical Framework - Andragogy

Andragogy as a theoretical framework was vast and complex; therefore, andragogy’s six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980, 1995) and eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995) were chosen as the conceptual framework for this study (see #5 definition of terms). Isenberg (2007) conducted a study of applying andragogical principles to Internet learning for adults. In addition, Osborn

(1999) acknowledged distance learning displayed a critical element facilitating andragogy. The literature reviewed in this section provides an overview of the research literature that is relevant to this study.

Preparing young adults entering in the workforce was the primary goal of a college or university so they must be able to adapt to the change of the technological advancements in the education field. Per Forrest and Peterson (2006) from Herford College, University of Oxford, “The field of management education has responded to such changes with increasingly dynamic instructional strategies and methods that seek to better prepare individuals for the business world” (p. 113). Andragogic concepts and theories helped improve how adults learned and obtained information. Knowles (1980) said, “Methods and techniques, which involved the individual most deeply in self-directed inquiry will produce the greatest learning” (p. 56). Becoming educated on how people learn and discovering new ways to reach individuals was critical when leading a successful workplace.

“Adult learners are serious learners; they learn differently from children and have different reasons for learning” (Knowles et al., 1998, p. 24). As a result, Knowles (1984a) introduced a new theory of learning called Andragogy. The term andragogy dated back to the 19th century in Europe (Forrest & Peterson, 2006, p. 114). Andragogy, as defined by Knowles (1984a), was a theory based on the mental cognition of being an adult, and implied a person could only conquer adulthood when they arrived at a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives, of being self-directing. Knowles (1980) originally defined andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 43). The opposite of andragogy is pedagogy, “the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles,

1980, p.43). Pedagogy emphasized the importance of a child's educational growth and aspirations by expressing themselves (Kim, 2015). This in no way correlated with andragogy and its values. "Adult learners who have been given a 'second chance' at education might be more motivated to learn than children . . . because they will be able to draw a connection between the material discussed and their own lives" (Mcgrath, 2009, p. 100).

Andragogic learning styles elaborated on the vital learning style of adult learners and were more problem positioned than content positioned (Galbraith & Fouch, 2007). In Knowles' (1980, 1984a) own opinion, the most crucial learning practices were those that were cooperative between the teacher and the learner and included several available resources. "Considering the characteristics of adult learners along with self-learning and andragogy, it could be concluded that they would like to be educated in relation to real life, which is self-directed, including participation, and based on their own life experiences" (Firat et al., 2016, p. 33). To incorporate these learning experiences, Knowles (1980, 1984a), demonstrated the six andragogical assumptions followed by the eight key business concepts. The six assumptions of the characteristics of adult learners were as follows: self-directedness, bring a prosperity of experience to the educational setting, demonstrate a readiness to learn, problem-centered in their learning, best motivated by internal factors, and have a 'need to know' incentive to want to learn something (Knowles, 1980, 1995).

In reference to Knowles (1980, 1995), Table 2 demonstrates the six assumptions and an andragogical approach that attends to the assumptions.

Table 2

The Six Assumptions of Andragogy

Six Assumptions	Andragogical Approach
The Need to Know	Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it
The Learner's Self Concept	Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. Once they have arrived at that self-concept they develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction.
The Role of the Learner's Experience	Adults come into educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youths
Readiness to Learn	Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situation
Orientation to Learning	In contrast to children's and youths' subject-centered orientation to learning (at least in school), adults are life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning
Motivation	While adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, and the like), the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life and the like) (Knowles, 1980, pp. 57-63)

According to Isenberg (2007), these assumptions could and would help facilitate a better understanding of what was needed when implementing an Internet learning experience. Within the proposition of andragogy, the adult learner becomes self-actualized with essential motivation toward achievement and the development to take on a certain task or problem (Knowles, 1980). Furthermore, McGrath (2009) elaborated, "Adult learners need to know why they are learning new knowledge before they are willing to participate" (p. 99). According to Galbraith and Fouch (2007), participants in

the learning process should serve as facilitators, accumulate life experiences into learning, structure learning around primary goals, be practical so learners could include reasoning from their own experiences, and incorporate respect for all adult learners (p. 36). By having real world experiences, adult learners could relate to, learners would be more interested and willing to learn.

Initially, Knowles (1973) described the andragogy process model as incorporating seven elements. Later, Knowles (1995) added an additional element that precluded the original seven. Knowles (1980) acknowledged that educators should be expected to reach full prosperity in adult education by implementing these eight process elements. In Knowles' (1973, 1995) development model for the elements, he proposed the following: (a) prepare the learner appropriately, (b) establish a climate setting relative to learning, (c) implement mutual planning, (d) understand the need for learning, (e) format a setting of objectives, (f) design and implement learning plans, (g) relate these learning experiences with the right materials and resources, and (h) evaluate the outcomes of the learner (p. 102).

Table 3 illustrates these elements and how they aligned with the andragogy concept, according to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005). These eight elements focus on the 'process design' which is the primary basis for andragogy instead of "content design". The implementation of these eight andragogical process elements and six assumptions could be successfully utilized as part of an appropriate instruction tool used to facilitate adult learning (Brookfield, 1986).

Table 3

Eight Process Elements and Associated Andragogical Approach

Process Elements of Andragogy	Andragogical Approach
Preparing Learners	Offer Information
	Incorporate Involvement
	Embrace Reality
	Ponder Content
	Calm, Trusting
	Provide Mutual Respect
	Warm and Inviting
	Collaborative and Supportive
Climate	Openness and authenticity
Planning	The mechanism for mutual planning by learners and facilitator
Diagnosis of Needs	By mutual assessment
Setting of Objectives	By mutual negotiation
Designing Learning Plans	Sequenced by readiness Problem units
Learning Activities	Experiential techniques (inquiry)
Evaluation	Mutual re-diagnosis of needs
	Mutual measurement of program

Note. Reprinted from Knowles, Holton, & Swanson (2005).

According to Knowles et al. (1998), learning how to learn for the adult learner involved an explanation for proactive and reactive learning, implementing a short background experience, and facilitating a mini project, which demonstrated the use of proactive learning (p. 53). Moreover, Collins (2009) specified that one's potential and expansion for learning to learn must stem from having an applicable knowledge base to acquire more information.

In addition to Knowles' (1973, 1975, 1990, 1995) six assumptions and eight key business concepts, a learner must be able to adapt and stay active in wanting to learn.

“Lifelong learning is now recognized by educators, governing bodies, accreditation

organizations, certification boards, employers, third-party payers, and the general public as one of the most important competencies that people possess” (Collins, 2009, p. 613). Tough (1982) believed that initiating change in one’s lifestyle was a normal process of learning and would aid in a successful outcome. In research completed by Ghost Bear (2012), the processes of “learning in formal educational settings differ dramatically from real-life learning” (p. 29). For example, learners in an education setting usually liked to deal with the task at hand, unlike the real-life learner who had unsuspecting turns and twists that affected the process of how one learns. A lifelong learner must be continuously learning, have an excellent support system, be self-directed, have the ability to facilitate their own skills and knowledge, and be able to apply them properly to the obstacle being worked (Collins, 2009).

Summary

Understanding the background of andragogy, pros and cons of telecommuting, trust and leadership aspects, employee evolution and XYZ company business strategies, and having the ability to relate them to the eight process elements and six assumptions, was the primary focus of this research opportunity. Chapter Two explored how virtual learning influenced culture and the way business had been conducted. Understanding how individuals continually learned through self-directed learning was also analyzed. It was important to understand that each individual learns differently, based on his or her background, culture, knowledge, and past experiences.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The first purpose for this study was to explore the relationship, if any, between andragogy, as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner and the eight process elements of learning, and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live by the XYZ Technology Company's core values. By cultivating the purpose of this study, another relevant purpose discovered was to investigate more about the personal perceptions and experiences of employees and to answer the following research question: Can the self-directed concept of andragogy be applied to both virtual/hybrid employees working within XYZ company?

The second purpose was to seek parallels and differences, if any, between the two groups of participants, related to (a) the extent of telecommuting (hybrid versus virtual) and (b) the extent of andragogy application in an employee's perceived ability to live the company's core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity.

This study was strictly qualitative in nature using demographic surveys, interviews, and focus groups to collect participants' perceptions, and thus, answer the research questions. The subjects chosen for this study included individuals who were employed as both virtual and hybrid employees at XYZ Technology Company. XYZ Technology Company was viewed as one of the most 'well-liked' companies in the nation and people found value in the culture it portrayed and the trust it offered to its employees. According to one employee, "XYZ Technology Company is one of the best companies to work for because of all the benefits it provides which in turn creates a profitable growth company which is also a great place to work" (M. Moriarty, personal

communication, September 12, 2017). Working from home was one of the many benefits XYZ Company offered to its employees. This privilege was seen as a benefit for both the employee and corporation. The benefit allowed the employee to be satisfied and happy, while creating a work environment that provided longevity and job security. This advantage suggested that over a period of timing, meaning 90 days, six months, or a year after employment, employees were given the privilege to work from home. This depended on the employee's manager, team environment, employee knowledge, and well-being, in order to be given the opportunity to be placed in the virtual/hybrid work environment.

Not all XYZ employees were given the privilege to work from home and not all employees were hybrid or virtual employees. There were two instances where an employee might become a remote/virtual employee (a) an employee was hired remotely or (b) an employee was hired as a regular employee but had to move away, due to certain circumstances within the family. All participants were selected from the following business groups: Business Operations, Finance, and Information Technology. These groups of individuals were separated into two groups of participants (a) hybrid employees, who conduct 50% of their work on campus and, with the other 50%, collaborated off-site, and (b) strictly virtual (remote) employees that conducted 100% of their work off campus. The hybrid employees operated in both the virtual and physical environments. These individuals correlated their work by spending 50% of their time in the office and 50% offsite. The virtual employees strictly worked off-site, meaning they were never physically on campus working. "In virtual communities, people typically do not know one another and do not expect to meet face-to-face" (Yan, Zah, & Yan, 2014, p.

382). Some virtual participants never physically met others on campus; yet worked together in the virtual world. “People converge in virtual communit[ies] due to their common interests, goals or practices” (Yan et al., 2014, p. 382). All participants were chosen for this study to work collaboratively and communicate daily together. Moreover, they then-currently interacted together to accomplish projects, orders, proposals, reports, and dialogues, etc.

Since this was an ethnographic research study, it was important to understand the background and experiences of all the individuals chosen for this study. “The emphasis in this type of research is on documenting or portraying the everyday experiences of individuals by observing and interviewing them” (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012, p. 13). Personal thoughts, comments, and perceptions were highly valuable and thoroughly documented throughout this research. Thus, the qualitative model approach was the most suitable research method for this study. Under these circumstances, this methodology was well suited for this study because it was “not just concerned with describing the way things are, but also with gaining insights into how things got to be the way they are, how people feel about the way things are, and what they believe” (Gay, 1996, p. 13).

Research Questions

The main research question for this study was ‘What is the relationship, if at all, between andragogy and the perceived ability to live by the core values while doing their job at XYZ Technology Company, whether hybrid or virtual?’ Also explored were a list of sub-research questions that were demonstrated throughout this study:

- 1) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees perceived ability to live by the core value “*trust*” and andragogy as

- measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
- 2) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees perceived ability to live by the core value “*humility*” and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
 - 3) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees perceived ability to live by the core value “*embracing change*” and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
 - 4) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees perceived ability to live by the core value “*passion*” and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
 - 5) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees perceived ability to live by the core value “*positive attitude*” and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?
 - 6) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees perceived ability to live by the core value “*teamwork*” and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?

7) What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees perceived ability to live by the core value “*honest and integrity*” and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?

After researching the main and sub-research questions, there were also related research questions that arose which will also be discussed:

Research Question #2: How do hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees compare in their perceived ability to live by the seven core values?

Research Question #3: What is the role of leadership at XYZ Technology Company in helping hybrid and virtual employees perceive they are able to live by the seven core values?

Research Question #4: What is the role of the individual hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employee in helping him herself perceive he or she is able to live by the seven core values?

Exploring the additional research also helped emphasize and understand the virtual employee.

Methodology - Ethnology

One of the primary aspects considered in which these questions could be answered most effectively and efficiently was to correlate the ethnographic model. Ethnography was “a research methodology . . . which involves the observation of and participation in particular groupings” (Neyland, 2008, p. 1). To apprehend the objective representation of the development of cultures and individuals best described ethnology. “Ethnography is most usefully defined as a style of social science writing which draws

upon the writer's close observation of and involvement with people in a particular social setting" (Watson, 2011, p. 205). Watson (2011) further stated, "It relates the words spoken and the practices observed or experienced to the overall cultural framework within which they occurred" (p. 205). When ethnographic research was conducted, readers could recognize the perceptions of those who were involved in the study.

It was important to consider "the general awareness in the organization and management studies field of just what ethnographic work is and how much it can contribute both to the scholarly 'body of knowledge' and to practical thinking of citizens, workers, managers, students, etc." (Watson, 2011, p. 214). According to Van Maanen (2006), a professor at MIT in Cambridge, MA, "With the rise and expansion of vast human migrations, vanishing native groups, market globalization, enhanced information, communication and transportation technologies, the anthologizing of the West, ethnography has become rather de-territorialized" (p. 13). However, that being said, it could potentially put a hindrance on how ethnography was conducted in the virtual environments. Van Maanen (2006) furthered his response, saying, "it becomes heavier, messier and less easily located in time or space" (p. 13). The data analyzed were completed by collecting demographic surveys, conducting one-on-one interviews, and piloting a focus group. Ethnography could provide the ability to "tell us the valuable truths about the realities of work, organizations, and management" (Watson, 2011, p. 207).

