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**Developing Effective Leadership:
Exploring the State of Vertical Development in Practice**

**A Research Project
Presented to the Faculty of
The Graziadio Business School
Pepperdine University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Organization Development**

**by
Hannah Elise Jones**

June 2018

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This research project, completed by

HANNAH ELISE JONES

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The Graziadio Business School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: June 2018

Faculty Committee

Committee Chair, Julie Chesley, Ph.D.

Committee Member, Terri Egan, Ph.D.

Deryck J. van Rensburg, D.B.A., Dean
The Graziadio Business School
School of Business and Management

Abstract

This research builds upon arguments for the use of the psychological theory of adult vertical development to transform traditional organizational practices of leadership development, and build leaders needed for the future. The purpose of this study is to understand the current state of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices. Specifically, the research considers what strategies and practices are being used, and what challenges practitioners have faced in implementation. It was found that an organization's success in implementing vertical development largely depended on three factors: 1) overall leadership development strategy, 2) ability to overcome new variations of organizational challenges that have long impeded leadership development, and 3) degree to which vertical development theories are used in practice. The details of this research illustrate that accelerating leadership capacity of an organization through the implementation of vertical development requires significant organizational commitment and change, and likely a new perspective on organizational change itself.

Keywords: leadership, leadership development, vertical development, implementation

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Leadership has become a cultural fascination in the western world, where leaders are celebrated everywhere from the basketball court, to the campaign trail, from the local news media, and to the c-suite. A search on Amazon reveals more than 190,000 books on leadership, and a vast number of blogs and websites dedicated to the topic populate the Internet. Conversations about leadership, who has it, and how you gain it are everywhere. For organizations, however, the conversation is indicative of more than just a trend. Global changes have transformed the demands placed on leadership and are reshaping what it means to be a leader in today's society. Unfortunately, most leaders are not able to make the transition required to be effective. A study of executive leadership done by McKinsey & Co. found that 90 percent of leaders fall below 50 percent in their ability to deliver on eight skills determined as essential for effective leadership (Ghemawat, 2012). The question of how to develop more effective leaders, those who can handle uncertainty and doubt in a time of rapid change, is essential to social progress.

Kouzes and Posner (2007) present a framework and supporting research that illustrates this phenomenon on a larger scale. Unlike many other books on leadership, Kouzes and Posner (2007) do not focus solely on CEOs and Presidents, but on everyday leaders in ordinary businesses and organizations. Kouzes and Posner (1988) conducted an in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis of the experiences of more than 1,100 managers that revealed a pattern of critical leadership behaviors. These behaviors were then grouped into five categories of leadership practices. Since that original study, the authors have developed an assessment of the practices which they call the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). Between 2005 and 2011,

more than 128,000 organizational managers and leaders took the LPI, making it one of the largest leadership studies ever conducted. The mean response rates for this time period show that, as an aggregate, the managers tested fell below a 50% success rating in all five practices (“Leadership Practices Inventory”, 2012). This low performance indicates a significant lack of effective leadership, not just at the top levels of organizations, but throughout the management structure.

Organizations are aware of this lack of quality leadership and are trying to combat it through investment in training and development. It is estimated that spending on organizational learning surpassed \$140 billion in 2016, with more than one third going to leadership development, specifically (“Global”, 2016). According to an annual report from Bersin, the research branch of Deloitte, in 2016 overall spending on leadership development rose 10%, marking the fifth period of year-over-year growth for the industry (Carrol, Singaraju, & Park, 2015).

If investment in leadership development is high and organizations still assert that they are experiencing a shortage of talented leaders, it is clear that a discrepancy exists between the current approach to development and one needed for the modern era. Weiss and Molinaro (2005) refer to this trend as ‘The Leadership Gap’, citing the growing difference between the leadership skills currently possessed by leaders in today’s organizations, and the skills that are needed to solve the complex problems of the future. Weiss and Molinaro (2005) say that this deficit is perpetuated by the inefficiency of current leadership development techniques. Other researchers support this point of view and are increasingly calling on senior leaders to “understand the reality of their leadership situation” and “move to adapt by re-focusing leadership development

efforts” (Leslie, 2009, p. 11). Some even assert that the current way leadership development is approached will, in itself, inhibit individual growth from occurring. McGonagill, a consultant for the Bertelsmann Stiftung Foundation Leadership Series, is quoted as saying that in the face of organizational complexity, “all of the tools in the world will not change anything if the mindset does not allow and support change” (Petrie, 2014a, p.12).

In looking at differences between social and environmental conditions 20 years ago and those present today, it is clear that the way individuals, particularly leaders, interact with the world must change in order to be successful. Today, a higher level of mental complexity is required to make effective decisions in a changing world, a fact that carries a great deal of significance for the world of management and leadership development. As skillful as leaders for the past two decades may have been, “their abilities will no longer suffice in a world that calls for leaders who can not only run but also reconstitute their organizations in an increasingly fast-changing environment” (Kegan and Lahey, 2010, p. 783). It seems then that the solution to the leadership gap lies not in training individuals with more leadership skills but developing them to think in different and more complex ways.

Purpose

As our world becomes increasingly complex, it is clear that existing leadership development approaches are not sufficient to build leaders we need for the future. Competency and skills-based models are no longer enough. This research builds on the growing arguments for the use of the psychological theory of adult vertical development to transform traditional organizational practices of leadership development. The purpose of this study is to understand

the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices. Specifically, the research questions are:

1. What is the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices?
2. What strategies and practices are being used to implement vertical development into organizational leadership development?
3. What challenges have been experienced by practitioners who have attempted to implement these theories, or components thereof?

Organization of the Study

This chapter has outlined the background and purpose of the study and made a case for the significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to this study. Chapter 3 describes the methods used. Chapter 4 reports the results of the current research. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings and possible next steps to consider in the continuation of this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to understand the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices. Specifically, the research questions are:

1. What is the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices?
2. What strategies and practices are being used to implement vertical development into organizational leadership development?
3. What challenges have been experienced by practitioners who have attempted to implement these theories, or components thereof?

This literature review considers classic approaches to leadership development and their deficits, including those that impact the whole industry. After reviewing the state of the industry, alternative approaches that leverage principles of adult vertical development will be discussed, along with early theories and research on operationalizing these new development approaches in organizations.

The Current State of Leadership Development

The leadership development industry encompasses many tools, practices, theories, and approaches. A comprehensive discussion of the current industry practices is beyond the scope of this literature review and is a topic that has been covered in several publications to date (e.g., Day & Halpin, 2001; Nohria, & Khurana, 2010). There are, however, some widely utilized approaches that are relevant to examine because of the role they play in influencing the practices of the industry at large. Regardless of the tactics, tools, and approaches an organization uses in

their leadership development, they most likely have a point of view on how leaders are developed and a framework for how the organization's leaders should be developed. These two characteristics are commonly represented by organizations using an action learning approach to development and a competency-based framework for leadership. Because of their relevance and popularity, the practice and critique of those two approaches will be discussed here.

Action Learning Approach to Development. Revans (1972) argues that the best learning comes from those impacted by and responsible for the work itself, through a continued process of learning and reflection. In practice, action learning is implemented by having colleagues work on real organizational issues together, and involves a continuous process of action and reflection to generate learning through the experience (McGill & Brockbank, 2015). Proponents of action learning theory in leadership development claim that this approach is well-suited to leadership development because in a group problem-solving situation, using real world problems, a number of leadership skills can be practiced and improved (Day, & Halpin, 2001; Dilworth, 1998; McGill & Brockbank, 2015)

There are many ways to develop action learning initiatives, but all focus on problem solving in a practical and applicable context (Marsick & O'Neil, 1999). Based on the belief that programs involving active practice have a greater impact than programs that do not use active participation, it seems that action learning "does a better job in ensuring the inclusion of these necessary and sufficient elements than other popular leadership development strategies" (Leonard & Lang, 2010, p. 3).

While the theory of action learning is rooted in elements of experience and reflection, is popular, and is generally accepted, there is debate on how techniques for implementation impact

learning outcomes. Critics of action learning often cite two major flaws in the common application of action learning (McLaughlin & Thorpe, 1993). First, effective self-development requires that the learner is able to define their own learning needs accurately. However, not all individuals enter an action learning program at a level of self-awareness that allows them to reflect accurately on themselves and their behavior. The action learning intervention must therefore provide a structure to not only reflect on action but also illuminate and critique it in a manner that allows the participant to learn about themselves, not just the surrounding environment.

Secondly, critics maintain that organizational implementation often does not focus enough on reflection to properly solidify the learning from the activity. Because the connection to the material is developed through collective action, sufficient individual reflection is required to stimulate individual development (Oliver, 2008). If that reflection does not occur, learning will be primarily collective in nature. Because the key element of action learning is continuous work-related activity, facilitators are often too deeply engaged in the activity to develop and stimulate effective reflective practices, thus perpetuating the disconnect. This results in participants not having “the time to reflect on their practice and the assumptions that underpin the strategies they would develop” (Oliver, 2008, p. 82).

The Competency-Based Framework for Leadership. The competency-based approach is another popular model in leadership development today and makes up a significant portion of the leadership development industry. Competencies are rooted in behavior and performance measures that indicate superior performance in a given role (Boyatzis, 1982). The competency framework relies on specific training to define and develop various roles in an organization and

often consists of industry knowledge, technical skills, problem solving techniques, and strengths-based placement (Garonik, Nethersell, & Spreier, 2006). According to the Society for Human Resource Management, by “using a competency-based approach to leadership, organizations can better identify and develop their next generation of leaders” (“Leadership Competencies”, 2008, para. 1). After Kotter’s (1990) influential distinction between management and leadership, organizations leveraged competencies to better distinguish between the two and embedded them into various development and evaluation systems.

There are many critics of the competency model who focus on key weakness of the approach (Conger, 2008). One major dispute is the generic nature of competencies that assume homogeneity in leadership roles, based on a simplified and compartmentalized concept of leadership (Loan-Clarke, 1996). When facing simple, technical problems individuals can prescribe known solutions. But when individuals are facing adaptive issues they have not previously experienced, that do not have prescribed solutions, the methods of solving the problems become increasingly complex, beyond what competencies alone can address (Heifetz, 1994). These challenges and a leader’s ability to respond to them become increasingly dependent on the individual and the context, both of which fall outside of the measurable outcomes and behaviors that competencies tend to emphasize (Bell et al., 2002). The problems facing leaders today are not problems that can be solved with a set of competencies, therefore teaching leadership by teaching competencies makes little sense (Hollenbeck & McCall, 2003).

Bolden (2006) assessed trainings based on popular leadership competency frameworks in order to more deeply understand the impact of a competency-based approach. Bolden (2006) hypothesized that this style of training would “reinforce particular ways of thinking and

behaving that ultimately limit the ability of organizations to engage with and embed more inclusive and collective forms of leadership” (p. 147). Kellerman (2004) also takes a critical eye to the role of competencies in leadership development. Kellerman (2004) says that success in specific competencies “is now viewed as less than it once was. It is now widely agreed that to overemphasize the leader’s traits and specific skills is to underemphasize other important variables, such as the situation, the nature of the task at hand and of course the followers” (p.19).

Critiques of the Industry

Beyond these two specific popular approaches to development, critics assert that the leadership development industry itself is ineffective. Research has continued to demonstrate the adaptive nature of leadership in today’s organizations, yet the models and practices used to develop leadership are prescriptive in nature. This is what some critics say is the essential problem: “Our primary method of developing leaders is antithetical to the type of leadership we need” (Rowland, 2016, para.1). Avolio and colleagues (2005) had similar concerns about the state of the industry. In a meta-analytic review, Avolio and colleagues (2005) produced a quantitative assessment of all the published leadership intervention studies conducted to date. Their goal was to analyze what had been tried over the last hundred years of leadership development in order to better understand what makes a truly successful leadership development intervention.

Based on their analysis, Avolio and colleagues (2005) recommended changes to enhance effectiveness and stimulate authentic development, two of which will be elaborated on here. First, they recommended that interventions had to ensure appropriate context to allow for non-linear and natural progress. Consistently, trainers and participants lamented the difficulty of

retaining learnings after interventions, a problem Avolio and his colleagues (2005) coined the “transfer-of-training.” The question of appropriate context speaks to characteristics of interventions that are both physical, removed from the work environment, and conceptual, non-personalized and distant. If an intervention occurs in an environment that is not applicable to the leaders’ identity or purpose, it is less likely to be transferred back to their leadership practice, resulting in an unsuccessful intervention (Avolio et al., 2005).