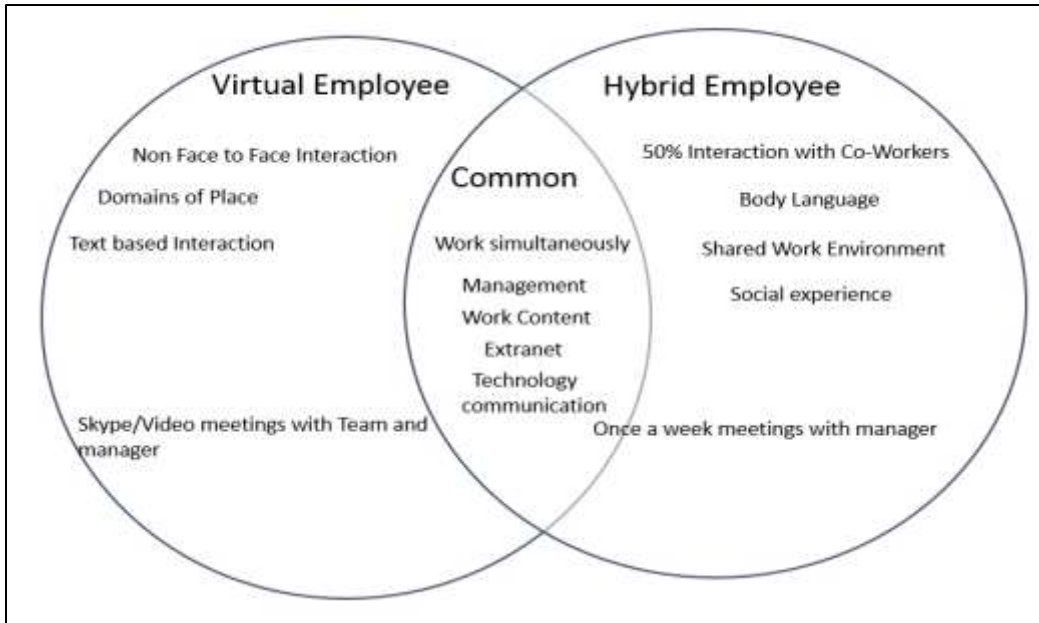


Figure 2. Venn diagram of virtual and hybrid employee aspects within the workplace.

“As a science, organizational ethnography needs to be concerned with creating systematic generalizations about ‘how the world works’” (Watson, 2011, p. 209).

Figure 2 demonstrates how some cultural aspects of the employees were distributed to each hybrid and virtual employee and some were entwined together. Both employees had different views and experiences. Virtual employees experienced this study with no face-to-face interaction and were predominantly text/Skype-based. Hybrid employees utilized face-to-face, social interaction throughout this study. However, both groups had the same type of employees who were completing the same type of work, such as customer service, procurement, and inside sales, etc. Each hybrid/virtual employee also reported to the same level of management. Figure 2 primarily illustrates the thematic scheme of the day-to-day aspects of both hybrid and virtual employees working within a business organization. It signifies a design tool for an innovative, qualitative model that would illustrate the concept of how adults worked together in the business world (Watson, 2011, p. 207).

Instrumentation

The researcher designed the questions for the demographic surveys (Appendix B) to seek a better understanding of the individual employees' backgrounds and relationships they had within the organization. Furthermore, the researcher also designed the questions for interviews and focus groups (Appendix C) in alignment with the research questions of the study. Due to the specific nature of the study, the researcher was able to generate questions specific to the hybrid and virtual workers at this company and address the andragogical concepts. By aligning the interview and focus group questions to the specific research questions of the study, the researcher was able to validate the instrument.

XYZ Technology Company Core Values

The only way to survive as an employee at XYZ Technology Company was to live and breathe the core values of this corporation. The core values were established in 1990, when the then small private organization was founded. Over the years the company grew massively and continued to grow and adapt which meant the core values had to be adapted, too. These mandated goals adapted over the years into what remained, at the time of this writing, as the backbone of this worldwide organization. Each employee unequivocally and irrevocably must adhere to these core values. If an employee failed to comply with these core values, under any condition, he or she was either coached up or coached out of the organization.

It was important to realize that some rapidly growing companies tried to adapt to the modern era, but were unable to focus on the most important asset, the people. Nelis (2014) stated, employees in any industry were the people who drove it, and were the

greatest asset (p. 8). It was also relevant that, even though XYZ Technology Company was a rapidly growing organization, it must not exclude the humility factor of where and how it was founded. According to Thornburgh, a Civitas Learning CEO who was interviewed by Stych (2016) with the *St. Louis Business Journal*, "It's possible to lose your identity if you let (growth) get out of control" (p. 1). One way to keep a stable and successful environment for any company was to be aware of the changes in the environment.

XYZ Technology Company was a constant entity that aligned its changing abilities to society. According to the CEO of XYZ Technology, there needed to be a thorough process and standard of how managers onboarded new employees and to make sure the people hired were understanding the values of the organization and the business. The core values were just one of the many important management and leadership initiatives followed by employees.

XYZ's core values were the basis of how XYZ Technology Company operated their business. Known as 'THE PATH' the core values combined with the leadership and management approach to form the basis of what employees referred to as the 'XYZ Way' (Bockert, 2013). Focusing on individual performance, having high-performance teamwork, and a passionate work ethic were just a few of the qualities an XYZ employee must have to succeed. If eligible, XYZ employees were given the opportunity/privilege to work remotely. Not all employees were able to work remotely, even when given the opportunity. The core values defined the company and its actions; and indicated who the employees were, how they acted, how they made decisions, and how they were the XYZ Technology Company.

THE PATH stood for:

- 1) Trust – In character and competency
- 2) Humility – stay grounded; never forget where you came from
- 3) Embrace Change and diversity of people and thought
- 4) Passion and strong work ethic
- 5) Attitude – be positive and open- minded
- 6) Team Player - proactively communicate and share ideas
- 7) Honesty and Integrity. (WWT A Great Place to Work, n.d.)

By living and breathing these core values, XYZ maintained the idea of being morally grounded and aspired to become a profitable growth company that was also a great place to work. According to Henschke and Kheang (2015), there must be credible core values when establishing trust. This credibility came with (a) integrity with honesty, (b) intent or motive, (c) capabilities of inspiring confidence, and (d) results mean getting the right things done (Henschke & Kheang, 2015, p. 13). Establishing these values upfront seemed to manifest sustainable leadership and employees. For example,

a humble person is more concerned about *what* is right than about *being* right, about *acting* on good ideas than *having* the ideas, about *embracing* new truth than *defending* outdated position, about *building the team* than *exalting self*, about *recognizing contribution* than *being recognized* for making it. (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. 64)

This philosophy was about fixating on the principle of these values and placing them ahead of one's self. A potentially capable employee must contribute talent, intelligence, proficiency, and satisfactory work habits; but above all, they must adhere to the core

values of the company (Collins, 2009). The goal of having these values intact was to grow and develop XYZ Technology employees, managers, leaders, and culture that produced results that would stand the test of time.

Procedure

First, in order to conduct this comparative, qualitative research study, the researcher had to receive approval from Lindenwood University and the Institutional Review Board, as well as permission to use responses of the employees of XYZ Technology (Appendix D). The researcher emailed XYZ Technology Company hybrid and virtual employees in the Finance, Business Operations, and Information Technology departments. In the email, the researcher asked if they would like to volunteer to participate in this research study that would gather information from their own experiences and thoughts about working as a hybrid or remotely. The participation consent form (Appendix A) was attached to the email, which went into detail regarding the nature of the study. These participation forms were distributed via email from a Proxy. The Proxy email read as emailed from XYZ Technology Company, which helped in keeping the researcher's identity unknown; and therefore; prevented biased responses.

Subjects

The participants who were willing to participate replied to the Proxy email with the e-signed participation form (Appendix A), which sent a notification directly to the researcher. Having the e-signed document made it easily accessible for employees to sign, and it also helped the organization of this study. Both the hybrid and virtual participants were emailed a link via surveymonkey.com (Appendix B), which led to a

demographic survey that needed to be completed. This survey was submitted electronically and anonymously and was left open for response for three months.

The researcher then randomly selected, via Excel, five to seven participants from each of the segregated departments to be a part of the interview process. This was the same organization policy that the researcher utilized for the focus group of eight to 10 participants. It was important to note that the participants from the interview were completely different from those selected for the focus group.

Once all participants were selected at random, the researcher sent them a calendar invite, via Outlook, through which the participant either accepted or declined, based on their own availability. All hybrid interviews were conducted face-to-face at the company's global headquarters, located in St. Louis, Missouri. All the virtual interviews were conducted via Web-Ex with video enablement. By including this feature, body language and eye contact were captured.

All focus group participants were asked to join the researcher for a luncheon. If those participants were virtual employees, the researcher sent a Web Ex to invite, so those participants could join over video.

Data Collection

During the three-month time frame, the researcher sent out two other reminders about the research study asking for employees to participate, so the email would not be disregarded. All surveys were acknowledged and accounted for after the full three-month period was completed. Once the demographic surveys (Appendix B) were submitted, the researcher organized the surveys into hybrid and virtual categories. At XYZ Technology Company, all employees were allowed one hour for lunch. The luncheon allotted for all

participants who joined, giving an opportunity so that no one was left out. The focus group session lasted around 30 to 45 minutes. The researcher utilized audio capabilities to perform the focus group and interviews that were recorded via the researcher's apple device, using the Evernote app. This method helped the researcher transcribe audio to writing which was then stored on the researcher's personal computer via One Drive, which was a secured database utilized in a cloud environment.

The interview and focus groups were managed with a list of questions — the same questions previously used for the interview questions (Appendix C). The focus group and interviews were audio recorded via permission from the research subjects. The researcher using an iPhone application called Evernote, and transcribed the interview and focus group audio recordings. After the audio was fully transcribed, the researcher emailed participants for their verification and electronic sign-off.

Initially, the interview was organized by the researcher, who formally introduced herself by providing the subjects with some cultivation information as to why this study was being implemented, along with some personal background. The researcher then thanked everyone for participating in the study. During the interview, the researcher reviewed the protocol, such as the anticipated length of the interview, which was about 20 to 30 minutes; participation was strictly voluntary, participants may step out of the interview at any time, and it was acceptable to decline to answer any or all the questions, as well as all information was kept confidential.

Regarding the focus group, the researcher reviewed the protocol of the focus group that included, once again, the anticipated length of the focus group, which was 30 to 45 minutes, participation was strictly voluntary, participants may step out any time

during the focus group, it was acceptable to decline to answer any or all questions, and all information was kept confidential.

For both the interview and focus group, the researcher conducted a brief review of the consent form, which was given to the participant prior to filling out the demographic survey (Appendix B). This demographic survey helped the researcher understand her subjects on a more personal level.

After all the research was collected, the researcher distributed one \$100 Visa gift card to one participant who participated in the interviews and focus groups. The researcher randomly selected the winning individual by utilizing Excel's random number feature.

Data Analysis

After the data were collected, the department chair and researcher scrubbed it to ensure anonymity. The researcher used open coding to analyze the interview and focus group data for alignment with andragogy's conceptual framework and XYZ Technology Company's seven core values. In order to measure the relationship between andragogy and the core values, the researcher also compared the data for alignment with Knowles' (1973, 1990, 1995) six assumptions and eight process elements and created a table to illustrate alignment between and among the six assumptions, eight key process elements, and the core values. By comparing this data, the researcher created categories, which were based on the researcher's own perceptions. Then, the researcher used open coding to analyze data for emerging themes for all instruments used: demographic survey, focus group responses, and interview data (Appendices B, C).

The research questions were created to understand the relationship, or lack of a relationship, between and among the ability of virtual and hybrid employees from three different departments to conduct their jobs according to the core values proposed by XYZ Technology company and how the application of andragogical concepts permeated daily work. Understanding how the study participants, as a member of an employment status group (virtual or hybrid) and a department (Information Technology, Business Operations, and Sales Operations), executed their daily tasks living the core values by applying the concept of andragogy and then using the demographic survey responses (virtual or hybrid status) to compare the two groups to arrive at the outcome of this study. Participants, both hybrid and virtual, incorporated their own personal experiences living the core values, and these were captured in their interview and focus group responses.

The existing six assumptions of the adult learner and the eight process elements of adult learning were used to answer the research questions and further illustrated how, and if, andragogy was applied in living the core values among virtual and hybrid employees at XYZ Technology company in the Information Technology, Business Operations, and Sales Operations departments. The researcher collected and transcribed the participant responses using [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) and [transcribe.wreally.com](https://www.transcribe.wreally.com) (transcription to text website). Once all responses were collected, the Vice President at XYZ Technology Company requested the data retrieved on [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com), along with the Transcribe application where all the identifiers were removed, so the researcher could analyze the data while protecting participants' anonymity. The researcher took observational notes during the interview and focus group sessions to capture facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures.