The study’s second outcome for an effective development intervention was that it was in some way maintained over time (Avolio et al., 2005). This emphasizes the importance of continual reinforcement of the leadership learning after the first intervention. The idea of maintaining learning over time is not unique to this research. A study conducted by Goldsmith (2004) surveyed eight corporations with specific leadership development programs. All eight programs were different but across the interventions “one variable emerged as central to the achievement of positive long-term change: the participants’ ongoing interaction and follow-up” (Goldsmith, 2004, p.77). No matter what the learning is, it is only significant if it is sustained, which more often than not required reoccurring interactions and learning.

Pfeffer (2015) also believed that many of the aspects of leadership that are focused on in development are not actually helpful to leaders. Pfeffer (2015) argues the characteristics are modeled off an ideal world and not what it truly takes to lead. This inaccurate representation of leadership, coupled with the industry’s failure to effectively and objectively evaluate leaders and their performance, has led to the failure of leadership development.

Kellerman (2012) also takes a stance on the ineffectiveness of the leadership development industry. Kellerman (2012) shares that many pedagogies of development that have risen in

popularity in the last few decades, such as Kotter's distinction between leadership and management (1990), Heifetz's "adaptive leadership" approach (1994), George's focus on purpose and values through "authentic leadership" (2003), and Burns' call for "transformational leadership" (1978) as examples. Despite all the ways these pedagogies are positioned and described, Kellerman (2012) asserts they all have some central similarities that limit their effectiveness as a development approach. Kellerman (2012) suggests that the dominant points of view used today are too leader-centric, ignoring the environment that impacts the leader, including the important role of followers. Additionally, there are not enough methods to evaluate if what is in use is working. The lack of testing and reliable evaluation across the leadership development industry leaves the true effectiveness of these programs virtually unknown.

Kellerman (2012) produced a scathing and detailed account of the failures of the current approach. Kellerman (2012) argued that the proliferation of the leadership industry has contributed to "a crisis of confidence in those who are charged with leading wisely and well, and from a surfeit of mostly well-intentioned but finally false promises made by those supposed to make things better" (p. 79). However, Kellerman (2012) does not give up on leadership development entirely and suggests instead that essential changes must be made if the industry is going to become relevant for modern times.

First, Kellerman (2012) asserts that the industry must "subject itself to critical analysis", committing to rigorously evaluating and documenting its impacts (p. 200). Second, the industry must begin to better reflect the changes that have occurred in the environment, adopting more fluid, agile, and open approaches. Third, leadership development interventions, regardless of their origin, must transcend the situation-specific contexts that make learnings irrelevant. Finally,

the industry must end its leader-centrism, opening up to the broader environment that leaders operate in (Kellerman, 2012).

Leadership Development of the Future

Identifying Development Needs. Given the significant critiques against the leadership development industry, and the increasing urgency to respond to the complexity that organizations face, identifying the true needs of leadership development has never been more critical. Many innovative leadership development practitioners are asking questions not only of how we develop leaders, but of what it is that we are actually trying to develop. The high amount of investment, along with the reported rates of leadership failure, and the wide-spread concern around the current “leadership gap” suggests that the current development approach is falling short in ways that may extend beyond the recommendations for effective interventions made by critics like Avolio and colleagues (2005) and Kellerman (2012).

The need to transform leadership development is made more urgent by an increased understanding of our volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world. The concept of the VUCA world was first articulated by the US Army in the 1990’s and has taken off in the business world in the last few years (Stiehm, 2002). The term is now commonplace in corporate conversations, as it accurately describes the environment of upheaval that many organizations and industries have increasingly found themselves in over the last decade (Lemoine, 2014). Research has identified several criteria that make a VUCA environment more difficult for leaders to manage (Horney, Pasmore, & O’Shea, 2010). First is the challenge of understanding and tracking the large number of interacting elements that are now at play. Second, information is now ambiguous, incomplete, or indecipherable, which contributes to the challenge of

understanding all the vital components of a situation. Interactions among systems are no longer linear, and this interconnectedness makes information less clear. Third, this interconnectedness encourages dynamics to emerge from within systems, making them harder to change from the outside. Finally, the old adage that hindsight leads to foresight is no longer true as change happens rapidly and complex systems are in continual flux.

All of these characteristics of the VUCA world radically transform the way leaders must operate to be efficient. While the shift to this fast-paced and turbulent world has been widely acknowledged, little has been done to change the way we lead within it. In a research paper for the Center for Creative Leadership, Petrie (2014a) conducted interviews of industry leaders and worked with an interdisciplinary collection of researchers to define the skills that will be required of leaders in this new VUCA world. This research identified five key skills, abilities, and attributes: adaptability, self-awareness, boundary spanning, collaboration, and network thinking.

Similarly, another study conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) asked high-performing organizations to report their greatest needs for the future. None of the organizational needs in the top ten were specific skills or competencies, but general, interdisciplinary ways of thinking and behaving. The study found the top five organizational needs reported by respondents: inspiring commitment, strategic planning, leading people, resourcefulness, and employee development. Of those, only resourcefulness was cited as a leadership skill that is currently exhibited (Leslie, 2009). All the characteristics identified in the study are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1*Leadership Skills Needed for the Future*

Skill	Percentage of Managers Rating It As Important
Leading People	89%
Strategic Planning	86%
Inspiring Commitment	86%
Managing Change	82%
Resourcefulness	81%
Participative Management	81%
Being a Quick Learner	79%
Employee Development	79%
Doing Whatever It Takes	77%
Balancing Personal Life and Work	76%

Adapted from: Leslie, J. (2009). The Leadership Gap: What You Need and Don't Have When it Comes to Leadership Development. *Center for Creative Leadership*. Retrieved from <https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Leadership-Gap-What-You-Need.pdf>

Increasingly, the activities rated as important for organizational success are not the leadership skills that are currently being used well, if at all. To cultivate these new ways of thinking and behaving, researchers are arguing that the field of leadership development needs to go beyond just a change of approach and seek a transformation of how it thinks about developing leaders (Kellerman, 2012; Leslie, 2009; McGuire & Rhodes, 2009).

Understanding Vertical Development and the Need for Change. One approach to development that has been recognized as having the potential to support the new requirements of leadership is vertical development. There are two main types of adult development, horizontal and vertical (Brown, 2016; Petrie, 2014b). Horizontal adult development refers to the development of skills and abilities from a technical perspective. It is most useful when problems

are known and there are clearly identified approaches for solving them. Vertical development, on the other hand, refers to the stages that people progress through in regard to how they make sense of their environment (Brown, 2016; Kagen, 1982; Petrie, 2014b; Torbert, 1987). With each stage of development, individuals see the world in a different way, developing an increasingly complex and inclusive point of view.

Vertical development is not a new theory in the field of psychology. The studies of psychosocial ego development produced some of the first models decades ago (Erickson, 1952; Loevinger, 1976). In parts of the psychological and philosophical community, the idea of adult vertical development has been embraced as a valuable tool in understanding evolution and change, both of individuals and of collectives. The most comprehensive analysis of how this type of human development aligns with and supports other common theories of development comes from Wilber (2000). Wilber (2000) provides a comprehensive review of theories of development including spiritual, cognitive, and psychosocial development, among others. Theories of adult vertical development are referred to as self-development and are represented as a key part of his comprehensive model. However, the majority of the work that has built upon early developmental theories has remained in the academic discourse of psychology and philosophy, without expanding into widespread practice, let alone crossing disciplinary boundaries and integrating into other fields. Despite this strong divide, there are two models of adult vertical development that have begun to successfully permeate organizational and business management: Kegan's Orders of Consciousness (1994) and Torbert's Action Logics (1987).

Kegan (1994) identifies five distinct levels of development that individuals progress through in a vertical fashion. The First Order is made up of developing children who are not able

to understand themselves in relation to other objects in the world and are not able to understand that there are objects that remain constant. This means that they have a hard time seeing systems and how they relate to the world and how the world relates to them. The Second Order represents a shift to thinking more concretely about the self and seeing other objects outside of them as having concrete properties, but they still understand the world in relation to their own needs. Those in the Third Order have begun to internalize more systems of meaning, how objects are connected, and how they in turn connect to those larger systems. These individuals are able to think abstractly, be self-reflective, and have the ability to devote themselves to things outside their immediate needs and concerns.

Fourth Order Consciousness, or the 'Self-Authoring Mind,' is characterized by the possession of a core ideology that guides individual behavior and often overcomes the expectations of the environment. Individuals at this order possess a strong sense of self that is lacking in the Third Order, and they are better able to control their relationships to the systems they see. The final level is Fifth Order Consciousness, or the 'Self-Transforming Mind'. At this level individuals have learned the limits of self, and instead of viewing others as people completely separate from themselves can begin to see similarities through what once looked only like differences. They can step back from their own personal ideologies and see them as limited. The significance of this ability is that individuals can more effectively consider different perspectives without holding polarized beliefs. The Fifth Order mind is the only developmental phase truly able to reject the self as independent of experience, creating enough space between the individual and the environment to allow for open and non-biased thinking (Kegan, 2003).

This means that Fifth Order individuals are able to think in more complex ways, seeing

big-picture ideas of holistic systems. The ability of Fifth Order individuals to simultaneously hold many realities, when none are constant, allows them to operate under a condition of

Action Logic	Characteristics	% of sample
Opportunities	Wins any ways possible. Self-oriented; manipulative, "might makes right"	5%
Diplomat	Avoids overt conflict. Wants to belong; obeys group norms; rarely rocks the boat	12%
Expert	Rule by logic and expertise. Seeks rational efficiency	38%
Achiever	Meets strategic goals. Effectively achieves goals through teams; juggles managerial duties and market demands	30%
Individualist	Interweaves competing personal and company action logics. Creates unique structures to resolve gaps between strategy and performance	10%
Strategist	Generates organizational and personal transformations. Exercises the power of mutual inquiry, vigilance, and vulnerability for both the short and long term	4%
Alchemist	Generates social transformations. Integrates material, spiritual and societal transformation	1%

uncertainty. Because of this, people at higher levels of development have a greater ability to learn and solve complex problems than those at the Third Order. This is significant because it indicates that "those at higher levels can learn and react faster because they have bigger minds" (McGuire & Rhodes, 2009, p.59). Yet, only 18-34% of adults ever reach the Fourth Order. 3-6% of adults are in phases of transitioning between Fourth Order and Fifth Order and no individuals in the study were found to have fully reached the Fifth Order (Kegan, 1994).

Similar to Kegan (1994), Torbert (1987) had success in popularizing his Action Logic model in the context of organizational leadership. The Action Logics, or Levels of Leadership, apply the stages of adult development in the context of organizational leadership quite explicitly. A simplified description of each of the levels can be seen in Table 2. The model highlights seven levels of leadership: Opportunist, Diplomat, Expert, Achiever, Redefining, Transforming, and Alchemical. The levels are distinguished by differences in how a leader sees the world and takes

in information. An Opportunist sees the world through a lens of power and seeks personal gain. An Alchemist, on the other hand, moves away from seeing the world in categories at all and begins to understand complexity and the temporal nature of events. These two radically different worldviews make up the distant ends of the spectrum of leader levels. Leaders who understand and strive to develop their action logic can transform themselves and their organizations (Rooke & Torbert, 2005).

Table 2

Description of Action Logics and Distribution in Research Sample

Moving through these levels is not about gaining new skills or even new awareness, it is “a matter of transforming one’s embodied, conversational process in our on-the-ground, moment-to-moment organizing actions of each day” (Global, 2017, para.1). Torbert (1987) associated the levels with organizational leadership since originally introducing them, which could be part of why the model gained more traction than previous developmental models. Similar to Kegan’s Orders of Consciousness (1994), research has not found many individuals living at the upper end of the spectrum. Only 4% of the studied population reached the Strategist

Adapted from: Rooke, D., & Torbert, W. R. (2005). Seven transformations of leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 83, 66.

level and less than 1% was found to be at the level of Alchemist (Rooke & Torbert, 2005).

Vertical Development and Leadership

In the years since the publication of Kegan’s developmental theory (1994), many scholars have connected it to leadership. Articles have argued for the application of adult development theory to the selection, assignment, and development of leaders (Allen & Wergin, 2009; Kuhnert & Lewis 1987). Kegan and Lahey (2001; 2009) wrote books applying the theory more directly to individual behavior, interpersonal relationships, and organizational change. As writings like these illustrate, vertical leadership development provides a very different philosophy of leadership development; one that moves away from focusing on *what* leaders know towards understanding *how* leaders make sense of the things they know. This difference in philosophy illustrates why despite “widespread investments in management and leadership education, companies still are not able to deal with the ‘leadership crisis’ in their organizations” (Weiss & Molinaro, 2005, p. 15). These investments are focused too much on *skills* the individual possesses and not enough on *development* of the individual themselves.

Berger (2011) echoes the call for higher levels of development among organizational leaders. Berger (2011) asserts:

As organizations become more powerful and more global, and as the threats to our planet become far too large for any group or organization to manage, we will require people with self-transforming minds to be in leadership positions. Such leaders can look beyond their own reputation and their own needs—even their own need to see their vision realized—and hold on to a more connected, global sense of the world (p. 196).

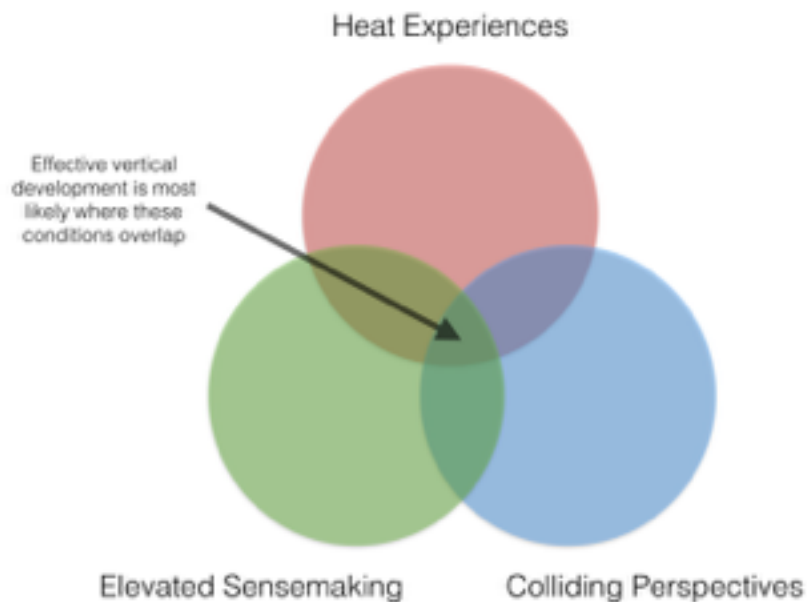
Operationalizing Vertical Development to Make Lasting Change. As more researchers and industry professionals align around the potential of vertical development as a transformational tool in the leadership development industry, important questions are emerging,

including how this approach can be integrated into organizations without being trapped by the inefficiencies experienced by other approaches.

Conditions for Vertical Development. Petrie (2015) suggests a framework for creating developmental experiences that encourage vertical growth. Petrie’s (2015) framework names three primary conditions for vertical development: Heat Experiences (Initiation—The What), Colliding Perspectives (Enablement—The Who), and Elevated Sensemaking (Integration—The How). Please see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Three Conditions for Vertical Development



Adapted from: Petrie, N. (2015). The How-To of Vertical Leadership Development—Part 2: 30 Experts, 3 Conditions and 15 Approaches. *Center for Creative Leadership*.

In Petrie’s (2015) framework, Heat Experiences are designed to disrupt the individual’s habitual way of doing things and open their mind to search for new and better ways. Examples of

these kinds of experiences include role changes that expand the scope of responsibilities, entering a new culture, or taking on significant stretch assignments. Colliding Perspectives occur when the individual is exposed to people with different worldview, opinions, skills, and backgrounds. These interactions challenge the individual's mental models and encourage them to think bigger. Examples of this experience include entering an unknown environment, receiving expert coaching, or having a cross-cultural dialogue. Elevated Sensemaking refers to the individual's process of integrating and making sense of new perspectives to develop a larger and more advanced perspective. Unlike the other two components of the framework, sensemaking cannot be triggered by an external stimulus, it has to occur within the individual. For this reason, it is one of the most challenging phases of vertical development. Organizations can support individuals through this phase with regular assessments and high-quality coaching or mentorship. Most critically, Petrie (2015) claims that organizations need to provide their leaders with time for reflection, otherwise they will not be able to adequately integrate their learnings in a way that creates sustainable change.

Deliberately Developmental Organization™. While Petri's (2015) conditions are helpful in thinking about specific practices in an organization, Kegan and Lahey (2016) take the implementation of vertical development even further with their Deliberately Developmental Organization™ (DDO™) framework. Inspired by the potential they saw in adult vertical development, Kegan and Lahey (2016) expanded their research to organizations who were intentionally creating environments that supported vertical development. Their book shares case studies of organizations who have successfully created these environments and a model for others to follow. The DDO™ framework highlights three essential dimensions of organizations

that are needed to create and sustain a developmental environment: Edge (Aspiration), Groove (Practices), and Home (Community). Each of these dimensions is characterized by specific features which are outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Key Features of DDO™ Dimensions



Image adapted from Kegan, R. and Lahey, L. (2009). *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization*. Boston, MA, Harvard Business School Publishing.

Becoming a DDO™: Building Community. For an organization to begin their journey to becoming a DDO™, the work of creating a community can be the most effective and challenging first step. Kegan and Lahey (2016) emphasize the importance of community by saying that

“growth can happen only through membership in workplace communities where people are deeply valued as individual human beings, constantly held accountable, and engaged in real and sustained dialogue” (p. 108). Similar to Kegan and Lahey’s (2016) view of community, Edmonson and Lei (2014) assert that a sense of psychological safety in the workplace is key to individual performance and organizational effectiveness. Their research points to psychological safety as a mediator between teams, learning, performance, decision making, and other essential organizational factors (Edmonson & Lei, 2014). Hess (2014), the originator of the theory of the High-Performance Learning Organization (HPLO), also supports the significance of safe communities in cultivating individual development. Hess (2014) argues, “In organizational environments, persistent negative emotions, such as anxiety or fear, are toxic to learning. Fear and anxiety impair comprehension, creativity and retrieval from long-term memory” (p. 31) As a baseline, organizations aspiring to become a DDO™, must prioritize trust and safety in their culture, otherwise employees will not have the support they need to engage in the meaningful and challenging work required for their personal development.

Becoming a DDO™: Creating Aspiration. The dimension of Aspiration refers to the core philosophy and strategy of the organization. For any organization to become a DDO™, a deep belief in individual development as a critical component to business success must be part of the core operating system. An “organization can sign on to the principle in spirit, value it as a nice to have, and even make investments to promote more of it—but this is very different from asking, ‘From the group up, have we designed our organization so that it supports the growth of its members...?’” (Kegan et al., 2016, p. 88). Similarly, Berger (2014) says that “learning at work should be about making possible tomorrow things that were not possible yesterday—both for the

benefit of the organization and the benefit of the individual” (p. 163). Organizations who connect their business strategy to the development of their people, align leaders to the importance of individual development, and make investments that allow for the creation of authentic and supportive communities are more likely to find long-term success as a developmental organization.

Becoming a DDO™: Designing Practices. The success and sustainability of any organizational change often comes down to the system that is put in place to support and hold people accountable for living into that change. Deliberate practices help the strategic and visionary aspiration extend throughout the organization in a way that people, managers and individual contributors alike, can understand and react to. “If what you want is for people to think about things in new ways—you need to create a transformative learning space” (Berger, 2014, p. 108).

To support this transformative learning space, Berger (2014) has identified developmental habits that can be integrated into many existing practices and ways of working to begin creating a shift that triggers more developmental experiences. The developmental habits are: asking different questions, taking multiple perspectives, and seeing the system. These habits can be built into coaching, performance reviews, team functioning, meetings, and many other standard organizational practices in an effort to shift the employee experience (Berger, 2014). Even though these habits seem simple enough, Berger (2014) suggests that the implementation of simple practices can be complicated when you are designing for an audience that is likely at different developmental levels to begin with. “Developmental theories call on us to expand our design and teaching to be psychologically spacious and to include as many different sense

making systems as possible” (Berger, 2014, p. 97). More details on designing for various levels of development can be found in Table 3. While this type of developmental design is not simple, it is an essential step in bringing authentic development into the work experience and ensuring that true vertical development can occur in organizations sustainably.

Table 3

Key outcomes, design elements, and questions to support levels of development

Level of Development	Key outcome	Piece to consider including in the design	Questions to ask as a facilitator
Level 2: Self-Sovereign	To broaden perspectives and learn that they are part of a bigger more complex system than previously understood	Opportunities to have people understand the complexity of various situations, giving people real experiences of being broadened and assisted by the thinking of others	Have I given people the opportunity to hold the perspective of another person? Have I made room for people to demonstrate their ability to subordinate their interests to the good of the group in some way?
Level 3: Socialized	To focus on own thoughts, ideas and principles to give them the sense that they can create their experiences rather than simply having them	Opportunities to have the time and permission to author key ideas for themselves, time and space to find their own path, freedom and encouragement to adapt rather than adopt	How have I given time and space for people to express distinctions between what experts think and what they think? Have I offered an idea, provided examples, and allowed people to take the time to develop their own path?
Level 4: Self-Authored	To begin to recognize some of the limits of the self-authored system and the need to be co-creating systems with others	Look at complex problems and come to the understanding that no self-authored system will ever be complex enough to make real traction in a world filled with ambiguity and uncertainty	Have I given people the time and space for reflection? Have I helped people see parts of their internal assumptions about the way they have authored their lives that they might want to adjust? Have I offered people the ability to interact with a variety of complex viewpoints?
Level 5: Self-Transforming	To continue to learn and grow—taking in larger and larger views overtime	Opportunities for people to walk around the full edge of a problem, compare with those who are dissimilar and develop a deeper and multi-faceted perspective	Have I allowed this problem to be as complex as possible? Have I offered chances for people to find many perspectives on one issue? Have I allowed people chances to find ways through the complexity of the issue?

Summary

The literature provides many arguments for and against various approaches to leadership development in organizations. This review highlighted the limitations of two popular approaches, identified challenges in the leadership development industry broadly, and presented data on the ineffectiveness of current leadership development approaches which suggested the need for change. This review also showcased research on vertical development and introduced two models that articulate approaches for operationalizing concepts of vertical development and integrating it into organizational leadership development practices.

While examples of successful vertical development practices do exist in the literature, this concept is far from widespread in practice. Few leadership development practitioners are practicing concepts of vertical development and deliberately developmental organizations in their organizations or with their clients in an intentional or comprehensive manner. While Kegan and Lahey (2016) discuss three successful DDO™s, those are still unique examples. What is preventing these compelling approaches from gaining more traction in organizations, and how can that be changed? This study considers these questions of implementation in more detail, adding to the body of knowledge by expanding the evidence on culture and design features that support effective vertical leadership development in organizations. This information will be helpful to organizational leaders interested in creating a developmental or learning organization that can navigate a complex environment and support agile change. The next chapter will describe the methods used in this study.

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this study is to understand the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices. Specifically, the research questions are:

1. What is the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices?
2. What strategies and practices are being used to implement vertical development into organizational leadership development?
3. What challenges have been experienced by practitioners who have attempted to implement these theories, or components thereof?

This chapter describes the research design, sample, protection of human subjects, data collection, and analysis process used in this study. The chapter closes with a summary.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach, with data collected through semi-structured interviews (Maxwell, 2013). This approach was chosen to better understand the experience of practitioners who are experimenting with concepts of vertical development in their organizations. To move beyond an academic discussion of the theories of development, this approach captures the feelings, values, perceptions, and behaviors that shape the way these theories show up in practice. Where possible, the interviews were conducted in-person at the interviewee's organization. When this was not possible, the interviews were conducted via phone or virtually with video conferencing. The interviews were semi-structured in nature and the conversations

were recorded and transcribed. Data was collected over a 3-month period in the winter of 2018. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, with an average of 54 minutes.

Interview Design. The qualitative interviews were designed and modeled after Kegan and Lahey's (2016) framework for Deliberately Developmental Organizations™ (DDO™), and Petri's (2015) conditions for vertical development outlined earlier. Interview questions were mapped to characteristics in these models to ensure a comprehensive review. The instrument was tested and refined through peer review by two practitioners familiar with theories of vertical development and experienced in bringing vertical development into organizations through external consulting practices. The interviews were then tested in pilot interviews with an external consultant and an internal leadership development practitioner.