The research design used triangulation of the data from demographic surveys, employee focus group responses, and employee interview responses to seek validity. Comparisons between categories of data sets allowed the researcher to determine existing relationships or lack of relationships. First, categories of participants were determined by tallying the demographic surveys. Then, comparisons were conducted. The first comparison was between focus group and interview data by employment status (virtual or hybrid). The second comparison was between the interview data and each department (Business Operations, Sales Operations, and Information Technology). The third comparison was between interview and focus group data by employment status (virtual or hybrid) and perceived ability to live each of the corporate values, which were each previously aligned with the six assumptions of the characteristics of the adult learner and eight adult learning process elements by which adults learned best. The last analysis was conducted using open coding of interview and focus group data to discover emerging themes. Table 4 illustrates the primary relationship between the andragogical research questions and how these questions were measured by utilizing Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1995) six assumptions and eight process elements. The core value that pertained to each research question was identified. Following each core value, the andragogy theoretical framework used was then categorized into the researcher's depiction of theories. Table 4 also summarizes the perception of the researcher's opinion of how each core value was integrated into each participant's ability to live out these core values on a day-to-day basis.

Table 4

Alignment of Research Questions with Core Value and Theoretical Framework

7 Research Sub Questions & Research Questions 2, 3, & 4	Core Value	Theoretical Framework Used to Measure the Relationship: Knowles Six Assumptions	Theoretical Framework Used to Measure the Relationship: Knowles Eight Process Elements	Andragogical Category (Six Assumptions/Eight Process Elements). 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self-Directed Learning 3. Learner’s Need to Know 4. Environmental Climate 5. Internal Motivation 6. Evaluation 7. Communication
SQ#1: What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees’ perceived ability to live by the core value <i>trust</i> and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?	Trust	1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn	1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation	1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication

Continued

Table 4. Continued

<p>SQ#2: What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value <i>humility</i> and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?</p>	<p>Humility</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication 8. Evaluation
<p>SQ#3: What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value <i>embracing change</i> and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?</p>	<p>Embracing Change</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 4. Environmental Climate 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication 8. Evaluation

Continued

Table 4. Continued

<p>SQ#4: What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value <i>passion</i> and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?</p>	<p>Passion</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication
<p>SQ#5: What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value <i>positive attitude</i> and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?</p>	<p>Attitude</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 4. Environmental Climate 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication 8. Evaluation

Continued

Table 4. Continued

<p>SQ#6: What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value <i>teamwork</i> and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?</p>	<p>Teamwork</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 4. Environmental Climate 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication
<p>SQ#7: What is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value <i>honesty and integrity</i> and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995)?</p>	<p>Honesty and Integrity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication

Continued

Table 4. Continued

<p>RQ#2: How do hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees compare in their perceived ability to live the seven core values?</p>	<p>All Seven Core Values</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2.Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 4. Environmental Climate 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication 8. Evaluation
<p>RQ#3: What is the role of leadership at XYZ Technology Company in helping hybrid and virtual employees perceive they are able to live by the seven core values?</p>	<p>All Seven Core Values</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6 Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 4. Environmental Climate 5. Internal Motivation 7. Communication 8. Evaluation
<p>RQ#4: What is the role of the individual hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employee in helping him herself perceive he or she is able to live by the seven core values?</p>	<p>All Seven Core Values</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner's Need to Know 2. Self- Concept of the Learner 3. Prior Experience of the Learner 4. Readiness to Learn 5. Orientation to Learning 6. Motivation to Learn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Learners 2. Climate 3. Planning 4. Diagnosis of Needs 5. Setting of Objectives 6. Designing Learning Plans 7. Learning Activities 8. Evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readiness to Learn/Preparing Learner 2. Self- Directed Learning/Orientation to Learning 3. Learner's Need to Know/ Learners Experience 4. Environmental Climate 5. Internal Motivation 7.Communication 8. Evaluation

Summary

In summary, participant perceptions were collected through focus groups and interviews in this ethnographic study. Ethnography was the research method used primarily to collect the qualitative data. The data collection was completed over a three-month timeframe. The data were analyzed using open coding, comparison, and open coding techniques. Data sets were compared in order to discover relationships between and among the interview and focus group data, the employment status of the participant (virtual or hybrid), and the core values (aligned with an andragogical theoretical framework).

Chapter Four: Results

Chapter Four presents the results from the demographic surveys, interviews and focus group responses, and emerging themes. The participant interview and focus group responses were based on participant perceptions. The emerging themes were based on open coding analysis of both interview and focus group data. The data were collected from both virtual and hybrid employees from three XYZ Technology Company departments: Business Operations, Sales Operations, and Information Technology. The results are presented in the order they were collected: demographic survey, interview and focus group data (same questions), and emerging themes.

Demographic Survey Questions and Results

The demographic survey results were completed on [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) (Appendix B) and were distributed to each virtual and hybrid employee before the researcher conducted the focus group and interviews. Each employee answered the survey questions on his or her own time and completed this task in less than 10 minutes. The total number of individuals that answered these questions was 28. This survey was administered to seek a better understanding of the individual employees' backgrounds and relationships they had within the organization. The following is a summary of the survey results by survey question.

Demographic survey question #1: Which department are you currently in: Sales Operations, Business Operations, or Information Technology? The majority of participants resided in the Sales Operations team with a total of 20 employees. There were three participants in Business Operations, and five participants were from Information Technology.

Demographic survey question #2: What is your gender? There were 20 female participants and eight males. None of the participants selected: ‘I prefer not to identify as male or female.’

Demographic survey question #3: What is your age? The majority of employees were 31 to 40 years old (11 employees). No participants were under 21 years of age. Four participants were 20 to 30 years old, eight participants were 41 to 50 years old, and five participants were above 51 years of age.

Demographic survey question #4: What is your highest level of education? All participants had a minimum of a high school diploma. Four participants had a GED or high school diploma, three had an associate’s degree, and three had a master’s degree. The majority of participants fell into the category of graduating with a bachelor’s degree, with this number totaling 18.

Demographic survey statement #5: I am inspired to meet my goals at work. Several employees ‘strongly agreed’ with this statement (22 participants). Another five employees selected ‘agreed,’ and only one individual selected ‘strongly disagreed.’

Demographic survey statement #6: My supervisor and I have a great working relationship. None of the employees selected ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘disagree.’ A total of 18 participants selected ‘strongly agree,’ nine selected ‘agree,’ and only one selected ‘neutral/neither agree nor disagree.’

Demographic survey statement #7: I feel I have the necessary tools and technology to complete my job effectively and efficiently. Sixteen participants answered ‘strongly agree’ with this statement, nine employees selected ‘agree,’ and three selected ‘neutral/neither agree or disagree.’

Demographic survey question #8: Are you currently trying to further your education, either by schooling or certifications? Twenty-two participants stated they were not enrolled in any sort of education/certification that would advance their then-current career path. Eight participants stated they were pursuing/furthering their education by schooling and/or certifications to help advance their own careers.

Demographic survey question #9: Do you currently take the time to learn new training/technological advancements about the company on your own? Two participants said they ‘rarely’ took time to advance their careers, nine employees said they ‘sometimes’ would take the time to learn new advancements and training, 14 participants said they ‘often’ learned new advancements, and two participants said they ‘always’ took the time to learn new training/technological advancements.

Demographic survey question #10: Do you currently telecommute? This question was asked to determine employment status. Four participants responded with ‘yes,’ they could telecommute, zero participants marked that they were unable to telecommute, five employees acknowledged that they could telecommute one day per week, eight participants responded with ‘yes, two or more days per week,’ and 11 employees stated they were full-time virtual employees.

Interview and Focus Group Questions

The interview and focus group questions were the same. They were as follows.

- 1) How is employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee related to an individual employee’s ability to live the corporate core values?
 - a) Trust?
 - b) Embracing Change?

- c) Passion?
 - d) Positive Attitude?
 - e) Teamwork?
 - f) Honesty and Integrity?
- 2) How would you compare the experience of virtual and hybrid employees' ability to live by the core values?
 - 3) What is the role of leadership in a virtual/hybrid employee ability to live by the core values?
 - 4) What is the role of the individual employee as a virtual or hybrid employee to live by the core values?
 - 5) What would you change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live by the corporate core values?
 - 6) What would you add, take away, or change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live by the corporate core values?
 - 7) Is there something else you would like to say about working as a hybrid/virtual employee?

Focus Group and Interview Results

The focus group responses were formatted based on each individual core value. Each response was broken down and compared to Knowles' (1973, 1990, 1995) six assumptions and the eight process elements. The results affected the virtual and hybrid employees directly. The interview responses were formatted based on each individual core value. Each response is broken down and compared to Knowles' (1973, 1990,

1995) six assumptions and the eight process elements. The results affected the virtual and hybrid employees directly.

All focus group questions emanated from the primary Research Question 1 (What is the relationship, if any, between andragogy and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live the XYZ Technology Company's seven core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity?) After coding the focus group interview responses from participants from all three departments, most responses could then be categorized into seven primary factors that related to the use of Knowles' (1973, 1990, 1995) six assumptions and the eight process elements: (a) readiness to learn, (b) self-directed learning, (c) learner's need to know, (d) environmental climate, (e) internal motivation, (f) evaluation, (g) communication. All seven questions asked during the focus group primarily focused on each individual core value of XYZ Technology Company and how it affected the outcome of how each hybrid and virtual employee completed his or her job duties.

Focus group results. In terms of how employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee was related to an individual employee's ability to live by the corporate core values, in relation to *trust*, both hybrid and virtual employees stated trust would have a different impact whether virtual or hybrid. Participant 4, who was in a leadership role and was a hybrid employee stated, 'I think that's the key factor whether you're in the office every day remote or hybrid. If you don't have trust, then you aren't going to have a successful team.' Several participants agreed with Participant 4's response on the issue of trust; but, there were a few remote employees that had a difference of opinion. For example, Participant 7 who was a virtual employee stated,

I think that the trust must be higher for remote employees because I just feel like if you're working from home one-day week, some people would think, 'oh I can just push my work off until tomorrow.'

When you are remote, you must do your work no matter what. In summary, most virtual employees must have the ability to work independently and problem solve thoroughly if a problem arises.

In terms of the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value, *embrace change*, both hybrid and virtual employees concurred that embracing change as a remote employee could pose as an infinite challenge for that employee. Most participants agreed having that face-to-face interaction daily was crucial for embracing new changes within the company. Participant 4 mentioned as a remote employee, 'It can be a challenge to embrace change because sometimes certain things are better taught in a group face to face.' Participant 8 in agreement stated, 'It is harder for the remote employee because you are so far removed from the situation it takes longer to understand the change being incurred.' Most employees agreed they 'enjoyed social interaction,' that being a hybrid employee allowed and that concept was 'truly missed' for the virtual employees. Furthermore, Participant 9 implicated the importance of having relationships established prior to becoming remote was a crucial matter, 'If you have established office relationships before you become a virtual employee can be very beneficial.' Some employees did mention they started as a hybrid employee, then transferred into the role of a virtual employee; that meant they already had the healthy established relationships they needed to fulfill their job duties. 'Grasping the aspect of change can pose a challenge

because you must be self-taught,' was another point voiced by Participant 8. In agreement, Participant 5 stated virtual employees must be comfortable working independently.

In terms of the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value, *work ethic*, both hybrid and virtual employees varied in responses, based on their role. For instance, Participant 7, commented from a remote perspective, 'Work ethic is greater because employees are constantly looking for a way to stay connected and improve' on any aspect of the company. Congruent to what Participant 7 stated, Participant 8 noted as a remote employee, the ability to strive to be overbearingly engaged and 'double up your efforts so others don't think you are taking advantage of the system' is enforced. Both hybrid and virtual employees elaborated that 'work ethic' primarily results back to the 'personality characteristics of the individuals.' Participant 4, being a hybrid employee in a leadership role, elucidated whether hybrid or a remote employee, the ability to abide by the XYZ Technology core value of having a passionate work ethic and 'go above and beyond what is expected of you' was enforced. Participant 3 also indicated that by being a hybrid employee, prior to transitioning into the virtual role, helped integrate the necessary 'relationships needed to complete the job, which was an important dynamic to adapting to the culture.'

In terms of the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value, *attitude*, both types of employees stated this core value would have a different impact whether virtual or hybrid and alluded to a more positive impact for remote employees. Participant 1, a hybrid

employee, elaborated on this point by saying that the environment was ‘more relaxed’ by having the opportunity and privilege to work from home. Participant 6, a virtual employee, continued in agreement by illustrating the fact there were ‘fewer distractions’ while working at home, which in turn ‘has a positive impact directly on my attitude.’ Participant 2, an information technology hybrid employee, complied with this concept and expressed more was accomplished working remotely than in the office, because there was less interference and fewer interruptions from other coworkers.

In terms of the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees’ perceived ability to live the core value, *teamwork*, all employees, both hybrid and virtual, agreed that communication was a key factor in having a successful team. Participant 5, who was a remote employee, commented once again on the importance of having established healthy relationships within the team, whether hybrid or remote. Another Participant, 7, specified the importance of having the technological advancements throughout the organization helped teams to be more collaborative and effective, whether hybrid or remote. An example of these so-called, ‘technological advancements’ included an instant message (IM), ‘Being able to quickly communicate via chat, or phone call or shared screen’ at the click of a button has truly opened the lines of communication and the effectiveness of how teams co-function. Participant 6 conveyed the significant positive impact of having team meetings on a regular basis to communicate problems with others on the team helped increase effective communication.