The literature review and a subsequent peer review were used to establish the face validity of the instruments. The intention of the design was to use the survey to explore how models for the implementation of vertical development are being adopted in practice. By mapping the questions to the framework at the outset, all components of the DDO™ framework were covered in each interview (Appendix A). The semi-structured nature of the interview questions ensured that main topics are covered, but that the dialogue was loose enough to allow for a focus on how the theories emerged in the context of each organization, rather than the specific differences in people or settings (Cresswell, 2014)

Sample. This study used a purposive and convenience sampling approach (Cresswell, 2014). Two groups of participants were targeted, internal practitioners and external practitioners. For those working internally, criteria for interviewees was that they were in a large organization, 1,000 employees or more, and held a strategic-level position that allowed them to understand the

leadership strategy of the organization. In two cases, respondents labeled their role as global manager development, not strategy. However, each of their organizations had over 20,000 employees and had global offices, so the researcher concluded the role was large enough to be considered strategic. Additionally, there were two respondents who oversaw executive development. Both of these organizations had over 70,000 employees and a global presence. Since the focus of the work was smaller, but obviously strategic and targeted for a significant group of leaders, their work was also deemed to meet the criteria of strategic positioning by the researcher. Other respondents included titles like Global Talent Officer, Chief Learning Officer, and Vice President of Learning and Organizational Effectiveness. Each of their organizations had 1,000 employees or more.

The second group of respondents was made up of external consultants focused on leadership development and/or coaching. For these respondents, the only criteria was that they had to be engaged in work that clients would consider focused on leadership itself. For some respondents, their work bled into other parts of the business, but they all started with a focus on leadership and development.

After the purposive sampling of two groups, a snowball sampling tactic was used to gather additional participants (Cresswell, 2014). In follow-up communication from the interview, participants were asked if they would recommend other practitioners for an interview. Because the traction received with these personal introductions was much greater than that of cold emails, the sample came to represent the snowball more than the initial purposeful sample. The breakdown of participants is shown in Table 4.

Table 4*Respondents by Type and Sample Process*

Respondent Type	Sample Process	Respondent Count (n = 25)
Internal	Purposive (Reach Out)	16
	Snowball (Introduction)	3
External	Purposive (Reach Out)	2
	Snowball (Introduction)	4

Each of the six external consultants interviewed were running their own small, independent consulting or coaching firm. None of them worked for larger agencies. This was not intentional and was mainly driven by the snowball sampling in this group. Among the 19 internal practitioners, 15 individual organizations were represented in the data. Their industry breakdown is presented in the Table 5.

Table 5*Respondent Organizations by Industry*

Industry	Respondent Count (n = 15)
Technology	7
Professional or Financial Services	2
Manufacturing	1
Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals	2
Government or Philanthropy	3

Data Collection and Analysis

The interviews were conducted by the researcher over a 3-month period in the winter of 2018. All but one interview was recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were organized by question and then inductively coded to identify consistent themes and sub-themes present in the data. The intention of this inductive manner of data analysis was to assess how the characteristics of the frameworks used to design the instrument were being seen and used in practice.

Protection of Human Subjects

Approval to conduct the study was obtained through Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board on August 11th, 2018. Interview questions were subsequently revised as a result of peer review and re-submitted to the Institutional Review Board. These study changes were approved on December 8th, 2018.

Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the research methodology and procedure used in this study to examine the current state of organizational conditions and characteristics that support sustainable vertical development of employees at all levels. The design, sample, instrumentation, collection, and analysis of data were presented. The next chapter provides an in-depth look at the findings from this research.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study is to understand the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices. Specifically, the research questions were:

1. What is the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices?
2. What strategies and practices are being used to implement vertical development into organizational leadership development?
3. What challenges have been experienced by practitioners who have attempted to implement these theories, or components thereof?

This chapter reports on the results of the study and provides an overview of the findings and themes generated from the study. The chapter begins with an analysis and description of the participating organizations' strategic orientation to leadership development. Data is then presented in the context of three key factors identified for successful use of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development.

Leadership Development Strategy

A key component in the interview process was the exploration of the participant's organizational leadership development strategy. This inquiry was intended to identify if elements of vertical development were present in the way that the organization has institutionalized and scaled its approach to developing leaders. Participant responses were coded for key concepts related to vertical development, including explicit references to theories and research covered in Chapter 2, as well as implicit mentions of self-development, perspective-taking, frame-breaking

experiences, managing polarities, and other common vertical development practices. This assessment broke down the 15 participating organizations into three categories based on how they conceptualized and communicated leadership in their organization: Skill-Based Prescriptive, Values-Based Prescriptive, or Core Principles. Each is described in more detail below.

Table 6

Distribution of Leadership Views by Organization

Strategic Approach	Number of Organizations
Skill-Based Prescriptive Model	4
Values-Based Prescriptive Model	5
Core Principles Model	6

Skill-Based Prescriptive. Organizations characterized as Skill-Based Prescriptive utilize leadership frameworks that identify skills, competencies, and capacities that tend to be role-specific. These frameworks usually detail a level of granularity not seen in other frameworks. They tend to focus on tactical aspects of leadership as opposed to relational or personal aspects. For example, one organization using a Skill-Based Prescriptive model described five leader “qualifications”, based on external research on leadership skills, that were then divided into competencies. One qualification was being “Results Driven” and some of the key competencies required were “Accountability”, “Problem Solving”, and “Decisiveness”, among others. In addition to these competencies, some organizations add another layer by applying differentiating sub-competencies corresponding to various positions in the organization. One participant from a Skill-Based Prescriptive organization responded:

We introduced a leadership framework with competencies here. It is really about clarifying expectations so managers know what they need to do in terms of competencies. We have a competency framework with eight competencies. We really organized it across the organization. There were a series of workshops in each department to really explain what the framework was about and how it informs talent management processes in the institution. For example, we use the competencies to design training, we use them to frame performance reviews where we look at who is ready now, who will be ready in a couple of years, and what kind of developmental plan do they need to have based on the competencies.

Values-Based Prescriptive. Organizations characterized as using a Values-Based Prescriptive approach to leadership utilize a leadership framework that is rooted in their core organizational values. These frameworks tend to emphasize behaviors that are less technical than those seen in the skills-based category and include more interpersonal behaviors. In each of these organizations, there is a heavy emphasis on specifically what it means to be a leader in the unique cultural context of the organization. For example, one organization articulated collaborating with others, including others, establishing trust, and having fun as competencies required to support their organizational value of Partnership. Both values and skills-based strategies tended to be more complex, using frameworks that consist of multiple levels of sub-competencies, behaviors, or metrics. One participant from a Values-Based Prescriptive organization described:

I would say most of it, nearly all of it grows out of our core values, which might not be that different from what you would see at other organizations. But what I think is interesting about [our organization] that is distinct from other organizations is that these values really underpin everything that we do in terms of employees, human resources development and human resources management...So when we further propagate that we have a set of management and leadership competencies that roll out of those core values...We assess managers and leadership around those competencies

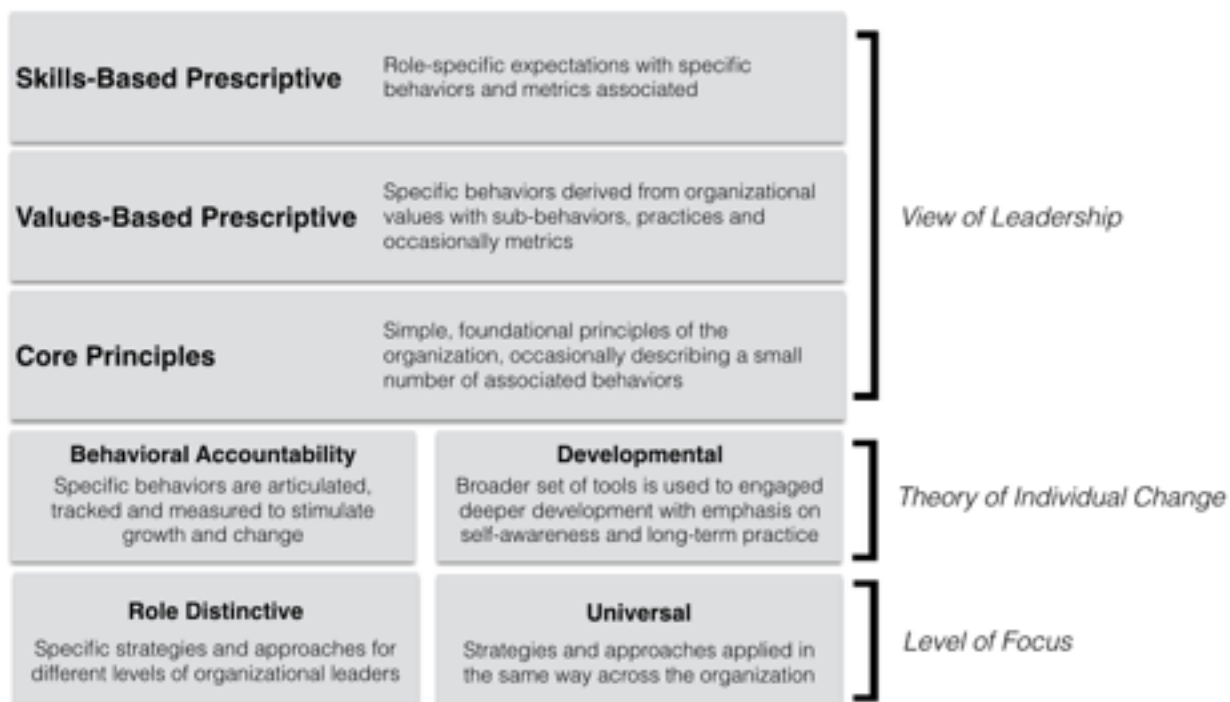
Core Principles. The Core Principles Model seen in six of the participating organizations is a framework that emphasizes the foundational truths of the organization, as opposed to the

detailed behaviors expected of leaders. All organizations using this framework had no more than three principles, and for the two that had behaviors associated with the principles there we no more than three behaviors per principle. For example, one organization had three broad principles: “Create Clarity”, “Generate Energy”, and “Deliver Success”. Each of these were accompanied by three independent sentences describing the principle. One participating organization had a set of tactical leadership expectations laid over these principles that were specifically aimed at positional leaders. One participant described their organization’s leadership principles and how they influence the way they think about leadership development in the following way:

The three principles are...nurturing people and building great teams, the second is courageous inquiry and intellectual integrity, and the third is about prioritizing reflective success. So it is sort of like we have vertical development as the scaffolding for the how and these three principles are like the scaffolding for the content [of leadership development in the organization]. And so they are both coming together. They are operating though more off stage, rather than center stage.

Additional Strategic Components. In addition to the Strategic Approach to leadership development, two other elements stood out as significant: the theory of individual change and their focus. Figure 3 illustrates the three components of an organization’s strategic orientation to leadership development. The theory of individual change refers to how the organization is engaged either by emphasizing behavioral accountability, or by utilizing principles of vertical development.

Figure 3

Strategic Orientation to Organizational Leadership Development

While both of these theories are aimed at creating shifts in behavior that stimulate growth and development, they do so in different ways. Behavioral accountability refers to approaches to where specific behaviors are identified, tracked, and measured to stimulate growth. One participant described it in the following way:

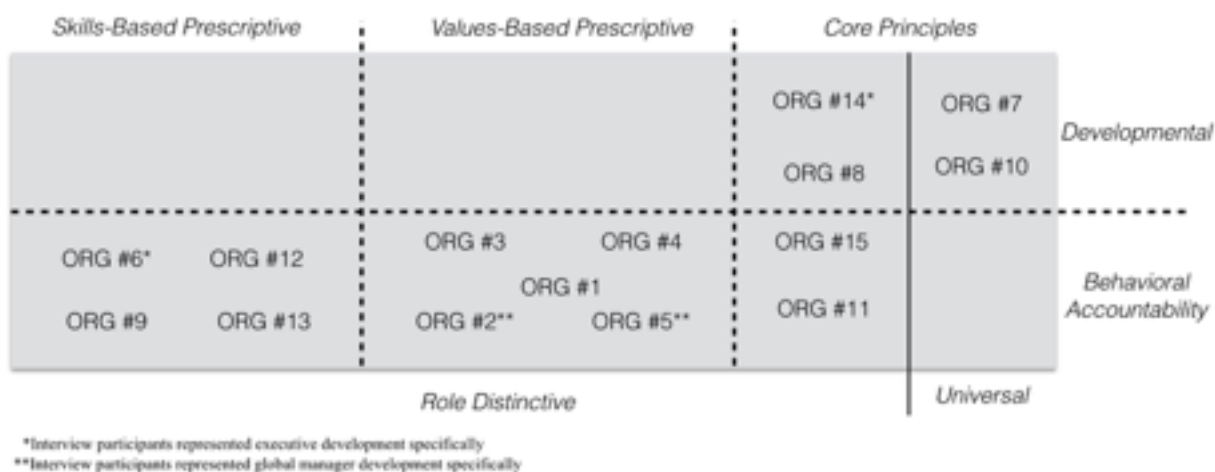
It [values-based prescriptive competency model] is the set of expectations that answers, “What is expected of me?” It is how we develop people and manage performance. If you know the answer what is expected of me, you can go to the next question, which is how am I doing against those expectations? Then the third question is how do I need to develop? And now what we are doing is that we have structured our talent development, our leadership development, and all our learning and development assists against that model of expectation.