In terms of the relationship between hybrid and virtual employees of XYZ Technology Company perceived ability to live by the core value, *honesty and integrity*,

all employees, both hybrid and virtual, agreed that communication and building relationships were primarily the focus for this specific core value. Participant 3 stated, ‘Honesty and integrity remain the same for both hybrid and virtual employees and is usually what managers look for in any good employee.’ The importance of each employee upholding the value of honesty and integrity throughout the organization created a standard of morality that shaped the outline of the culture.

After all responses were collected for the primary research question (what is the relationship, if any, between andragogy and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live by the XYZ Technology Company’s seven core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity?), the collection of data continued with how hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees compared in their perceived ability to live by the seven core values. The responses implied that most employees agreed that this directly related back to work ethic. Participant 2 aforementioned most employees could easily adapt to the core values, whether hybrid or virtual because, during the interview process, these were ‘key components your hiring manager looks for during this process.’ Another participant stated, ‘some employees adapt better than others embracing our culture.’ All employees did feel that most hybrid and virtual employees followed these core values religiously, whether they are hybrid or virtual.

The role of leadership in a virtual and/or hybrid employee’s ability to live by the core values of XYZ Technology Company posed several challenges in the virtual environment. For example, Participant 6 stated, ‘Personally it is more challenging because you are not there having that face-to-face interaction’ with teammates and other

employees. Most felt it was harder to interpret body languages and cues from the remote employee. Another participant indicated that he/she would only have a virtual manager on his or her team if the employee started out in a hybrid role and then transitioned into a remote leader because the relationships and interactions necessary had already been established. Moreover, all participants declared that the opportunity to move up in a leadership role as a virtual employee was limited. 'Higher management wants to have team leaders or managers in the office to be able face-to-face with their employees versus someone who is remote,' Participant 6 said. On the other hand, Participant 9 did mention having a virtual leader/manager could be done. Furthermore, she continued to explain that if there was not a question or reason to interact with a manager, she may not speak to that particular manager at all that day. Most of the participants felt by being proactive with their communication and making the effort to interact daily with teammates, virtual leaders could be as effective and efficient as hybrid leaders. Another aspect mentioned that helped build these relationships with the virtual community was the video enablement feature. Participants who then-currently had a virtual leader on their team explained having the video capabilities for any type of interaction was crucial.

Most employees agreed that the role of the individual as a virtual or hybrid employee to live by the core values depended entirely on that individual's work ethic and trustworthiness. Participant 8 said, 'This depends on the person and their drive to get their work completed.' Participant 6 stated, 'Working from home is a privilege and it can be taken away' if the employee does not fully comply with the company's core values. A couple of other participants commented that 'working from home is not for everybody.' Some employees may not have the focus and determination to get through the workday

without being distracted by home chores or other environmental interruptions that may occur. It was important for management to provide permission for telecommuting and choose virtual workers selectively and carefully.

In terms of what the virtual and/or hybrid employees would change to live by the corporate core values, employees mentioned different things that they would change. For example, Participant 6 said XYZ Technology Company should ‘allow for more growth for remote employees.’ Many others agreed with this statement. Participant 5 elaborated on the response by saying there was a leadership position available; but, she was overlooked because she was a remote employee. As a technology company and by utilizing the innovative technological advancements, XYZ Technology Company had to offer, ‘remote leadership should be more accepted,’ Participant 6 stated. Visibility and communication were extremely important aspects that should be implemented daily by both hybrid and virtual employees, if the employees were willing to adapt to all seven of the core values.

In terms of what the virtual and/or hybrid employee would add, take away, or change to live by the corporate core values, participants’ answers were very similar to what virtual and/or hybrid employees would change. Most stated XYZ Technology Company should be more open to having virtual leaders throughout the organization. Also, communicated by Participant 5, teams that worked together should all telecommute on the same day. It was thought by many, by enforcing this regulation, teams would be more prosperous at collaborating together. Another participant stated, ‘It is easier to train in the office first to learn and adapt to our culture;’ so it might be more successful as a

company to hire potential virtual employees on as hybrid employees first and then slowly transition them into the virtual role.

Regarding additional comments that participants wanted to make about working for XYZ Technology Company as a hybrid or virtual employee, the participants proceeded to enlighten the researcher on details on what they liked about their then-current position. Most participants loved working in their then-current position as a hybrid or virtual employee. For example, Participant 3 commented she ‘loved working remotely’ and stated she would ‘never go back to be a hybrid employee.’ Another participant stressed the importance of culture and being a hybrid employee gave the ability to experience that first hand. Other participants did mention that corporate executives tended to forget that remote employees were on call and they needed to be more conscious and perceptive to include everyone during calls/meetings.

Interview results. All interview questions derived from primary research question #1 (What is the relationship, if any, between andragogy and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live by the XYZ Technology Company’s seven core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity?). After coding and acknowledging the arising themes within the research, from both hybrid and virtual employees, the outcomes from all the interview responses could be categorized into the following factors, which directly related to Knowles’ (1973, 1990, 1995) six assumptions and eight process elements: (a) readiness to learn, (b) self-directed learning, (c) learner’s need to know, (d) environmental climate, (e) internal motivation, (f) evaluation, (g) communication. All seven questions asked during the interviews, fundamentally fixated on each individual core value of XYZ

Technology Company and how it affected the outcome of how each hybrid and virtual employee completed their job duties.

Employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee related to an individual employee's ability to live by the corporate core values, in relation to 'trust,' both hybrid and virtual employees agreed trust would have a different impact, whether being a virtual or hybrid employee, but would entirely depend on the individual and the members of the team. Several responses from interviewees varied and were skewed. Some interviewees stated that 'trust was much higher in the virtual work environment' because, in order to work successfully in the virtual environment, one must have high trust, but also mentioned that 'trust is harder to be accomplished' in a strictly remote environment but can be reached if a proactive effort is integrated. On the contrary, others stated that there was a 'lack of trust in the virtual environment' due to people not being physically present and visibly available. A few people did mention it was 'much easier to establish trust as a hybrid employee,' because employees were in the office every other day and had the ability to continuously build those relationships face-to-face. Other remote employees said that the information technology tools allowed for employees to easily collaborate and also provide the opportunity for visual communication via video; but, 'nothing replaces that one-on-one interaction,' as one interviewee purposed.

Employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee related to an individual employee's ability to live by the corporate core values, in relation to 'embrace change;' both hybrid and virtual employees agreed that in order to embrace change, core values would rely on the individual's characteristics, demeanor, and the members of the team. The responses varied from interviewees stating embracing change would 'remain the

same,' 'be more difficult for virtual workers,' and 'would be easier for virtual employees to adapt to change for both hybrid and virtual employees.' One interviewee replied that 'accidental interactions are crucial' during the work day and elaborated that having those side conversations with others increased morale throughout the organization and created a more accepting culture. This was how employees built new relationships and enhanced old ones. Embracing change could be viewed as 'more challenging for virtual employees,' because the collaboration opportunities were limited. On the contrary, another employee, who was previously a hybrid employee but recently transitioned to a strictly virtual role, mentioned embracing change in the virtual environment had '100% changed for the better,' because of the opportunities it presented. Some examples of the opportunities given included having the ability to be self-taught and become a more sufficient problem solver as an independent learner.

In terms of employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee related to an individual employee's ability to live by the corporate core values, in relation to 'work ethic,' presented mixed feelings for both hybrid and virtual employees. One hybrid interviewee stated, 'Working from home increases my ability to work independently which drives my focus to work harder.' Another virtual interviewee admitted there was less social interaction as a virtual employee, thus extenuating the ability to ask questions; therefore, the virtual employee must be more proactive with communication with his or her manager and team. Some remote employees even said, 'Visibility is key when working remote; you must make yourself available though you are not physically there' to display employees were passionate about work while working remotely.

Some obstacles mentioned by remote employees were that it was difficult for them to show their passion that could negatively impact their own ability to move forward in their careers. One virtual employee said, 'The opportunity isn't there' to become a leader because employees are physically in the office and are missing out on collaboration opportunities and this can potentially open the door for other positions. 'Being hired as a remote employee hinders one's ability to advance and grow,' because of the lack of interaction with teammates. Adversely, one virtual employee did say that by being remote 'you have more appreciation for the flexibility the job offers which increases my passion as a virtual learner.' Another remote employee stated, 'I don't believe your work ethic is hindered as a virtual employee, but you must be extremely invested in your job to prove your passion for your work.' Other hybrid employees said that the ability for passion depended entirely on the individual and remained the same for both hybrid and virtual employees.

In terms of employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee related to an individual employee's ability to live the corporate core values, in relation to 'attitude,' the majority of hybrid and virtual employees agreed that having a positive attitude remained the same whether an employee was hybrid or virtual. One employee who started as a hybrid employee and transitioned to a remote employee stated, 'I don't believe it changes at all whether you are hybrid or virtual.' Most employees agreed with this analogy.

All employees must have a positive attitude while working at XYZ Technology Company. One hybrid employee stated, 'People who have the privilege to work from home or be a virtual employee tend to have a more upbeat attitude towards their work.'

Since XYZ Technology allowed their employees to work from home, this created a more positive atmosphere and employees were happier about coming to work when they were in the office. One remote employee mentioned, 'There is a greater work-life balance' being a remote employee and this directly influences attitude. On the contrary, one hybrid employee commented on the virtual employees by saying 'people that work full time remote, miss out on the communication' aspect of the culture at XYZ Technology Company that could negatively impact attitudes. This was one of the only disagreements expressed during the interview process about the core value attitude.

In terms of employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee related to an individual employee's ability to live the corporate core values, in relation to 'teamwork,' most employees, both hybrid and virtual, acknowledged virtual employees must try harder to make an impact on their team. One hybrid employee mentioned the fact that 'if someone is remote you have to forcefully collaborate whereas if you are hybrid it becomes more natural' to build that bond or relationship. Another commented saying building new relationships with teammates could be a challenge for most employees who were virtual, as they must work more independently and 'be able to adjust technology' on a day-to-day basis. This forced new employees to be self-taught and learn on their own. One hybrid employee explained 'it is harder to explain something over the phone or IM if you are remote.'

Furthermore, as virtual employees utilized the technological advancements that were there to help, such as the sharing screen option could be helpful; but, overall, it was harder to work through a problem if employees were not physically there. On the contrary, one remote employee stated that the majority of his or her team was then-

currently all virtual employees; this positively influenced the bond between the individuals on the team; because, everyone was working virtually. Another remote leader mentioned that even though many employees were hybrid employees, ‘you can still get caught up in the virtual mode and distance yourself from others’ while working in the office. Even hybrids needed to remember to be outgoing and make themselves noticeable and enhance relationships by going outside of their comfort zones.

In terms of employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee related to an individual employee’s ability to live by the corporate core values, in relation to ‘honesty and integrity,’ almost all virtual and hybrid employees conceded that mutual values were carried out in the same manner for both types of employees. One remote employee stated, ‘I have a good relationship with my team and they are brutally honest with providing any feedback whether it’s positive or negative.’ Having open communication between all teammates was crucial when it came to the aspect of honesty and integrity within the company. One remote employee expressed that it was important to ‘prove your honesty and integrity in your work ethic.’ This demonstrated the mental determination and driven personality of the individual and expressed the importance of maintaining honesty and integrity throughout the organization. Another remote employee stated, ‘Honesty and integrity are important for both hybrid and virtual employees,’ and depending on others was a must at all times. One employee voiced, ‘By being a hybrid employee you have the support and help of your team in the office to help maintain your honesty and integrity,’ whereas for a virtual employee, it is ‘easily forgotten and those employees tend to overlook the importance of having honesty and

integrity established in their work ethic.’ Overall, the significance of having honesty and integrity vested in each employee, whether hybrid or virtual, was crucial.

After all responses were collected for the primary research question (what is the relationship, if any, between andragogy and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live by the XYZ Technology Company’s seven core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity?), the collection of data continued regarding how hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees compared in their perceived ability to live the seven core values. The results alluded to the experience of virtual and hybrid employees’ ability to live by the core values, and most were in agreement that this depended entirely on the individual hired. Some even said, ‘The core values at XYZ Technology Company cannot be taught; a person either has these key characteristics or they do not.’

Incongruously, one interviewee stated his opinion that if one was hired as a virtual employee it was harder to adapt to the core values and it was harder for him to be integrated into the culture that XYZ Technology Company offers. Others did concur with this analogy and agreed it would be harder for a remote employee to transition into the culture, rather than an employee initially hired as a hybrid and then transitioning into a remote role. Furthermore, in order for a remote employee to fully adapt to the culture and core values, one interviewee mentioned, ‘Remote employees almost need to come into the office for a month or two before they can truly adapt solely as a virtual employee.’ Some hybrid employees that recently transitioned to a solely remote role mentioned, ‘It is easier to adapt for me because the relationships are already established.’ However, there were some hybrid employees that stated it may be easier for remote

employees to adapt to the core values, because they have the freedom and flexibility to live by these corporate core values. Moreover, the hybrid interviewee stated, 'The balance of work and life is much easier if you are a virtual employee.' On the other hand, some hybrids said it was much easier for hybrids to adapt, because they were in the office and had that one-on-one interaction with other teammates, thus making the core values easily adaptable.

Regarding the role of leadership for hybrid and virtual employees and helping each employee live by the seven core values, several employees agreed that being a manager or leader in the virtual environment posed several distinct challenges versus a hybrid environment. For example, some interviewees stated that one must have an 'outgoing attitude, be very driven, and focus' in order to be a leader in a virtual role; because, the majority of work completed by a virtual employee was done independently. 'Constant communication' was much more important within the virtual environment. Additionally, one must also 'be proactive' in reaching out to the team to illustrate visibility. Others opposed this by saying if a manager was remote it was harder to communicate with him or her at all referring to an 'out of sight out of mind' type of scenario. One hybrid manager said, 'To be an effective leader is to grow new relationships; people need to be around other leaders and teams.' There was 'less face-to-face interactions' and synergy in the office for virtual employees created a challenge or mingling with other groups and 'creating new relationships.' A hybrid leader mentioned, 'the ability to read people's body language for virtual employees is limited.' Going above and beyond was crucial for virtual leaders. 'Being around people in the office can help motivate employees to work hard,' one hybrid employee stated. 'Having

video calls' regularly with the team could positively influence the effective communication and cooperation within the team for virtual employees.

Regarding the actual role of the individual employee as a virtual or hybrid employee to live by the core values, most participants mentioned the role of the employee depended entirely on that individual's characteristics and his or her mentality. Both hybrid and virtual interviewees agreed to be successful at XYZ Technology Company one must be proactive in communication, constantly asking questions, be open-minded, maintain an interest in work ethic, be a driven individual, have a positive attitude towards others and their work, and utilize all of the seven core values on a daily basis. One hybrid employee stated, to fulfill the role of an individual employee to meet the core values, one must be 'visible' to the team. This could pose a challenge for the virtual community because they were not always 'seen.' Some hybrid employees mentioned that 'more work gets done when their manager is in the office,' so as a virtual manager, it made it 'harder to communicate' with them. However, there were some virtual and hybrid employees that disagreed with this concept.

Technological advancements, such as video collaboration, were a vital part of the teamwork aspect for these remote employees and allowed for constant communication. 'Self-motivation and determination' were critical for each employee, whether hybrid or virtual, when following the core values of XYZ Technology. 'Being bred as a hybrid employee and then transitioning into the remote role has portrayed a definite advantage because of the ability to adapt to all the core values before going solely remote.' For employees this transition made the core values more easily adaptable and more efficient in the long run.

In terms of what would hybrid and virtual employees change to help live by the corporate core values, employees provided an array of different opinions on how and what they would modify. For example, one hybrid manager said, for XYZ Technology Company ‘to be a successful virtual organization, the need for personal video units is vital.’ He added that this would be an expensive necessity that the company would have to invest in, but would be beneficial to prosper and grow in the future, as this was the way the modern society was moving towards. Another popular concept mentioned by a few interviewees was to have the virtual employee come into the office two to three times a year to interact with their team and customers. One concept mentioned by a hybrid employee was to implement a new business structure where potential remote employees would have to begin their career as a hybrid employee, and then ‘wait six months before fully transitioning into the remote role.’ This would allow for more ‘face-to-face’ interaction with the team and ‘allow for relationships to grow;’ this could be prosperous for both the company and the employee’s career.

Another suggestion mentioned by a virtual employee was to ‘integrate the managers more to the remote sites for more one-on-one meetings.’ Furthermore, this could lead to a better relationship with the manager and possibly lead to other opportunities in the company that maybe the remote employee was not aware of. Others stated they would not want to change anything and XYZ Technology was ‘ahead of other companies in the virtual aspect.’

In terms of what would virtual and/or hybrid employees add, take away, or change to help live by the corporate core values, the participants’ answers varied. One hybrid employee who transitioned into a remote role stated, ‘The onboarding process for

remote employees' needs to be reprimanded; so, they have 'the groundwork' and foundation hybrid employees were offered when being hired. 'The need for that initial interaction with your teammates and other coworkers is crucial' when onboarding. Others agreed with this statement by saying, 'Virtual employees should need to be a part of the hybrid community for at least six months,' and then transition into the full-time remote role. Another hybrid employee who transitioned into a remote role emphasized the importance of being a hybrid before becoming fully remote, as this was how one could adapt to the core values and build relationships in the company. Some said that the way all employees lived by the corporate core values was 'successful the way it is; if we didn't implement like we do we would lose good employees.' On the contrary, some employees agreed to 'leave this as is' as nothing needs to be fixed; 'if it's not broke, don't change it.'

As for if there were something else employees would like to say about working as a hybrid or virtual employee at XYZ Technology Company, the participants elaborated in detail on what they liked about their then-current position. One hybrid employee mentioned she loved having the privilege to telecommute; because, it allowed for flexibility and for a greater work/life balance. Moreover, another hybrid elaborated by saying, having the social interaction with teammates and customers helped make a successful team or organization. Another hybrid employee who transferred into a virtual role admitted she loved having the opportunity to have other virtual employees on the team, because she could connect virtually. Furthermore, another hybrid employee who transferred into a virtual role admitted, 'Being remote you miss out on the social interactions and prefers to come in every few months' to allow for relationship growth

and other opportunities; ‘being remote you feel disconnected from your team.’ Another remote employee said it was more challenging to become a team lead or manager, because not physically being in the office in front of a team could hinder productivity. In addition, another remote employee stated, ‘Remote employees can be perceived as less important or put in less initiative because they are physically being seen.’ On the contrary, one remote employee said, ‘More is accomplished at home because there are fewer distractions however, the hours worked are more skewed as you tend to work more.’

Emerging Themes

Both the interview and focus group data were analyzed using open coding to discover emerging themes by employee status (virtual or hybrid). Some themes applied to one or the other employee status and some themes applied to both. Each theme was supported by participant quotes and aligned with one of the corporate core values. The results are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5

Participant Quotes Supporting Core Values and Emerging Themes - Virtual, Hybrid, or Both

Core Values	Participant Quotes	Emerging Themes
Trust	“There is more importance because you aren’t face to face today”-virtual employee	Trust is harder virtually
Trust	"I was even less confident that they were going to get their work done while not in the office” - hybrid manager	Lack of trust virtually

Continued

Table 5. Continued.

Trust	"From my point of view, I feel there is an elevated level of trust for both hybrid and virtual employees" - hybrid employee	Trust appears in both environments
Embracing Change	"I think the ability to embrace change is easier for a hybrid employee" - hybrid employee	Easier for the virtual employee
Embracing Change	"The ability to adapt to change remains the same for both hybrid and virtual employees" - virtual employee	Remains the same for both hybrid and virtual employees
Embracing Change	"Change comes easier for a hybrid" - hybrid employee	Adaptability
Passionate Work Ethic	"I think having a strong work ethic remains the same for both virtual and hybrid employees" - hybrid employee	Remains the same for both virtual and hybrid employees; Hybrid & Virtual Theme: Devotion
Passionate Work Ethic	"As a remote employee, there are fewer distractions and less opportunity to grow" - virtual employee	Fewer distractions
Passionate Work Ethic	"Remote employees have less social interactions and less opportunity to network" - hybrid employee	Fewer opportunities to grow
Positive Attitude	"I don't think being hybrid or remote has an impact on your attitude" - hybrid employee	No affect whether hybrid or virtual
Positive Attitude	"Being a remote employee has definitely had an impact on my attitude due to the work life balance" - virtual employee	Virtual employees are happier with the work-life balance; Hybrid & Virtual Theme: Importance of teamwork Work-life balance
Continued		

Table 5. Continued.

Teamwork	"Having effective teamwork depends entirely on the team" - virtual employee	Depends on the people
Teamwork	"Teamwork can be more challenging in a remote role; I have had to adapt to learn more independently" - virtual employee	Less social interaction for virtual teams; harder to communicate virtually
Teamwork	"It is harder to explain things over the phone or IM vs. doing so in person" - hybrid employee	Virtual Theme: Communication challenge
Honesty and Integrity	"I think this is on the same level whether hybrid or virtual here at XYZ Technology Company" - hybrid employee	Remains the same for both hybrid and virtual employees; Depends on the individual; Theme: Individualism
Honesty and Integrity	"I think this could have a more significant effect on someone if they are working remotely" - hybrid employee	Higher as a virtual employee

Table 6 also illustrated emerging themes from the interviews and focus group questions and aligned with participant quotes.

Table 6

Participant Quotes Supporting Interview and Focus Group Questions and Emerging Themes

Interview/Focus Group Questions	Participant Quotes	Emerging Themes
How would you compare the experience of the virtual and hybrid employee's ability to live by the core values?	"This depends entirely on the individual since having the core values isn't a taught behavior" - virtual employee	Depends on the morals of the individual; Core values can't be taught; Balance and work life is easier working remotely

Continued

Table 6. Continued.

How would you compare the experience of the virtual and hybrid employee's ability to live by the core values?	"I think if the person is hired on as a full time remote employee they have a hard time adapting to these core values" - hybrid employee	Difficult for newly hired full-time remote employee
How would you compare the experience of the virtual and hybrid employee's ability to live by the core values?	"Balance and work life is much easier working remotely" - virtual employee	Individualism; Work/life balance
What is the role of leadership in a virtual/hybrid employee's ability to live by the core values?	"As a leader, I don't think you can work remotely" - hybrid employee	Virtual leaders are less effective; Less interaction
What is the role of leadership in a virtual/hybrid employee's ability to live by the core values?	"I don't think someone can work remotely and manage a team as relationships are the key to being a leader" - hybrid manager	More challenging for remote leaders; Hard to build new relationships; Leaders must be present
What is the role of leadership in a virtual/hybrid employee's ability to live by the core values?	"I don't think it is easy, but if we are going to be a world-wide company it is something we must adapt to" - virtual manager	Ability to Adapt
What is the role of the individual employee as a virtual or hybrid employee to live by the core values?	"I believe we are more independent and more proactive with communication" - virtual manager	Must learn independently; Must be self-motivated Communication is key
What is the role of the individual employee as a virtual or hybrid employee to live by the core values?	"As a remote employee you must be more resourceful" - hybrid employee	Must be resourceful especially if you are virtual
What is the role of the individual employee as a virtual or hybrid employee to live by the core values?	"One must be more self-motivated and have a strong drive" - hybrid employee	Motivated

Continued

Table 6. Continued.

What would you change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live by the corporate core values?	"XYZ Technology needs to implement more personal video units to help employees adapt" - hybrid manager	Need personal video units
What would you change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live by the corporate core values?	"Facilitating a 6 month transition protocol should be enforced" - hybrid employee	Wait six months to transition into the hybrid or virtual role; make video mandatory for all meetings
What would you change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live by the corporate core values?	"Incorporating more team meetings would be beneficial for all employees" - virtual employee	Incorporate more team meetings; Training
What would you add, take away or change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live by the corporate core values?	"I don't think anything needs to be changed with our corporate values" - hybrid employee	Leave as is
What would you add, take away or change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live by the corporate core values?	"I believe having some more training and around technology would be beneficial" - hybrid employee	Have all virtual employees become a hybrid before fully transitioning into the virtual role
What would you add, take away or change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live by the corporate core values?	"Starting every virtual employee as a hybrid employee could help mandate the core values for those potential remote workers" virtual manager	Training and Transition
Is there something else you wish to say about working hybrid or virtually at XYZ Technology employee?	"I feel like I'm missing something if I'm not in the office so having the social interaction is a must" - hybrid employee	Need the social interaction
Is there something else you wish to say about working hybrid or virtually at XYZ Technology employee?	"I think so people perceive a remote employee as less involved in the business, but I disagree; being remote enables better communication because it forces you to do so" - virtual manager	It can be perceived that virtual employees put in less initiative and this needs to be changed; Communication

Summary

In summary, the results indicated that there was a clear and defined relationship between Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1995) six assumptions and the eight key business concepts relating to the core values outlined in XYZ Technology Company. The focus group, interviews, and demographic surveys conducted displayed each individual's perception on how each core value was applied in their work routine. By understanding each employee's perception, the researcher was able to integrate the andragogy framework into a chart that was easily interpreted.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion

The purpose for this study was to explore possible relationships between andragogy, as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner, the eight process elements of learning, and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live by the XYZ Technology Company's core values. Another purpose was to seek parallels and differences, if any, between the two groups of participants related to (a) the extent of telecommuting (hybrid versus virtual) and (b) the extent of andragogy application in an employee's perceived ability to live the company's core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity. The researcher used demographic surveys, interviews, and focus groups to collect participants' perceptions to answer the research questions. Chapter Four detailed the results of the research questions and in this chapter the researcher will expand upon those results by providing interpretations and implications of the findings. Further in this chapter are recommendations for further research.

Overview of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data from this study did in fact yield results that identified relationships directly from the XYZ Technology Company employees that unknowingly to them arose from Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1995) six assumptions and eight process elements. The identification of noticing these six assumptions and eight process elements in XYZ Technology employees created alternatives to the way each individual employee and the organization related to the business and to one another. Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1995) eight key business processes and six assumptions necessitated around the idea of informal adult education and self-directed learning, and identified adult experiences that

made them a prosperous source for one another in conducting day-to-day activities at XYZ Technology Company. As described in the literature review, Knowles (1970, 1984) recognized diverse

assumptions congruent to adult learning; particularly, the adult learner is self-directing; adult experiences make them rich resources for one another; readiness to learn can be triggered by effective role models; adults enter an educational activity with a life-centered, task-centered, or problem-centered orientation to learning; and the more potent motivators for adults are internal, such as self-esteem, recognition, better quality of life, self-confidence, and self-actualization.