The second theory of individual change, developmental, is based on the theory of vertical development that has been outlined in this research. This approach was described by participants as a much broader set of tools and approaches used to help the leader develop at a level deeper than only observable behaviors. Participants using this theory spoke more about the individual leader, the significance of self-awareness, the long-time horizon and the challenge of measuring progress. One participant described it as:

The way that we're strategizing it is that there is kind of a sprint to learn domain-specific skills that you need to learn from a leadership perspective, and then there is a concerted effort over a long period of time in order to kind of adopt the mindset you need to have as you go higher up in the organization...as you look at the research and the more you talk to practitioners about this idea of adopting a new mindset or elevating your thinking from vertical is that it takes a multi-year, multi-stage process, that cannot and should not necessarily be solved through any type of specific program. It could be introduced in a programmatic way but really articulated in a long-term focus of practices.

The third component of leadership development strategy identified in the analysis is the focus of the strategy overall. This refers to if the organization had segmented their approach by role and/or hierarchical level, or if they viewed development and leadership as level-agnostic. This distinction was often related to whether or not the organization had manager or executive-specific programs, competencies, or expectations clearly articulated and instantiated. Figure 4 illustrates these characteristics across the participating organizations.

Figure 4

Continuum of Progressive Leadership Development Strategies

Understanding the Role of Strategy. Notable in this categorization is the fact that all participating organizations that utilize vertical development approaches intentionally in their leadership development strategy, thereby employing a developmental theory of individual change, also use a Core Principles Model as opposed to either type of Prescriptive Model. The continuum in Figure 4 shows how these strategic components relate to one another in the organizations represented in the data.

It can be seen that these strategic principles relate to each other in a progressive fashion with the more traditional approach represented by organizations on the left and a more progressive approach to leadership development represented by organizations on the right. In the top right, we see the two organizations that employed the most progressive developmental approach to their leadership development strategy. Importantly, none of these intentionally developmental organizations, those in the top half of the continuum, outlined detailed behaviors, measures, outcomes, or expectations for leaders. They only provided a narrative of the foundational principles of the organization, which in many cases they expected all employees to

attend to, including leaders. One organization in this category explicitly distinguished their use of both vertical and horizontal development, the vertical being focused on leadership and the horizontal being focused on requisite job skills. This distinction created space in their framework for both the necessary specificity of role-specific skills, and the more open description of leadership that makes room for different kinds of individual leadership growth. This expansive approach was different from the detailed and at times complex frameworks used by other organizations.

However, using a Core Principles Model to inform leadership in an organization does not ensure a vertical approach to leadership development. There were two organizations that utilized a Core Principles Model but did not have a vertical theory of individual change, as can be seen in Figure 4. These two organizations had eliminated their traditional leadership competency frameworks, but still upheld a more tactical and data-driven approach to behavior change. Hallmarks of this combination include specific connections between leadership expectations and performance reviews, enterprise goal setting, and pre-determined learning paths for leaders. These organizations also maintained distinction by job level and hierarchy. In the four organizations who took a vertical approach to leadership development, two of them distinguished leadership by level in their strategic framework. In both cases this distinction consisted only of general competencies expected of managers. There was no other distribution of expectations by job level in developmental organizations.

This data set suggests that a developmental approach is not possible when using a prescriptive definition of leadership, be it skills or values based. Only organizations who had let go of these specific and detailed views of leadership created enough room for developmental

practices to emerge. After moving away from prescriptive frameworks, organizations must make the shifts from a behavioral to a developmental theory of individual change. Again, only four of the organizations in this research had done so, and in two of those cases they had not yet brought vertical development into all parts of the organization. The difference between the developmental organizations who reported having a more widespread integration and success with vertical development practices had made the shift from a role distinctive, to a universal definition of and approach to development. These two organizations are unique in that their view and definition of leadership applies to all employees, regardless of level or job, and their programs are not specific to certain levels. For these organizations, this pivotal shift both from a behavioral view of change to a developmental view, and from a level-specific to a universal definition and application of leadership, have allowed them to become more fully developmental.

Regardless of where an organization is in their leadership development journey, there are similar themes that impact their ability to effectively develop leaders. The data shows that an organization's ability to develop their leaders, and to make the essential strategic shifts required for vertical development, depends in large part on three key factors: essential organizational dynamics, senior leadership engagement, and the capability and experience of practitioners. The following sections explore those themes and includes responses from both internal and external leadership development practitioners. You can see the breakdown in Table 7. The concluding section of this chapter reviews the findings and summarizes key learnings.

Table 7*Respondents by Strategic Orientation*

Respondent Type	Count (n = 25)	Theory of Individual Change	Count (n = 19 internal, 6 external)
Internal Practitioner	19	Behavioral Accountability	14
		Developmental	5
External Practitioner	6	Behavioral Accountability	0
		Developmental	6

Key Factors Influencing Developmental Approach

As shown in Table 7, these key factors were present in all organizations, irrespective of their strategic orientation. However, as the following examples show, the impact they have and how they are managed is unique in developmental organizations. Within the three key factors several sub-themes emerged from the data. These are outlined in the Table 8 and will be described in the following sections.

Table 8

Key Factors Influencing the Implementation of Vertical Development Approaches: Sub-Themes and their Prevalence

Key Factor	Sub-Theme	References (n = 25)
Essential Organizational Dynamics	Creating Alignment in Business Processes	15
	Expanded Understanding of Risk-Taking	14
	Making Space for Openness and Vulnerability	19
Senior Leader Engagement	Role Modeling Behaviors	7
	Setting the Tone	12
	Investment and Sponsorship	7
Capability and Experience of Practitioners	Understanding of the Theory	4*
	Translating and Showing Impact	10
	Experience with Personal Development	5*

*All of these respondents were developmental practitioners.

Essential Organizational Dynamics. The first key factor influencing a vertical approach to organizational leadership development is essential organizational dynamics. The three important sub-themes in this area are: Creating Alignment in Business Processes, Expanding Understanding of Risk-Taking, and Making Space for Vulnerability and Risk Taking. These cultural aspects of an organization can help or hinder the advancement of a vertical approach to organizational leadership development depending on how they are managed. Developmental organizations have a better handle on these key dynamics and understand clearly how they

impact leadership development. Meanwhile, other organizations in the research were just gaining awareness and were struggling with how to manage some of these dynamics.

Creating Alignment in Business Processes. The topic that came up most frequently with regards to organizational challenges was creating true alignment across the organization, from the smallest practices to fundamental ways of working together. 13 respondents cited organizational process alignment as a barrier to leadership development. Frequently cited in this context were performance reviews and promotions. Five respondents highlighted that their promotions process challenged leadership development because it focused on technical aspects of the job, and eight highlighted the challenge of integrating leadership into the performance management process. One participant from a values-based and behavioral accountability focused organization gave the following example of how their organization's performance management process is inhibiting leadership development:

We have some challenges in our performance review process, which is done twice annually. It only studies one half of the year at a time. It asks employees to rate themselves and for others to rate them based on only one half, and what impact they made that half. It is not rewarding any long-term changes. And there is nothing on there about "How did you learn? How did you fail?" Change takes a long time and learning takes a long time. So there is a lack of long term focus in this process.

In addition to examples of specific processes that inhibit leadership development, there was also a general discussion of how all of the organization could become more aligned, thereby supporting leadership development philosophies and efforts throughout the system. When asked what they thought would make the biggest difference in their ability to better develop leaders in their organization, one respondent in a values-based prescriptive organization spoke about this need for integration between leadership development and different components of the business:

Really getting skillful at seamlessly integrating learning at each layer of the organization, both horizontally and vertically. So if we can get more brilliant, from a leadership development perspective, at threading all of these concepts through our platforms, across geographic areas, different levels of the organization, and throughout different programs... If we can thread concepts through the programmatic pillars that make up human resources, that will fundamentally alter the experience our leaders have developmentally.

While performance processes and general integration was the main focus of responses from behavioral organizations, developmental organizations took the idea of integration further. Specifically, they called out specific elements not just of leadership development and human resources that are not integrated, but the idea that the entirety of the organizational system might be contributing to the struggles of effectively developing leaders. All four internal practitioners who utilized a developmental theory of individual change spoke about how the entire talent process, including performance management and promotion, have traditionally been impediments to leadership development. All four also shared how they are trying to work using more developmental approaches to career progression, including getting rid of job descriptions, adjusting the ranking process, and encouraging employees to identify roles they are interested in instead of following a pre-determined promotion path.

Beyond these examples, all respondents characterized as developmental in their approach to individual change cited the challenge of working within larger systems, either their own or others they have observed, that do not hold the same developmental values. The sentiment was that the system often restricts the individual from engaging more fully in their own development, a deep impediment to the effectiveness of vertical techniques. The two quotes below, both from developmental practitioners, illustrate this well:

Sometimes leadership development isn't the answer. Sometimes there are issues with the org structure or rewards, and if those issues don't get changed and you only focus on leadership development the reinforcement in the culture may not stick. You can't look at

leadership development in a silo-ed fashion. You have to look at it holistically. When we look at the individual we need to look at the team and we need to look at the organization. It is very systemic. And it has to be for sustainable change. There needs to be commitment and engagement across those three areas. At the end of the day there are a lot of good leaders out there and they are not able to move into their fullest potential because of the limitations of the organization.

Now, the one difficult thing within [our organization] is, say a team is really progressive, they are doing all of this stuff, but they are still caught within the larger system of performance management, of promotions, these things that can be a lower level design... So that is constantly an issue. You can't just unilaterally decide to change one of those whole company systems. That is whole, huge OD change. You can't ignore those systems... They make a huge impact and they are difficult to change. So that is a big factor.

Expanded Understanding of Risk-Taking. The second area of organizational dynamics that influence the implementation of vertical development practices is an organization's understanding of risk-taking. 14 of the 19 internal respondents indicated that their organizations did not provide safe spaces for experimentation and risk, and that it was an impediment to the growth of leaders that exists in both behavioral and developmental organizations. Changing a culture of risk-aversion is not easy, and one participant from a developmental organization described it as the most important breakthrough they needed to enhance leadership development. They said:

We are described as a gathering of valedictorians. Extremely high achieving. Some of the world's leading thinkers about, polio, or HIV, or US education... We are able to attract those kinds of individuals to our organization... Then there is always having to have the right answer and having to be ready at a moment's notice to give that right answer and give it in an eloquent, McKinsey bullet-pointed kind of way. And so that is an enormous impediment to vertical development.

The dynamic of 'being right' came up frequently in the data, with seven direct mentions of leaders feeling pressure to be right, or not wrong. These mentions were preceded or followed by descriptions of the organizational culture as focused on accuracy, logic, and competence. On

the topic, another participant in a self-described risk-adverse organization said the following:

“You get rewarded for having all the answers so that [being right] becomes really important, and there is a big identity piece around that for our leaders.”

Many respondents indicated that risk intolerance may be rooted in fear not just of mistakes, but of repercussions from a business that prioritizes successful performance above all else. One participant said the following when asked about what drives risk-aversion in their organization:

I would say there is an undercurrent of fear, particularly when it comes to something like the numbers. Therefore, you get bad cultural behavior playing out because you have a leader who is hitting his numbers, but he is a disaster... but we wouldn't let them go because we needed the number.

Another participant referenced fear-based leadership and its impact on individual's ability to speak up:

When it comes to risk-taking here it really relates to speaking up. To lead from a confidence-based map rather than a fear-based map. A lot of the directors have a fear-based orientation, that is how they lead. So, there is a lot of aversion to risk in that respect.