(as cited in Deborah & Marquardt, 2003, p. 408)

The eight process elements of andragogy encompassed a wide range of activities that occur at all stages of the learning experience. Self-sufficiency, free inquiry, and a human's capability to be able to adapt was one of the main goals of andragogy (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Preparing the learner, climate and/or environmental setting, mutual planning, diagnosis of learning needs, designing learning objectives, learning activities, learning plan execution, and evaluation were other education strategies Knowles (1984) analyzed. Originating from these six assumptions and eight process elements by Knowles (1973, 1990, 1995) emulated the researcher's perception of seven andragogical categories that each XYZ employee encompassed. These seven andragogical categories fundamentally developed directly from Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1995) eight process elements and six assumptions and were constructed based on the results found in the researcher's data. Included in these key categories were 1) readiness to learn/preparing learner, 2) self-directed learning, 3) learner's need to know/learner's experience, 4)

environmental climate, 5) internal motivation, 6) evaluation, and 7) communication.

These well-intended prevailing themes established how the relationship between the XYZ employees and organization were measured. Researchers must continue to explore the data found on virtual and hybrid employees because the outcome may affect its replication of andragogical concepts in other businesses and organizations as well.

Furthermore, it contemplated whether employees were unaware of how the six assumptions and eight key business concepts intervened in the workplace and how each individual was personally impacted.

The interview/focus group questions were based on the arranged research questions and posted within this collective, ethnographic study. The research questions were asked of focus group and interview participants to gain a better understanding of how XYZ Technology employees viewed their own working status as either a hybrid or virtual worker and how they conducted their workload. "For work to be meaningful, the employee must perceive it as contributing value to someone or something that matters" (Amabile & Kramer, 2013, p. 42). However, collecting this research around Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1995) andragogical concepts indicated a limited array of methods needed to appropriately monitor and provide feedback on how each employee perceived his or her own workload on an andragogical level. The primary research questions explored were to gain insight on how employees of XYZ Technology Company viewed their own status and other fellow employees, to investigate what concepts and values they admired, and to determine emerging challenges while working as a hybrid or virtual employee. They also allowed for the researcher to examine whether a combination of individual interviews, as well as a focus group interview, would yield results reflective of the same concerns or

key strategies identified by both hybrid and virtual employees in prevailing features of andragogy that were implemented consciously or unconsciously.

Interpretation of Results

Qualitative data from this study produced results that identified differences of opinions on how both virtual and hybrid employees viewed their own status and work integrity, noticeably outstanding similarities, and challenges that unknowingly yielded to Knowles' (1973, 1990, 1995) six assumptions and eight key business concepts. These perceptions from all employees of XYZ Technology Company were vital to being a successful employee. The results were based on the perception of the researcher and permeated directly into the primary research questions.

The primary research question (what is the relationship, if any, between andragogy and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live by the XYZ Technology Company's seven core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity?), was in fact established in hybrid and virtual employees and unconsciously related to the Knowles' (1973, 1990, 1995) eight key business concepts and six assumptions. To interpret this relationship, the researcher created categories, based on Knowles' (1973, 1990, 1995) concepts that each employee could relate to and were based on the interpretation of results from individual demographic surveys, individual interviews, and focus group interviews. This created a triangulation effect that evenly distributed the outcome of results. "Often the purpose of triangulation in specific contexts was to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different perspectives" (Jack & Raturi, 2006, p. 345). These categories included: 1) readiness to learn/preparing learner, 2) self-directed learning, 3) learner's

need to know/learner's experience, 4) environmental climate, 5) internal motivation, 6) evaluation, and 7) communication. The primary research question was answered by both hybrid and virtual employees and was followed by several research sub questions.

For research sub question 1 (what is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *trust* and andragogy, as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner?) (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), trust was required in order to maintain status at XYZ Technology Company both as hybrid and virtual employees. The andragogical category the researcher created for this core value included readiness to learn/preparing learner, self-directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/ learner's experience, internal motivation, and communication.

The readiness to learn/preparing the learner theory directly related to what employees want to learn in the present. In real-life situations, in order to become more effective, adults learned concepts they needed to know (Knowles et al., 2005). To have trust in both a virtual or hybrid role, one must be ready to develop realistic expectations and prepare for participation. It is the meaning of having confidence in one another to the fullest; this means integrity and credibility played a crucial factor in one person's character (Covey & Merrill, 2006). According to a few remote participants from the study, trust was needed in both the hybrid and virtual environments but was emphasized more in the virtual world because it was not face-to-face. "The major problem with virtual teams is how to promote interpersonal trust within those constraints" (Plinio & Burns, 2014, p. 41). To build up the trust in a strictly virtual environment, teams must be

fully reliant on that individual to complete his or her work. This increased the need for trust in a virtual environment.

As for the self-directed learning/orientation to learning category, employees must be willing to be self-taught and be willing to learn in a real-life setting that helps enable trust throughout the team. Virtual and hybrid employees both needed to be self-directed and have the drive to want to learn on their own. In reference to Raemdonck, Gijbels, and Van Groen (2014), the pleasure that was experienced while learning and the continuous desire to develop created a well-round worker. Employees would become more self-reliant and problem focused. “Self-directed learning is any process where the learner is the decision-maker and in control of the learning process” (Ghost Bear, 2012, p. 28). According to one participant, ‘Virtual employees need to be more determined because you don’t have the support system around’ to succeed. As a result, virtual employees became more resilient on problem-solving and coping with learning on their own rather than immediately giving up and asking for help.

In reference to Knowles’ (1973, 1990) six assumptions, adults retained new information best when new learning was executed in the real-life environment (Knowles, 1984a). All XYZ employees agreed that in order to complete their work effectively and efficiently, they needed to know what was expected from them as an employee and implement what they learned from their previous experiences, whether hybrid or virtual. This related back to Knowles’ (1973, 1990) learner's needed to know/learner’s experience category. Once employees have the information in advance of what is expected, delivering adequate results should follow.

Most of the remote employees interviewed mentioned that they were previously in a hybrid role. By transitioning into a remote role, most employees were able to apply what they had learned in the former hybrid role. As an individual evolves he/she increases a growing knowledge of experience that becomes a pertinent resource for learning (Knowles et al., 2005). “Learning from everyday situations, opportunities, dilemmas and experiences are a process all learners confront countless times during their lives” (Ghost Bear, 2012, p. 28). This exemplified the idea of Knowles’ (1984b, 1973, 1990) design of the learning experience. The core value of trust also related back to Knowles’ (1973, 1990) idea of internal motivation. In order for virtual and hybrid employees to complete their work diligently, they must have internal motivation and determination to accomplish that goal. According to one employee, to maintain status as a virtual employee, he must be ‘independent and proactive’ to stay motivated. Communication was also a vital key when establishing trust in any relationship. “Inequitable, irregular, and unpredictable communication can hinder trust” (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999, p. 808). Virtual and hybrid employees both needed to ensure they were continuously engaging with their team by communicating on a daily basis. Some technological advancements used to transmit communication by all XYZ Technology included email, Jabber (IM), WebEx video call center, Cisco Spark, Cisco Teams, and Microsoft teams (etc.).

For research sub question 2 (what is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees’ perceived ability to live by the core value *humility* and andragogy, as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner?) (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973,

1995), humility was required in order to maintain status at XYZ Technology Company both as hybrid and virtual employee. The andragogical category the researcher created for this core value included readiness to learn/preparing learner, self-directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/learner's experience, internal motivation, communication, and evaluation. For hybrid and virtual employees to establish a sense of humility, the learner must be ready and prepared to learn what is relevant to his or her own work. By understanding this need, the employee would provide a sense of one's own importance to the organization. Employees must be able to be self-direct in their own work and learn in day-to-day instances, thus providing each employee the opportunity to problem solve on his or her own.

According to one virtual participant, 'you want to work harder to prove you can get your work done;' this showed self-determination to accomplish a goal. As employees matured in their work, they learned from their past experiences and take a better understanding of their role as to what they needed know to get their job accomplished. To be a humble employee of XYZ Technology company, each employee must learn from his or her own past experiences and apply what he or she has learned to the then-current role. The organization must provide the appropriate tools, training, and technology advancements to learn from the past.

Employees did mention XYZ Technology did an excellent job of preparing employees for future applications and implementations. For example, one participant stated, 'Having Web Ex meetings and training bi-weekly is great' helped prepare employees for the future of the company. "While trust is a critical element in any team or operations, it's particularly important when you are managing teams or operations that

are geographically and culturally dispersed” (Ross, 2008, p. 1). Utilizing these applications enabled all employees, whether virtual or hybrid, to communicate openly. At the end of each quarter, all XYZ employees were evaluated on the work they completed. This evaluation was validated by peers and managers and was meant for the employee to humble him or herself and genuinely reflect on what was learned during that time period.

For research sub question 3 (what is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees’ perceived ability to live by the core value *embracing change* and andragogy, as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner?) (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), embracing change was required in order to maintain status at XYZ Technology Company both as hybrid and virtual employee. The andragogical category the researcher conceived for this core value included readiness to learn/preparing learner, self- directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/learner’s experience, environment climate, internal motivation, communication, and evaluation. Preparing each hybrid and virtual employee to embrace change may present some anxiety to the employee.

In order to help the employee embrace these changes, XYZ Technology company provided real-life work examples they could relate to, so they could adapt to the changes necessary for a positive outcome for the company as a whole. “Group success is dependent on effective communications and knowledge sharing among members” (Townsend, DeMarie, & Hendrickson, 1998, p. 19). One participant stated the ‘level of opportunities to embrace change as a remote employee are greater’ because one can learn

and prepare one's self, alone. Having the ability to problem solve on one's own, allows for more growth for that particular individual. Furthermore, being able to problem solve will enable the employee's ability to learn past experiences. It will also demonstrate how each employee has overcome certain obstacles and can result in embracing change for the good of the company.

Working in the appropriate environmental climate was ranked as one of the most important influential aspects participants communicated during the interview and focus group process. "The virtual workplace alternative is beginning to play a larger role in strategies to attract and retain employees" (Potter, 2003, p. 78). For example, during the focus group, one participant commented being able to work from home allows for a 'more relaxed environment which has a positive effect on my attitude.' Others stated more is accomplished in the office. This entirely depends on the individual and the environment they enjoy working in. Being a hybrid employee and adapting to the change in environment is a part of the daily routine since they are not solely working remotely.

Being able to embrace change has a direct effect on the employee's internal motivation. In order to motivate employees, a leader's ability to persuade, influence, and inspire others to grow in the workplace reflects specifically on their own talent to motivate (Gilley et al., 2009). Ineffective training, knowledge, and education can hinder motivation if it is not communicated and practiced by the employee (Knowles et al., 2005). It is the employer's job to communicate openly with the company to express certain changes (i.e. leadership, technology, fundamental, etc.) and helps facilitate these changes to the entire company. Employees must be satisfied with certain adjustments and understand why they are being implemented to increase job satisfaction and self-

esteem. After these changes are implemented, upper management should evaluate each change with each employee.

For research sub question 4, what is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *passion* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), passionate work ethic is required in order to maintain status at XYZ Technology Company both as hybrid and virtual employee. The andragogical category the researcher established for this core value includes readiness to learn/preparing learner, self-directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/ learner's experience, internal motivation, and communication. Adults become passionate about work when the ability to relate to real-life circumstances is presented.

XYZ Technology company does an excellent job of facilitating the "need to know" platform and demonstrates a shared knowledge of why it is important to learn. One participant commented that the training and onboarding process for new employees has tremendously made a vast improvement over the last few years. Hybrid and virtual employees must engage in the notion of being self-directed in order to continue having a passionate work ethic. By having the drive to want to learn more and extend one's own knowledge will directly impact one's internal motivation and passion. Communicating with peers and managers daily helps drive what motivates employees on a personal level. Motivation is directly affected, either negatively or beneficially, based on the experience an employee has within a given work atmosphere (Gilley et al., 2009). By discussing

these aspects of the job openly will result in a positive outcome for both the employee and the organization.

For research sub question 5, what is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *positive attitude* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), positive attitude is required in order to maintain status at XYZ Technology Company both as hybrid and virtual employee. The andragogical category the researcher formed for this core value includes readiness to learn/preparing learner, self-directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/ learner's experience, environmental climate, internal motivation, communication, and evaluation. As reiterated in the previous core values, having a positive attitude derives from employees who thoroughly understand the expected outcomes of the organization and are prepared with the appropriate information to complete their jobs successfully. Knowles (1973, 1990, 1995) exemplified the opportunity to be self-directed. Employees at XYZ Technology Company believe in the need to be seen and treated as capable in order to develop the skill of being self-directed, whether that is as a virtual or hybrid employee.