An interesting observation is how frequently the concept of innovation came up in conversations about risk. Organizations today want to encourage risk in service of more effective innovation, but for many organizations not used to risk taking, this is a big step. One participant described it in the following way:

I don't think, at least right now in [our organization], we are at a place where we can be encouraging people to take risks. I think we should be coming up with ways to talk about risk taking. Our place is to ask when is it appropriate to take risks?...I will say that one of [our] Leadership and Management principles is about being innovative, so it's an interesting question about whether you can you innovate without taking risk. Implicit in that principle is some amount of acceptance that risk taking is a good idea.

This tension between innovation and risk-taking came up frequently in conversations and was mentioned specifically in 10 interviews. Four participants discussed innovation as part of their leadership competencies or organizational values, an imperative ability for employees and leaders alike. There were several examples shared of how organizations are trying to support innovation in their business practices, hiring innovation officers, creating incubators, after-action reviews, sprints, and teaching design thinking tools. However, when asked about how these practices impact the organization beyond research and development, or other technical functions, the examples lacked detail or were absent all together. One participant described their organization's limited use of reflective innovation practices in the following way:

I think innovation and learning from mistakes occurs more on the R&D side. You know project launches always get debriefed... but I think what they talk about is mainly what occurred, what worked, what didn't work, and really focus it on the tactical. I think where there is a miss, or where we could get better is starting to embed, within that process, how do you reflect on how the team operated, how you showed up, particularly under stress. We don't talk about it very often here, how people operate under stress even though we are under stress a lot of the time, and how that may change things, particularly relationships. We don't go "softy" like that and I think we could benefit a lot if we did.

While the need to create a culture more supportive of and conducive to risk-taking was prevalent in both behavioral and developmental environments, practitioners, internal and external, who used a developmental approach to change spoke of this need in terms of not only organizational innovation, but also of personal growth. Developmental practitioners spoke about risk-taking and individual growth in a far more integrated way than those using a behavioral model. In reference to the work they are encouraging leaders to do, these practitioners talked about how to get leaders on their "growing edge", "as close as possible to the friction", by finding the right combination of "commitment—almost fear, but excitement". This difference in

tone illustrates how developmentally minded practitioners see risk-taking in a different light than those using a behavioral model. The developmental perspective moves risk away from the possibility of being wrong to the potential of learning and growth.

Making Space for Openness and Vulnerability in Organizations. The significance of a culture's ability to "go softy" cannot be understated in a developmental context. The data gathered in this study illustrates how rare it is for organizations to support individual vulnerability, but also emphasize the paramount importance of breaking down these age-old perceptions in order to enhance leadership development. All 25 interview participants expressed that their organizations or clients are challenged by personal vulnerability and in many cases extremely inhibited by it. However, all participants recognized the limitations of this cultural dynamic and expressed that they are looking for ways to change it. For organizations using a behavioral approach the focus was to shift the culture of vulnerability primarily through peer-to-peer and smaller group learning environments. Two examples of this are detailed below:

Traditionally leaders here do not talk to each other about these things. They kind of hold it in and figure out with themselves how they are going to respond on their teams. With the smaller learning communities within a business unit we are trying to foster that. We are trying to increase the comfort with being transparent around the goals that they have. Also, to cast development and learning in a different light.

We are trying to explore some parts of the organization moving to peer-to-peer learning. For me from an organizational development perspective is the value that it implies continuous learning, it implies interdependence... It implies many things, not just I have a problem, ask me some questions so I can work to solve it. It has all kinds of ripple effects throughout an organization. It shows people that when you have a problem around here this is a place where you can talk about it, you don't have to feel ashamed about it.

These types of relational interventions can help to develop stronger organizational habits around being direct, speaking up, and sharing personal experience. While all of these approaches are positive, research-backed approaches to increasing openness that facilitates development,

developmental respondents placed more emphasis on non-programmatic approaches to cultivating vulnerability.

For developmental practitioners, increasing the level of openness and vulnerability in their organizations and their clients is a main area of focus. All 11 developmental practitioners highlighted the importance of vulnerability in effective development. Five developmental practitioners took this concept further and acknowledged that the lack of openness in organizations is not just preventing leaders from developing, but it is preventing them from being themselves and may be having more serious consequences. One respondent articulated the significance of this cultural dynamic in the following way:

Most leaders are not in psychologically safe environments, so they can't show up fully. You need to have environments where you can show up that way. It might not be a work relationship. It might be a therapeutic relationship, or a community of practice, or a leadership development program they engage in outside the organization, or just with their women's group or men's group... Helping leaders to create the system or community that can fully meet them is SUPER important. Because frankly, for top executives, it's not their spouse, it's not their boss, it's not their peers or subordinates. There are leaders who are DEEPLY hungry for someone to be able to fully meet them, intellectually, emotionally, in their messiness—and it needs to be more than a coaching relationship that happens once a week.

The way that senior leaders are able to show up with openness and vulnerability in their own organizations impacts them psychologically, and because of the significance of their influence, it also impacts the way that leadership is viewed and acted upon in the rest of the organization. This can limit the range of acceptable behaviors and development activities in the organization, ensuring that a closed and less vulnerable culture persists. In illustration of this, when asked what one thing they would change to make leadership development more effective, one participant in a behavioral organization said the following:

I wish our leadership could let their walls down. I wish that they could feel that it is okay to want and need development. That it is okay to be responsible for our culture... I think right now we get a lot of no's... it is palpable. There is a lot of push back. So, for me the walls would be the one thing that I would want to crumble down first.

Senior Leader Engagement

The second key factor leading to an organization's capacity to adopt a developmental approach to leadership is the engagement of senior leaders. As the previous section indicates, senior leaders are significant to leadership development activities in an organization.

Respondents discussed senior leader engagement in three key ways: investment and sponsorship, role modeling behaviors, and setting the tone.

Investment and Sponsorship. Senior leaders' engagement often literally determines what can be done by practitioners. The topic of investment and sponsorship came up in seven interviews as explicit conversations but was also prevalent in conversations about behavioral role modeling and setting the tone. Much of the behavior comes from whether or not the leaders are personally committed to supporting the work themselves. When asked about the involvement senior leaders do have, one participant from a skills-based prescriptive, behavioral organization simply said, "You could say that the organization writes a check every month for these services... They are supportive." Clearly, this kind of support is not all it takes to cultivate a culture that truly brings vertical development into practice in an organization. When asked what would make the biggest difference in their ability to more effectively develop leaders, nine respondents specifically said support from the top of the organization was key. Two quotes related to this are shared below:

The one thing I think would make the biggest difference... It really is sponsorship from the very top. Now, [our past CEO] was an avid sponsor. She demanded good leaders, and quality leaders. But what I am looking for is a genuine passion, for the personal

evolution that can occur in a company like [ours] when you invest and put some dollars back into the mix to develop those leadership capabilities that are important.

More buy-in from senior leaders. I mean, if you ask them to come kick off something, they will come, they will say the right things, but in terms of practice it is still a challenge. I mean, they will do what you ask, but when they go back to their department they don't practice it every day. I think the organization is still finding value in the work. You can talk about leadership, but as long as people are still approaching it from their technical skills, staff in general will pay more attention to technical skills than leadership skills.

Notably, all but one of the organizations using vertical development principles in their leadership development discussed the high level of involvement of their senior leaders and their CEO. The respondent using developmental theories who did not report high levels of involvement from senior leaders attributed the success of the developmental approach to the non-hierarchical nature of the organization and did express a desire for more senior leader engagement and support. Overall, when discussing the participation of senior leadership teams, the tone of developmental organizations was much more positive than behavioral organizations, many of whom felt they had little meaningful support from the top.

Role Modeling. The importance of role modeling came up in six interviews, two from developmental external consultants and four from behavioral organizations. One participant described it in the following way:

They [employees] can see it rolled out but more importantly they need to see it in leader's words and behaviors. Is there follow through? Is there accountability? Is it just words? Or do we see behaviors that are consistent with it? Are we holding people accountable if we see behavior that is inconsistent with it? We have managers who have reputations for being difficult or they are not treating their people well, and do we hold them accountable for that? That is what really changes the culture, so we need to look at these things and how we hold people accountable to them.

Respondents espousing a developmental theory of change who spoke directly to role modeling did it from a different angle. Instead of emphasizing the role modeling of specific competency-aligned behaviors, the consultants spoke of the significance of the leaders' role modeling developmental work. One participant explained it not as leaders acting on a determined behavior, but being open in front of others about the developmental work they are doing personally. This kind of role modeling shows other leaders that developmental work is important and invites them to engage in the work as well. The following quote describes this:

And, of course, it is very powerful when senior leaders in the room begin to see something in their thinking that they begin to perceive as limited and they share it. That is a very powerful moment. There is a collective exhale in the room. They see something shifting at the top and they say that okay, I guess this is real. We are not just playing games here.

In reflecting back on a leadership development program that had recently been hosted for directors, one participant from a behavioral organization reflected on what the impact could have been had they encouraged top leaders to role model these developmental activities:

Part of me thinks that if we had invited in senior leaders to sit at the tables with them and help explain how some of those things impact their leadership, it would have sort of opened up the conversation. There is some vulnerability that is needed to have an honest dialogue about it, and if your senior leader is doing it you have a better shot of creating that vulnerability. It becomes the cool thing to do.

Setting the Tone. A less direct form of senior leader influence was brought up in the interviews as participants discussed the general tone set by leaders at the top and how significant the trickle-down effect is throughout the organization. It was said by one participant that "senior leaders bring the weather". Employees throughout the organization feel that weather and take their cues from senior leaders in subtle ways that are often hard to measure and articulate but are felt pervasively. In some cases, participants spoke about this influence in relation to the strength

of the organizational hierarchy. Hierarchy played a role in this dialogue and five respondents, all from behavioral organizations, referred to it explicitly as a factor contributing to the level of impact leaders have. In organizations that described themselves as hierarchical, there were descriptions of senior leader influence in the context of role progression, promotion, and political status in the organization. This is evidenced from a participant from a skills-based behavioral organization below:

I think their [senior leaders] impact is very strong. The organization is very hierarchical. The more senior you are, the more powerful you are. Typically, because they grew up being managed in a certain way and people valued their technical skills, that is what they tend to look for. Even staff would tell you that they would rather work with a manager who is technically good but not a good manager, rather than someone who is a fantastic manager and not good technically. Which is really interesting.

But even in companies who described themselves as less hierarchical, without controlling top teams, the influence of senior leaders was still an essential ingredient to successful leadership development. This leadership impact is described well by an external consultant, who was experienced in working with senior leaders and teams:

Absolutely the CEO and senior leadership team has a massive influence on how much people can show up at work... The biggest thing is can they bring more and more and more of themselves into the space? Can they bring that messiness? Can they bring their shadow stuff that they are aware of into the conversations? Can they be vulnerable in a way that they are not going to be politically assassinated?

In both concrete and less tangible ways, senior leaders are the lynchpin to having vertical development embraced in organizations. Four developmental practitioners addressed this important impact, reflecting frequently the leader's level of development determines the capacity of the entire organization to move towards a developmental theory of individual change. In reference to the leaders of his organization, one respondent said this in regard to the significance

of their impact on the developmental state of the organization: “We will develop to the extent, and in the time and pace, that they also develop. I think that is how systems work...”

Capability and Experience of Practitioners

The final key factor for successfully embracing vertical development in organizational leadership development is the practitioners themselves. This work requires practitioners to have an understanding of the theory, an ability to translate the theory and show impact, and experience with their own personal vertical development. This section further explains these sub-themes and why they are significant for organizational ability to shift to a developmental approach in a meaningful and sustainable way.

Understanding of Theory. Four developmental respondents discussed the challenge of finding practitioners familiar with theories of vertical development. One participant said that finding people to build their team and do vertical work in the organization was their biggest barrier to more effectively developing leaders. On this challenge, they shared the following:

I think one of the hardest things we have here at [our organization] is the capability and skills of the people on my team...I need to have someone who understands the [vertical] field and is also an A business player and I can't find them. I have people who understand the field, and people who are A business players, but not both. I can't find those people. I can't find them anywhere. The capabilities of leadership professionals are not tooled right now. That is one of the biggest problems I have. It is so hard to scale when I can't find people to do the work...there is such a big spectrum of people who have even heard of this kind of work.

Another respondent, when asked about why they thought so few people are familiar with theories of vertical development, responded in the following way:

I think it is really a failure of academia. You know, Harvard Business Review, how many Harvard Business Review articles have spoken explicitly about adult development?... Why isn't Fast Company talking about it? Why isn't any of the respected, credible literature that these business executives are reading talking about it?... We really need to

mainstream it. If these things are really happening, which we know they are, we need to talk about it more, we need to publish it more. Where are the New York Times best-selling business books on vertical development? They don't exist!

Translating and Showing Impact. In addition to understanding the theories of vertical development themselves, practitioners must also be able to help others to understand them and show how they can impact the business. Here, translating refers to the practitioner's ability to effectively embed their theories of leadership development in the organization such that others come to understand them as well. While this is a challenge in all organizations, regardless of if a behavioral or developmental approach is used, there is a significant barrier for translating and showing the impact of vertical development. This is often the result of it being so far from the mainstream leadership development conversation. Where this challenge was discussed, respondents from all four developmental organizations said that the best way to get leaders to understand and support the topics is to engage them in the work and help them understand ideas of vertical development through their own experiences. In addition to describing the concepts, respondents expressed challenges with proving the impact of leadership development interventions of all kinds. One developmental practitioner said the following about how they coach leaders to see and understand the positive impacts of their development:

So, what I try to do the most [when speaking with leaders about developmental work] is focus on business outcomes and relate to business outcomes. I try to get them to measure as much as I possibly can on what a business outcome would look like. Some of them really struggle with it in the beginning, so I have to logically line it out for them. So, then we have a measurable business outcome and could show ROI to the business. And they [the leaders] feel more invested in being able to...they feel more proud in looking at the impact of how they are growing into their work.

In most leadership development approaches, the challenge of showing impact is compounded by barriers to collecting effective measurements and tracking progress. While

individuals can work with coaches to track changes associated with their own shifts, it can be more challenging to show impact on the business at large, when only these specifically and personalized approaches exist. No respondents had an answer for the challenge of measurement and many noted that while you could observe trends it is virtually impossible to show more than just correlation. One respondent attributed their organization's lack of focus on leadership development to this issue, saying that even when focus is found, the organization rarely sustains it. Instead, they develop other measures and models in a constant search for something that the business will grab on to. According to the participant, this stems from the inability to measure or prove the impact of leadership development work.

An added challenge in this area when considering vertical development is the lack of availability of vertical development assessments. Even if leaders are to buy-in to the concept of vertical development in organizational leadership, it is challenging to measure progress or conduct pre and post assessments. Four respondents, using the developmental theory of individual change, described the current state of vertical assessments as a significant challenge to creating deeper organizational support for this kind of work. One such response is illustrated below:

Well, the tricky thing is, as far as vertical development, there are a lot of good assessments out there... All of these are expensive, time consuming, they have to be hand graded for the most part. I have tested and piloted it but I haven't found a good way to do it in a system...I think to scale it, and to see progress, to have true metrics—this intervention, did it increase vertical development? Unless you do pre and post assessments you will never know. I am really challenging my own system to do that, but they haven't been receptive for all the reasons I mentioned, time, expense. And it just takes a lot of energy. Just doing one of these assessments takes a lot of time and a lot of energy, a lot of focus, a lot of thoughtfulness. Often times our executives are running all over the place and to sit down and ask them to do that for an hour is a big ask.

Depending on how traditionally analytical the organizational culture is, practitioners will be challenged to various degrees in their ability to create understanding and show impact of vertical development practices. All respondents who used a developmental theory of change described techniques they used to help leaders relate to the concepts personally and track the impact of their own change. However, there was no clear consensus on a universal approach to this process. There was also not a clear case made for how to do this at the team or organizational level.

Experience with Personal Development. Adding to the challenge of identifying practitioners and proving impact is the importance of practitioners having experienced the work personally. This final sub-theme was presented as unique to vertical development and did not come up in interviews of behavioral practitioners. Five developmental respondents spoke specifically about the importance of practitioners having done vertical development work themselves. The significance of practitioners working on their meaningful development, is described in these quotes from participants:

The client can only go so far as you have gone within yourself... They are not going to go there if you won't go there yourself. So, the vertical development coaching is a really delicate container. I am always surprised at how much can show up. I do a daily practice of my own cultivation of presence and of yoga and meditation. I know when I am coming on a call and I have six leaders that day, I need to be holding a big container for them to see themselves as opposed to seeing me.

But I think one thing that is important is, have you actually done this work on yourself? I think a lot of practitioners sometimes get in the bad habit of saying oh you should do all these things but they themselves haven't actually gone through that process or that inquiry and there is a hypocrisy in that, you know. Sophisticated clients can smell that out after a while. And then if you practice it yourself you can teach it not just from the mind but from the body and from the gut and the heart. All these centers of intelligence. Because you have actually gone through it. The power of this work comes from it actually transforming you first.

Given the lack of awareness of the theories of vertical development in general, finding people with meaningful personal experience in vertical development is a barrier to more organizations adopting developmental approaches. The challenge of finding practitioners who have a mastery of all three of these things, vertical theory, ability to translate and apply that theory, and experience with their own development, is a pervasive impediment to bringing theories of vertical development into organizational leadership development in a sustainable and effective way.

Leadership Development Practices

The key factors articulated here are present regardless of an organization's strategic approach to leadership development. Yet, the organizations with the best grasp on these challenges are developmental in their views, and are striving to make changes in important areas, allowing for more effective organizational leadership development. This section highlights practices of developmental organizations that support vertical leadership development. This section is organized around the previously presented model from Petri (2015) on the three conditions for effective vertical development (Figure 1).

Condition #1: Heat Experiences. Often referred to in the interviews as 'crucible experiences', 'stepping out of your comfort zone', or 'creating tension', developmental practitioners, internal or external, strive to create these kinds of experiences for leaders as the foundation of their approach. One participating organization worked to create "heat-seeking" leaders by using an explicit practice Petri (2015) named "experience explorer". In this example, leaders were brought together at a leadership event and given "experience explorer cards" to

work through reflections on some of their most profound learning experiences. This process creates space for the identification of and reflection on heat experiences, helping leaders see the impact of those experiences and encouraging them to lean into them in the future. Exercises like this, geared toward increasing the developmental focus of individuals, can help to shape the broader developmental culture of the organization.

The second aspect of heat experiences, creating a culture of developmental risk-taking, was inquired about directly in this research. One respondent explicitly called out the work their organization is trying to do in this area by shifting the mindset of all leaders and managers “from evaluating people” to “developing them”. But this is much easier said than done. As has been discussed, cultural and systemic barriers exist to organizations increasing their tolerance for risk-taking, but some practitioners have developed practices to overcome those barriers.

One excellent practice was referred to as “Works in Progress” and is intended to help senior leaders model the kind of developmental risk-taking the organization wants to infuse at all levels. Influential senior leaders are shooting videos of themselves talking about where they have made mistakes and taken big risks. In these videos, they also respond to direct and raw feedback about them, shared by people who know them well. The leader reads the feedback on camera and responds naturally. The ongoing series is intended to have influential leaders model the fact that they are a “work in progress”. This kind of developmental vulnerability has a significant impact not only on the participating leaders, but also on what other leaders in the organization view as acceptable behavior.

Stretch opportunities are another significant element of heat experiences. According to Petri’s (2015) definition of heat experiences, they require the following in order to have real

impact: it must be a new experience, the results have to matter, there is a chance of both success and failure, important people are watching, and it is extremely uncomfortable. One external consultant expressed frustration at the lack of organizational willingness to truly create these kinds of stretch opportunities for leaders, saying it was the one thing that would make the biggest difference in accelerating leadership development, but that many organizations are not willing to take risks on people. While this is common, it was not true of all the organizations examined in this research.

One developmental organization invests in stretch assignments and projects frequently. A great example occurred when the CEO gave the responsibility for creating the organization's strategic plan to a group of high potential leaders from across the organization. While those leaders received support from the business, there was an immense risk of failure, and because no other group had been tasked with creating a backup strategy, the results truly did matter. As a testament to the power of an effective stretch assignment, in reference to this strategy-creation project, the respondent from this organization said, "These individuals were transformed. Their brains, their cognition, their emotional intelligence, it was changed from this profound experience."

Condition #2: Colliding Perspectives. Of the three conditions for vertical development, this condition was the least discussed in the data and, aside from peer coaching, only five respondents shared specific examples of these aspects. Of those five, only one was internal.

Peer coaching came up frequently in the research, both in reference to supporting leaders to adopt more coaching behaviors and creating communities where individuals are engaged in coaching each other through issues, regardless of their positional relationship. Only the two

developmental and universally focused organizations had robust examples of peer-to-peer learning that was instituted and effective. The other two developmental organizations did use leader-lead approaches frequently but did not have fully-functioning peer-to-peer development or sponsorship programs. All other organizations were just beginning to engage in the concept or were integrating it into their development approach. Aside from established mentoring or sponsorship programs, this peer-to-peer dynamic was discussed as an up-and-coming aspect of their leadership development approach. Many respondents were aspirational about the impact such a program could have on leadership at all levels of the organization. Peer-to-peer coaching and problem-solving was connected to diversity and inclusion, innovation, increased trust and vulnerability, and greater organizational empathy. But again, the only examples that show full implementation and organizational impact, came from the two most developmental organizations in the data.

Other aspects of Colliding Perspectives were referenced occasionally, and only by developmental practitioners, but not all of them. Only five respondents mentioned specific approaches like frame-breaking, deep listening, polarity management, or systems thinking. In most of these cases, these tools seemed to be used to supplement the developmental work of engaging leaders in their own blind spots, derailers, or shadow sides, which made up the bulk of the approach described by practitioners using a developmental approach.

Condition #3: Elevated Sensemaking. This final condition depends on a very important currency in organizations: time. Carving out both the time and the support required for meaningful reflection and integration was expressed as a challenge regardless of the respondent's theory of individual change. However, outside of introducing mindfulness and encouraging

general reflection in leadership development practices, the only respondents who touched on other aspects of sensemaking were those who held a developmental theory of individual change.

All 14 of the organizations using a behavioral accountability approach to individual growth had practices that supported reflection, whether it was built into leadership development programs or encouraged through coaching and mentorship. However, none of these organizations shared specific strategies for making these experiences developmental. The reflection processes highlighted in the interviews stayed in the realm of double loop learning, without moving into triple loop learning where leaders are supported to move from reflecting on how their thinking got them to a certain outcome, to reflecting on how their perspective and mindset shaped their thinking in the first place.

One external practitioner using a developmental theory of individual change described this aspect of triple loop learning to be the most powerful tool they had in encouraging a leader's vertical development. They facilitate this learning by having leaders they coach engage in a journaling practice focused on surfacing this third level of reflection. Finally, they had leaders commit to a certain number of reflections over a period of time.

Summary

This chapter has reported on the results of this research study, providing an overview of findings and key themes. The analysis began with an assessment of participating organization's strategic orientation to leadership development. The data that followed was organized according to what were determined to be the key factors influencing an organization's ability to adopt a developmental approach to leadership development: essential organizational dynamics, senior leadership engagement, and capability and experience of practitioners. Specific practices and

approaches of developmental organizations were also highlighted to illustrate what the work looks like in practice. Chapter 5 will draw implications from this study and suggest opportunities for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study is to understand the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices. Specifically, the research questions were:

1. What is the current state of the implementation of vertical development theories in organizational leadership development practices?
2. What strategies and practices are being used to implement vertical development into organizational leadership development?
3. What challenges have been experienced by practitioners who have attempted to implement these theories, or components thereof?

This chapter presents a discussion of the study results in relation to the stated research purpose and in context of the larger body of research highlighted in Chapter 2. This includes conclusions, recommendations, study limitations, and suggestions for further study.

Interpretation of Findings

The data from this study produced three key findings:

1. To effectively implement vertical development practices, organizations should not use a prescriptive model of leadership or have behavioral accountability as their philosophy of individual change.
2. Vertical development approaches are implemented incompletely in practice compared to suggested approaches in the literature.
3. Vertical development faces new variations of implementation challenges that have consistently impeded leadership development.

1) An Organization's Strategic Orientation to Leadership Development. Study

findings indicated that an organization's strategic orientation toward leadership development was a key factor impacting whether or not they were prepared to use a vertical approach to leadership development. The continuum of strategic orientation illustrated that an organization's likelihood of using vertical development was implicated by two strategic factors: the organization's view of leadership and their theory of individual change. The prescriptive model of leadership seen in respondent organizations typically dictated specific skills or values-based behaviors a leader needs to have and were similar to the competency models previously discussed, even if different names were given to the frameworks ("Leadership Competencies", 2008). All organizations in the data who used these prescriptive models of leadership had not yet adopted vertical development. Only those with a view of leadership based on core principles of the organization were able to integrate aspects of vertical development. It can be interpreted that the restrictive nature of the detailed exceptions and competency frameworks associated with these prescriptive views limited the implementation of vertical development. No organization who used a prescriptive approach was attempting to integrate vertical development.