One characteristic discovered during the focus group is being a self-aware employee means having everyone's point of view taken into account by management and peers. This is completed by both hybrid and virtual employees communicating their thoughts and feelings during weekly/bi-weekly/monthly meetings. This also opens a forum where employees can understand what is expected of them as employees and learns from their own experiences. According to Ghost Bear (2012) self-directed

learning is self-teaching where learners have power over all mechanical aspects and approaches of their learning processes (p. 28). This aspect is also reviewed during each employee's evaluation at the end of each quarter with management. One participant mentioned that 'some people are better than others as embracing our culture' but all employees must have the ability to become self-directed learners if they want to survive in the rapidly changing climate.

Having the ability to communicate and engage in active dialogue with teammates and peers, whether virtually or face-to-face, creates a positive work environment where employees have a positive attitude. One remote employee mentioned 'having the tools and applications to communicate virtually has had a positive impact on my attitude' thus reflecting directly on individual performance. The benefit of being able to work from home opens the opportunity for employees to work freely, and allowing employees to work at their own pace. The intrinsic value of having a positive attitude will ultimately affect one's internal motivation to become a better employee.

For research sub question 6, what is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *teamwork* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), teamwork is required in order to maintain status at XYZ Technology Company both as hybrid and virtual employee. The andragogical category the researcher formed for this core value includes readiness to learn/preparing learner, self-directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/ learner's experience, environmental climate, internal motivation, and communication. Effective and efficient

teamwork is expected of each hybrid and virtual employee at XYZ Technology Company.

Being prepared to engage in teamwork is expected of each employee.

Organizations, whether virtual or not, can ultimately realize the competitive synergy of teamwork and exploit the revolution in telecommunications (Townsend et al., 1998).

One example of teamwork presented was that although some teams are strictly remote, working closely together is a necessity in order to achieve greatness. Employees must take the initiative to be actively engaged in others work in order to learn what they need to know to get the job done. Collaboration in a supportive work environment allows for open communication on the team and provides a positive atmosphere even as a remote employee. 'Asking each other questions and bouncing off ideas from one another creates an effective learning environment whether you are virtual or face to face,' according to one remote employee.

For research sub question 7, what is the relationship between hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees' perceived ability to live by the core value *honesty and integrity* and andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), honesty and integrity is required in order to maintain status at XYZ Technology Company both as hybrid and virtual employee. The andragogical category the researcher formed for this core value includes readiness to learn/preparing learner, self-directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/ learner's experience, internal motivation, and communication. Honesty and integrity go without saying when trying to run a successful business.

XYZ Technology Company prepares the employee with the appropriate training and information when he or she is hired. One remote employee stated, 'it is important to have honesty and integrity because you are relying so much on other people.' Being open and honest creates transparency within the organization. "Effective communication, goal attainment, and service attainment are possible only in an atmosphere of trust" (Ross, 2008, p. 2). This allows for employees to grow and aspire into future leaders. Moral and ethical standards that are clearly established when employees are hired, leads to a successful foundation for the organization.

The research question, how do hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employees compare in their perceived ability to live by the seven core values, is measured by the andragogical concept of the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), is required for every XYZ Technology employee to adhere to in order to keep their role as an employee, whether hybrid or virtual. The andragogical category the researcher formed for this core value includes readiness to learn/preparing learner, self-directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/ learner's experience, environmental climate, internal motivation, communication, and evaluation. When onboarding an employee to XYZ Technology Company, it is important that the hiring manager look for these seven core values when searching for the pertinent candidate, whether this is for a virtual or hybrid position. It is the manager's job to prepare the employee for the realistic expectations and provide him or her with the appropriate information he or she is looking for in an employee. It is also required for the supervisor to provide the tools and applications necessary for the employee to excel within the

company. The characteristics of one's job can outline the competence development and learning for workers (Raemdonck et al., 2014). This allows for employees to learn to solve problems on their own and grow. According to the research, some employees adapt to this type of work environment and culture better than others. Some participants also mentioned, 'if you are hired as a remote employee it is harder to adapt to become an XYZ successful employee.' Many participants agreed with this statement and elaborated by saying, 'it is easier for an employee to adapt to the XYZ culture if the employee was first hired on as a hybrid employee who then transitioned to a virtual role.'

Employees at XYZ Technology Company are hired from all different ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and educations basis thus creating a very diverse culture for employees to openly learn from one another. Communication is a primary resource used daily; this helps employees grow and learn from their own life and work experiences. Employees commented in the research study that having open discussions, simulations, and problem-solving forums has to lead the company to be successful. As reported by one remote employee, the reliance on technology for communication has heavily impacted how employees must be self-directed in order to keep up with the changing environment. Being open to new strategies on how employees learn is a necessity that is not always taught, but executives need to be aware of the changing surroundings on how people learn and interpret information. Having employees participate in weekly meetings, quarterly reviews, and yearly assessments will help upper management determine what strategies are working for the company and what aspects need to change or adapt to improve, not only employee's self-performance but to be a successful organization as well.

The research question, what is the role of leadership at XYZ Technology Company in helping hybrid and virtual employees perceive they are able to live by the seven core values, is measured by the andragogical concept of the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), and having the appropriate leadership established in an organization is key for its own growth. The andragogical category the researcher formed for this core value includes readiness to learn/preparing learner, self- directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/ learner's experience, environmental climate, internal motivation, communication, and evaluation. As a leader, it is important to understand employees look to him or her as a role model/successor and can help coach employees up within the organization. It is a leader's job to initiate that each employee clearly understands his or her role and how it affects the organization. Understanding an employee's day-to-day task in real life situations and taking accountability for his or her work can help the success of the company. "Daily communication between a team leader and individual team members is the glue that holds a virtual team together" (Blaise et al., 2006, p. 429). Per the research found, employees stated they enjoy meeting with their managers one-on-one as it enhances their teamwork and communication with one another, whether virtual or hybrid. Weekly or monthly meetings also allow for leaders to be actively engaged with their employees to see how they are progressing as independent or self-directed learners. "Smart managers recognize the importance of cultivating their top talent by providing leadership development coaching at all levels of the organization" (Garfinkle, 2017, p. 1).

Understanding that all employees have an equal ability to coach, whether that is vertically or laterally, can directly impact one's motivation in the company. Employees in the research study commented they are able to coach on all levels therefore insinuating an employee has the capability to coach a manager if necessary. Per the survey results, a little over 60% of employees sampled from this research study strongly agreed they have a good and honest relationship with their manager. These results implicate XYZ Technology is effectively engaging with their employees on a level they can understand and relate to. Subsequently, most participants in the study declared the opportunity to move up in leadership roles as virtual employees is limited because their presence physically is limited.

The research question, what is the role of the individual hybrid and virtual XYZ Technology Company employee in helping him herself perceive he or she is able to live by the seven core values, is measured by the andragogical concept of the six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1973, 1990) and the eight process elements of adult learning (Knowles, 1973, 1995), applies to all employees and each employee is held accountable to ensure his or her are living by the core values. The andragogical category the researcher formed for this core value includes readiness to learn/preparing learner, self-directed learning/orientation to learning, learner's need to know/ learner's experience, environmental climate, internal motivation, communication, and evaluation. Actively engaged employees who are aware they must assimilate the seven core values in their daily task are the ones that succeed at XYZ Technology Company. These employees do whatever it takes to excel at their own job and help coach others as well. Understanding what they need to know to succeed and learn from their own experiences

are a few ways employees present their role in how they perceive they live the core values.

Collaborating and communicating with others, whether they are a virtual or hybrid employee, is another way teamwork is successful and employees' view themselves incorporating the core values on a daily basis. "Developing skills in communication, goal setting, planning and task proficiency are all as important for the virtual team as for the traditional team" (Townsend et al., 1998, p. 26). According to some participants, virtual employees and hybrid employees had very different opinions of each other and how they perceived themselves living the core values. For example, one virtual employee stated, 'some virtual employees feel trust in the virtual environment is higher than it is when they were in a hybrid role.' Other hybrid employees felt virtual employees may have less trust because they were not physically available. Each opinion was varied and based on certain people's backgrounds, personal experiences, and knowledge. Evaluating each employee at the end of the year with management to recap on how the core values were utilized throughout the year helped the employee, manager, and organization grow.

Implications

The implications of the findings of this research study were similar to others in the field of virtual learning and those who studied the concepts of andragogy. The results of this study will help other employers that have similar core values (tacit or implicit) better prepare current and future employees, through a more thorough understanding of the andragogy concepts in helping employees, whether hybrid or virtual, live by a company's core values. According to Isenberg (2007), it seemed rational for adults who

were not actually present to facilitate effective online learning follow andragogical principles presented by Knowles (1975, 1980, 1984a, 1984b). Knowles (1975, 1980, 1984a, 1984b) introduced the characteristics of learning (need to know, self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn) and shaped the term better known at the time of this writing as andragogy (the study of adult learning). For other companies to be successful in facilitating online virtual employees, it is most vital to understand the importance of following Knowles' (1975, 1980, 1984a, 1984b) concepts of how adults learn. For example, most participants in this study expressed the importance of having open communication with team members and effective trust and collaboration within the organization. As referenced by Kavanaugh (2015), CEO of World Wide Technology, investing in the company's people was a key ingredient to a successful organization. As one of the most profitable, growth companies, also on Fortune 100's Best Companies to work for, Kavanaugh's (2015) success supported this theory.

“Adult education is quite distinctive in its approach in that it aims to do substantially more than simply impart information to participants” (Connolly, 1996, p. 126). According to Henschke (1998), andragogy could be defined as a scientific discipline that studied everything related to learning and teaching and brought adults to their full degree of humaneness. Andragogy was positioned around the idea that the lecturer did not possess all the knowledge and others were encouraged to participate by referencing past experiences (McGrath, 2009). This theory should be utilized in all organizations, and not just in the educational sectors. According to this research study, it

is clearly defined that all participants learn from prior experiences and gain knowledge to help progress in their daily job duties.

The implications for future virtual/hybrid employment utilizing the andragogical concepts of Knowles (1975, 1980, 1984a, 1984b) should entail open communication, prepare the employee with the appropriate information needed in order to be successful, ensure the employee has access to the right tools and technology to be a self-directed individual, facilitate the employees' previous knowledge and experiences into daily tasks, provide the employee with the opportunity to be internally motivated so that the employee wants to learn and grow on their own, and evaluate and measure each employee's performance and provide constructive feedback therefore ensuring the employee's success.

"The global marketplace has become both more competitive and more dependable on employees' creativity, commitment, and initiative to maintain a strategic advantage" (Caldwell et al., 2010, p. 497). Giving the nature of online environments, without prompts of face-to-face interaction, trust could be eliminated from any relationship if not established up front (Ridings et al., 2002). "Unless trust permeates all facets of an organization, productivity will fall, creativity will decrease, and stress will abound" (Bader & Liljenstrand, 2003, p. 3). Therefore, the most influential implications to take away from this study is to ensure a company has a well-established culture of people which requires trustworthiness, open honest communication, constructive criticism and feedback at all levels throughout the organization. Without these concepts, the trust will never be established thus the company will be set up to fail.

The underlying goal of the study was to explore and research the use of Knowles (1973, 1990, 1995) andragogical concepts, specifically, andragogy's six assumptions and eight process elements, to see if these concepts would be useful and applicable in XYZ's virtual/hybrid employee daily tasks, based on its core values. As this research study developed and reviewed, it became evident that there was a purpose to explore these andragogy concepts within XYZ's workplace. This research could be used to back up the strategies, weaknesses, and/or flaws in implementing the XYZ's own core values. Understanding the perception from an employee's point of view was imperative if the company wanted to become a successful company. Utilizing the feedback from current employees can help adapt the company's vision and mission to become more aligned with the company's go to market strategy and have a direct impact on the core values the company needs to integrate.

The implication for businesses seeking an interest in virtual and hybrid employment, especially those who have similar core values, is to take time to be reflective and review all feedback from its own employees. People are the most important asset to a company and understanding their wants and needs is essential. Placing the right people in the right position is vital to any leader wanting to coach an employee up in the business. "Coaching enables the coachee to consciously make better-informed decisions which will lead to a better quality of sense making" (Angélique, 2007, p. 290). Being able to provide this coaching ability through an organization will lead to the employee and organizational success (Bersin, 2011).

The final implication of this study and overall message, speaks directly to the characteristics of an effective business leader who can facilitate an andragogical concept

of how adults learn in the virtual and hybrid employee environment. Effective concepts of andragogy hinge on a business leader's ability to perceive hybrid and virtual employees' strengths and weaknesses. It also provides feedback on how each employee can improve his or her behavior and performance based on the core values of the company. This evaluation promotes the idea that each employee should become life-long learners and strive for continuous improvement. Promoting lifelong learning involves engaging the student to learn from his or her previous real-world problems and acquiring knowledge and skills to become self-directed (Collins, 2009). Employees will want to be engaged and learn more about their job profession if motivated by their leaders and executives.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher has many recommendations for future research and follow-up studies. In this qualitative, ethnographic study, the employee interviews and focus groups were combined with the employee demographic surveys to give an overall profile for each employee's perception of his or her own status, as an XYZ Technology employee, so comparisons could be made between each employee and how it affects XYZ's current core values. However, it is suggested that future research takes a quantitative approach by requiring an executive to rate the employees he or she perceives as implementing the concepts of andragogy and comparing those employee ratings with specific corporate goals and also comparing these results to both hybrid and virtual employees. "Taking systematic account of the informal self-learning and training relevant to actual job performance would provide a fuller understanding of the complex relations between learning and employment" (Livingstone, 2001, p. 25).

Correspondingly, the researcher suggests future studies correlate the implementation of andragogical concepts with employee performance data.

Similarly, it is suggested that future studies of andragogy implementation within the workplace examine different methodologies, differences in settings and groups, and experience and length of implementation. Further qualitative andragogical studies and how it affects business strategies are needed and should include direct employee observations and permanent products, or documents produced by the human resources department and/or a training team as additional evidence of andragogy measures.

Clear articulation of a common view and consensus on the current situation and the way forward, with an agreement to implement a formal change management plan, and initiate sense giving to proposed changes with retraining and support for the implementation of systems, in order for new processes routines and systems to become the norm. (Rowland-Jones, 2012, p. 373)

This ethnographic study was limited to one company (XYZ Technology Company) and limited by the number of departments who participated in the study. The difference between each employee's personal background, experiences, and level of employment varied, as well.

There is also a need for future andragogical research within businesses to include longitudinal case studies that monitor andragogy concepts progress and from early implementation, when an employee is hired, to help establish how to incorporate relevant core values into the company. "Longitudinal studies would provide unique insights into how self-directed learning can be developed in an organization" (Rana, Ardichvili, & Polesello, 2016, p. 489). In addition, future research of andragogy concepts within the

business world would allow for comparisons from a wider selection of participating businesses/departments, and possibly even national or global trends. It would then be stimulating to compare specific andragogy concepts to international businesses, as this type of large-scale comparisons would add to the scope and depth of andragogical literature.

The researcher's final suggestion for future studies to explore is how andragogy benefits employee ideas and expertise in the workplace. According to Rowland-Jones (2010) in order to improve the organizational process, based on a clear demonstration of willingness to incorporate employees' ideas and expertise, will help a business succeed. The majority of interview and focus group responses in the study were about how each core value of XYZ Technology attributed to each employees' current status, whether hybrid or virtual, and how well each employee communicated with each other and customers. As presented in other research studies, "the capability to interact with others and have collaborative learning experiences should be explored in future studies" (Jestice, 2010, p. 129). Therefore, it is recommended that businesses align their core values equal to the culture of the people and the environmental setting that best suits the company.

Conclusion

The purpose for this qualitative study was to explore the relationship, if any, between andragogy as measured by the six assumptions of the adult learner and the eight process elements of adult learning, and the perceived ability of hybrid and virtual employees to live by the XYZ Technology Company's core values. In addition, the goal of the researcher was to seek parallels and differences, if any, between the two groups of

participants related to (a) the extent of telecommuting (hybrid versus virtual) and to (b) the extent of andragogy application in an employee's perceived ability to live by the company's core values: trust, humility, embracing change, passion, positive attitude, teamwork, and honesty and integrity.

Based on the results found, all hybrid and virtual employees wanted to be engaged and learn more about their job profession if they are motivated by their leaders and executives. All employees agreed that having open communication and collaboration, whether virtual or hybrid, is vital to the importance of having a healthy relationship. Trust is needed in both the hybrid and virtual environment but is emphasized more in the virtual world because it is not face-to-face. To build up the trust in a strictly virtual environment, teams must be fully reliant on that individual to complete their work. Virtual and hybrid employees both need to be self-directed and have the drive to want to learn on their own. As employees mature in their work, they learn from past experiences and have a better understanding of their roles as to what they need know to get their jobs accomplished. Having the ability to problem solve on one's own, allows for more growth for that individual. Everyone should have the desire to aspire to want to learn more about his or her job and what is expected by the organization to be a successful virtual or hybrid employee. By having the drive to want to learn more and extend one's own knowledge will directly impact one's internal motivation and passion. Being open and honest creates transparency within the organization and allows for all employees to grow and aspire into future leaders. Like much of the current andragogy research, focus groups and one-on-one interviews identified a need to continue

to be self-directed and take the initiative to learn and grow from previous real-life situations.

In conclusion, a common theme among both virtual and hybrid employee data was that andragogical concepts were subconsciously applied in the company. Employees unknowingly applied andragogical concepts in the workplace through quality professional development and training, effective collaboration and communication, and establishment of an open platform for employees to work together. If not already unconsciously applying andragogical concepts, businesses may benefit by providing structure-based strategies that align with Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1995) six assumptions of characteristics of the adult learner and eight process elements by which adults learn best.

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Appendices
Appendix A

Lindenwood University Consent Form

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

(Electronic Version)

Informed Consent for Participation in Survey and Interview/Focus Group Population

**Andragogy and Virtual/Hybrid employee: A Ethnographic Study on the
Relationship between Andragogy and the Perceived Ability to Live the Core Values
as both Hybrid and Virtual Employees at World Wide Technology Company.**

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by a fellow WWT employee under the guidance of Dr. Robyne Elder. The purpose of this study is to explore the Relationship between Andragogy and the Perceived Ability to Live the Core Values as both Hybrid and Virtual Employees at World Wide Technology. I would like to conduct and review interviews to explore the roles of how adults learn both hybrid (50% on/50%off campus) and virtually (100% off campus) employees conduct their job on a day to day basis.
2. (a) Your participation will involve participating in a two-part research study. Part I focuses on demographic information. Part II a 10-question interview and/or Focus Group with the researcher discussing the core values of World Wide Technology and how they impact how you execute your job.

(b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be 5-10 minutes to complete Part I via surveymonkey.com.
(c) For Part II, your participation in either an Interview/Focus group that will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Approximately 15-21 fully completed and valid interviews will be conducted. 1 Focus Group will be conducted at GHQ and Video capability will be available.
3. There are no more than minimal risks associated with completing this survey/questionnaires/interviews. There are also no more than minimal risks for those who voluntarily participate in the interview.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to how the future virtual workforce is implemented, the benefits and downfalls of working virtually, and hopefully help the future of job satisfaction within WWT organization.

Compensation in the form of one \$100 gift card will be raffled to one participant from the focus group and/or interview participants.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
6. The researcher will do everything possible to protect your privacy. All information that you provide during this research study will be kept completely confidential. Absolutely none of the individual answers that you provide will be shared with anyone, including your manager or supervisor. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Robyne Elder at 314-566-4884 your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4912.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above. Completion of this survey/ serves as your consent to participate in this study. Clicking “next” constitutes your consent to participate in this research.

Date and Signature: _____

Appendix B

Demographic Survey Questions

1. What is your department? (This question is a drop down question.)
 - A. Business Operations
 - B. Sales Operations
 - C. Information Technology

2. What is your gender?
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
 - C. I would prefer not to identify as male or female

3. What is your age?
 - A. Under 21
 - B. 21-30 years old
 - C. 31-40 years old
 - D. 41-50 years old
 - E. Above 50 years old

4. What is your highest level of education?
 - A. Some school
 - B. High school diploma or GED
 - C. Associates Degree
 - D. Bachelor's Degree
 - E. Master's Degree
 - F. Doctorate Degree

5. I am inspired to meet my goals at work.
 - A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree

6. My supervisor and I have a good working relationship.
 - A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree

7. I feel I have the necessary tools and technology to complete my job effectively and efficiently.
 - A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree

8. Are you currently trying to further your education, either by schooling or certifications?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

9. Do you take the time to learn new training/technological advancements about the company on your own?
 - A. Never
 - B. Rarely
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Often
 - E. Always

10. Do you telecommute?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No, I'm not able to work from home
 - C. Yes, 1 day a week
 - D. Yes, 2 or more days a week
 - E. I'm a remote employee

Appendix C

Interview/Focus Group Questions

1. How is employee status as a hybrid or virtual employee related to an individual employee's ability to live the corporate core values?
 - a. Trust?
 - b. Embracing Change?
 - c. Passion?
 - d. Positive Attitude?
 - e. Teamwork?
 - f. Honesty and Integrity?
2. How would you compare the experience of virtual and hybrid employees' ability to live the core values?
3. What is the role of leadership in a virtual/hybrid employee ability to live the core values?
4. What is the role of the individual employee as a virtual or hybrid employee to live the core values?
5. What would you change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live the corporate core values?
6. What would you add, take away, or change to help the virtual/hybrid employees live the corporate core values?
7. Is there something else you would like to say about working as a hybrid/virtual employee?

Appendix D

Required Approval(s) for Research Study

From: Loughman, Tim

Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2017 4:54 PM

To: Van Iseghem, Laura <Laura.VanIseghem@wwt.com>; Mika, Jeff <Jeff.Mika@wwt.com>; McKeon, Bill <Bill.McKeon@wwt.com>

Cc: Boehm, Michelle <Michelle.Boehm@wwt.com>

Subject: RE: Research Study for WWT Employee

I'm good with it.... good luck.

Tim Loughman Vice President of Sales Operations
World Wide Technology, Inc.
Phone- 314-919-1411
Cell- 314-517-1592

From: Van Iseghem, Laura

Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 10:51 AM

To: McKeon, Bill <Bill.McKeon@wwt.com>; Loughman, Tim <Tim.Loughman@wwt.com>

Cc: Mika, Jeff <Jeff.Mika@wwt.com>; Boehm, Michelle <Michelle.Boehm@wwt.com>

Subject: Research Study for WWT Employee

Hi Executive team!

I'm currently pursuing my Doctorate in Education and I would like to conduct my study here at WWT. I was hoping it would be OK with you if I emailed out a short survey/questionnaire in order to achieve the results I'm looking for. I'm putting together the appropriate documentation in order to get this formatted correctly out to the teams. I will need the IRB's approval before I can start any of my research but I wanted to run this by you first to see if you would be ok with me collaborating with your teams. The research question I'm going to be researching is What is the relationship, if at all, between andragogy and the perceived ability to live the core values while doing their job at XYZ Technology Company whether hybrid or virtual? (when I say Hybrid/Virtual I mean Telecommute and Remote) The survey and questionnaire questions will be based on how we as WWT employees learn, collaborate and engage together. I will send them out via surveymonkey.com. They will be at the most about 10 questions each. Once I have all my surveys and questionnaires completed, I will contact each person who wishes to participate personally to invite them to an interview to discuss further.

WWT will not be referenced while conducting this research... I will refer to WWT as XYZ Company so it is listed anonymously.

Please let me know if you would be OK with me collaborating with your team

Thanks,

Laura Van Iseghem M.B.A.

Federal Procurement Specialist | World Wide Technology | Tel: (314).301.2664 | Cell
Phone: 314-277-3809 * Laura.VanIseghem@wwt.com

From: Nieder, Megan
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 10:27 AM
To: Van Iseghem, Laura <Laura.VanIseghem@wwt.com>
Subject: RE: Research Study for WWT Employees (Finance)

Hi Laura,

I am good with it!

Megan Nieder

Finance Manager – Federal Sales

World Wide Technology, Inc.

Direct: 314-995-6140

megan.nieder@wwt.com |www.wwt.com

From: Van Iseghem, Laura
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 10:51 AM
To: McKeon, Bill <Bill.McKeon@wwt.com>; Loughman, Tim <Tim.Loughman@wwt.com>
Cc: Mika, Jeff <Jeff.Mika@wwt.com>; Boehm, Michelle <Michelle.Boehm@wwt.com>
Subject: Research Study for WWT Employee

Hi Executive team!

I'm currently pursuing my Doctorate in Education and I would like to conduct my study here at WWT. I was hoping it would be OK with you if I emailed out a short survey/questionnaire in order to achieve the results I'm looking for. I'm putting together the appropriate documentation in order to get this formatted correctly out to the teams. I will need the IRB's approval before I can start any of my research but I wanted to run this by you first to see if you would be ok with me collaborating with your teams. The research question I'm going to be researching is What is the relationship, if at all, between andragogy and the perceived ability to live the core values while doing their job at XYZ Technology Company whether hybrid or virtual? (when I say Hybrid/Virtual I mean Telecommute and Remote) The survey and questionnaire questions will be based on how we as WWT employees learn, collaborate and engage together. I will send them out via surveymonkey.com. They will be at the most about 10 questions each. Once I have all my surveys and questionnaires completed, I will contact each person who wishes to participate personally to invite them to an interview to discuss further.

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Please let me know if you would be OK with me collaborating with your team

Thanks,

Laura Van Iseghem M.B.A.

Federal Procurement Specialist | World Wide Technology | Tel: (314).301.2664 | Cell
Phone: 314-277-3809 * Laura.VanIseghem@wwt.com

From: Wittenauer, Jeff

Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 12:07 PM

To: Van Iseghem, Laura <Laura.VanIseghem@wwt.com>

Cc: Strothcamp, Leia <Leia.Strothcamp@wwt.com>; Toms, Joey <Joey.Toms@wwt.com>; Moldovan, Doreen <Doreen.Moldovan@wwt.com>

Subject: Re: Research Study for WWT Employee

Sure, not a problem. Adding Doreen, too, so you can hit up the IT Service Management team as well.

Jeff Wittenauer

Jeff Wittenauer Senior Manager of Information Technology

World Wide Technology, Inc.

Phone- 314-919-1411

Cell- 314-517-1598

From: Van Iseghem, Laura

Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 10:51 AM

To: McKeon, Bill <Bill.McKeon@wwt.com>; Loughman, Tim

<Tim.Loughman@wwt.com>

Cc: Mika, Jeff <Jeff.Mika@wwt.com>; Boehm, Michelle <Michelle.Boehm@wwt.com>

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Appendix E

NIH Certificate