The nature of a prescriptive model focuses on the measurement of external behaviors and accomplishments (Boyatzis, 1982; Garonik, Nethersell, & Spreier, 2006). For that reason, these views of leadership perpetuate a theory of individual change based on behavioral accountability. This is the second aspect of an organization's strategic orientation that limits the likelihood of successful implementation of vertical development. The behavioral accountability approach requires stated behaviors and skills to be seen, measured, and tracked by others external to the leader (Bell et al., 2002). This kind of model has a tendency to omit the internal personal work

that is core to vertical development, mainly because it is harder to see and quantify. While internal work is externalized through behaviors, the relationship between the two is difficult to track, so the easier way to go about ensuring individual change is to hold people accountable to the external changes. While external change is important, it cannot be emphasized at the expense of internal, reflective work, otherwise true vertical development is less likely to occur.

These findings illustrated that the first step to organizational implementation of vertical development is to shift the organization's strategic orientation to leadership. Organizations need to evolve past prescriptive models of leadership to consider and integrate more open and fluid definitions, rooted in core principles of how the organization operates. This shift creates space for leaders to explore in the context of their own development, and cultivate their own style, as opposed to use a model that has been defined for them by the organization (Bolden, 2004; Kellerman, 2004; Loan-Clarke, 1996).

Next, organizations should consider their use of a behavioral accountability theory of individual change and how a more developmental approach could support the growth of their leaders. By integrating a broader view of how individuals change, organizations can support and empower leaders in their own development, not just require that they change with a carrot and stick approach. These two changes appear to be foundational in an organization's journey to integrating vertical development.

2) Current Approaches and Existing Theories. In organizations implementing vertical development, innovative and impactful practices are emerging. Through these examples we can see the Conditions of Vertical Development (Petri, 2015) and Deliberately Developmental Organizations (Kagen et al., 2016) in practice, illustrating their relevance to practical application.

Conditions for Vertical Development. Overall, the three conditions for vertical development, Heat Experiences, Colliding Perspectives, and Elevated Sensemaking (Figure 1) were all represented in the data, but to varying degrees and levels of intentionality. Heat Experiences were common across respondents. The examples, shared by non-developmental practitioners, aligned with the descriptions provided of traditional action learning methods where experiences are practical, applicable, and designed to create a sense of active participation (Leonard & Lang, 2010; Marsick & O'Neil, 1999).

Intentionally developmental practitioners, on the other hand, viewed these experiences differently than these more traditional models. All developmental practitioners talked about heat experiences, not as the end or ultimate goal of the leadership development intervention, but as a means of opening doors to the true work of development. Each of the 11 respondents categorized as developmental talked about the tension that occurred in moments of heat as the way for a leader to access and understand their real developmental work. This was a total departure from the way heat experiences were characterized in non-developmental organizations, as learning experiences primarily that challenged your skills and your ability to handle new environments. That deeper level of personal work was absent from descriptions of heat experiences in non-developmental organizations. The intentional use of experience as a means to cultivate self-awareness moves the developmental approach beyond the traditional critiques of action learning methods used by non-developmental practitioners in this research (McLaughlin & Thorpe, 1993).

The second condition for vertical development, colliding perspectives, was the condition that had the fewest specific examples provided in the data. It is not clear why colliding perspectives approaches are not better represented in the data, but the challenges of engaging

people in developmental concepts could be part of the problem. While leaders likely have experiences with frame-breaking, for example, the challenge of directly engaging leaders in frame-breaking work, and discussing it as such, may come from the fact that the language and psychology of the approach is less common in a business context. One consultant described this language barrier in the following way:

I never say, 'I am going to engage you in vertical development.' People have no idea what that is. I like to instead say, 'I am going to help you think more holistically and systemically about the business so you can allocate your energy for the highest impact.'

It could be the case that until terms like frame-breaking and polarity management enter into the mainstream leadership lexicon, as growth mindset and emotional intelligence have in the last decade, we will not see as many direct references to their use in organizational leadership development. They may remain on the fringe, used by some practitioners, until they are popularized more broadly. This barrier could prevent organizations from adopting a complete vertical development practice, instead over-focusing on heat experiences or elevated sensemaking, without providing leaders with tools and experiences to do the important work of helping them see new perspectives.

Finally, elevated sensemaking was mentioned frequently, but often not in the way that true vertical development requires (Oliver, 2008). When asked about how reflective practices are included in leadership development, non-developmental respondents all said reflection was an important part of the work and went on to describe the individual reflections, trio conversations, and journaling exercises used in various leadership development interventions. These examples were in line with the reflective examples seen in reviews of the action learning approach (McGill & Brockbank, 2015; Revans, 2011). These examples, however, only scratch the surface of the

work this condition is intended to capture. Only vertical practitioners talked about ongoing reflection, extensive journaling, or dialogue that occurs over an extended period of time to continually engage a leader in their developmental work. The depth of the reflective practices shared by developmental practitioners was far greater than those practices shared by non-developmental practitioners.

The powerful impact of elevated sensemaking, is illustrated in this respondent's description of transformative reflection:

Most of our training doesn't make people think. It makes them sit there and absorb knowledge, which is very different from making someone think. They are waking up. They are waking up to how they are thinking and how limited that is. They are beginning to make a connection between their way of seeing the world, their thinking the ripple effect it is having, and the impact they are having. That is an aspect of this, that people are beginning to actually own their impact. They begin to see and make the connection between how they think, the results they see, and the impact that they have. That really energizes people because then they feel like they are in control and that they can do something about it, rather than feeling change isn't up to them.

The significance of this type of intentional reflection is critical in the work of vertical development. It may be the case that until practitioners experience the power of this level of personal reflection for themselves, they will not understand the role it needs to play in organizational leadership development. Once practitioners understand and promote this deeper sensemaking, they are more likely to develop understanding and support for this type of work in their organizations and clients. Until organizations and practitioners prioritize the time required for intentional reflection, the sensemaking component of vertical development will continue to be underserved and personal development will fall short of its transformative potential.

Dimensions of Deliberately Developmental Organizations™. It is notable that while all organizations intentionally practicing vertical development had examples of each of the

conditions of vertical development, only the two organizations characterized as both developmental in their approach to individual change and universal in their focus showed evidence of being a Deliberately Developmental Organization™, or at least on their way to being one.

The two universally developmental organizations emphasized these three dimensions through their practices and had strong examples of overcoming typical barriers in each of these areas. The most significant difference in the way these two organizations demonstrated the DDO™ dimensions, and the other two intentionally developmental organizations did not, is in the level of focus of their developmental approach. These two organizations were universal in nature. There were not special development for senior leaders or executives. There were not specific requirements for managers. In fact, one of these organizations had no organizational hierarchy and operated in a lattice structure, not a traditional managerial structure. This difference between a developmental focus that is universal and one that makes distinctions by level is significant for organizations. Not only adopting vertical development approach, but making that approach part of the whole organization.

3) Challenges Facing the Implementation of Vertical Development. This research suggests that the challenges plaguing the leadership development industry overall still apply to vertical development, but with new, complex variations. Practitioners intentionally using vertical development still struggle to get leaders and teams to prioritize the time required for development, which for meaningful vertical development is often a greater investment than a skills-based approach requires. From initial assessment, to coaching conversations, to personal reflection and continued follow-up, the comprehensive process of vertical development demands

quality time from those engaged in the process. Developmental practitioners implementing vertical in the study referenced the challenge of time and the overwhelming sense that leads people to believe they don't have time, as a barrier to development throughout the process.

Additionally, developmental practitioners were more focused on long-term learning and continued learning than non-developmental practitioners, which inherently requires a deeper level of long-term engagement from leaders. In the context of this long-term development, vertical practitioners still have to identify ways to create a meaningful transfer of learning, moving away from static interventions to more deeply embedded practices (Avolio, 2005). This often requires more support from others throughout the business and a deeper integration of developmental philosophies into the day to day work of the organization. This kind of support can be doubly challenging for developmental practitioners who face even greater obstacles to measuring progress than some traditional leadership development methods. They still struggle with measuring impact and proving ROI for individuals and for the business (Kellerman, 2012). They are still challenged to get the support and participation of the senior-most leaders, something with more significance and complexity for developmental organizations, that demand a different kind of engagement from senior leaders to set the appropriate tone for continued development.

In addition to these common challenges, those intentionally seeking to implement vertical development are also faced with the added challenges of the essential organizational factors: creating business alignment, expanding risk-taking, and making space for openness and vulnerability. These aspects of the data are called out specifically because they illustrate the deep, systemic, and cultural challenges to vertical development that are embedded in the way

organizations have always operated. All respondents using a vertical approach discussed challenges in these areas and all but two of the 11 vertical respondents cited an aspect of these essential organizational factors as one of the most significant challenges facing their ability to effectively develop leaders. While there are approaches that can be taken, such as working with key individual leaders and teams to integrate vertical development, it will always exist in pockets of the organization, never fully embraced as part of the organization's operating principles unless these essential organization-level factors are addressed.

Finally, Because of the highly personal and intensive nature of vertical development, vulnerability is essential to vertical leadership development. Organizations that do not support a culture of openness and vulnerability will not be able to become fully developmental.

Ancillary Findings: Mindset of Practitioners

While not a goal of the research, an interesting additional finding that needs more focused research is related to the self-description of practitioners. In looking across the respondents, a difference in tone was observed between developmental and non-developmental practitioners. There were three significant aspects of difference that stood out: 1) emphasis on their own personal development, 2) perceived comfort with experimentation, and 3) recognition of ambiguity and challenge.

Each of the 11 developmental practitioners made some mention of their own growth and development. For some, it was cited as an inspiration for their work and for others a limitation of their ability. These practitioners were comfortable using themselves in examples they shared and talked about how they grew from a given experience and then leveraged that to help others with their development. Some of these practitioners clearly said that the biggest limit on their ability

to develop others was their own ability to develop themselves. This language emphasized a tangible sense of personalization, such that the work felt a part of them. Whereas non-developmental practitioners spoke in less personal ways, at times incredibly passionate, but less personal. There was more emphasis on the models and tools than there was on the actual experiences of leaders, let alone the actual experience of the practitioners themselves. This difference indicated a higher level of personal association to the work, such that developmental practitioners spoke in ways that hardly separated themselves from the leaders they are responsible for developing.

Second, developmental practitioners were quicker to talk about the things they were trying or the aspirations they had for their work. There seemed to be a greater level of risk-taking and innovation involved in their practices. This could be because of their developmental view and the possibilities opened up by that perspective, or it could be a pre-condition to adopting a developmental approach in the beginning. Either way, it was a distinguishing factor from non-developmental practitioners who presented their practices and frameworks with more polish and certainty. While all respondents discussed changes and things they are trying and implementing, developmental practitioners had a more playful, curious, and excited tone about their experimentation. Their changes and ideas were not tweaks to an existing process, but more often radical departures. From these examples, developmental practitioners in this study appeared to have a higher level of propensity for and comfort with experimentation than non-developmental practitioners.

Finally, developmental practitioners exhibited a clear recognition of ambiguity and challenge in their work. They spoke often of the work it takes to “hold the container”, or “create

space” for others to grow, and that in that space, they are never sure exactly what will happen. This language was unique to developmental practitioners who seemed to take a less prescriptive and more facilitative approach to their role overall. Again, it is unclear if this is a characteristic that developed out of their use of vertical development practices or something innate in the individual themselves. Regardless, it was consistent across the developmental respondents.

Again, the findings related to practitioner’s views, mindsets, and personal practices, are considered ancillary findings in the study. While these observations emerged from the data, they were not directly assessed in the interview protocol and need further research to understand and substantiate. This research could have significant implications for the implementation of vertical development as it would further knowledge on conditions necessary for successful organizational implementation.

Implications

The findings from this research have implications for practitioners looking to bring more effective leadership development to their organizations or clients. First, those who are committed to implementing vertical development in their practice can find examples in pockets. Progressive organizations, like those who are considered developmental in this research, and consulting firms are developing new and innovative ways to think about and integrate vertical development into the way leadership is understood and taught. Despite this process, should a practitioner choose to implement vertical development, they will, for the most part, be pioneering in their work. Second, for practitioners seeking to make these profound changes in how they engage in leadership development, they will face more complex variations of traditional challenges that

have plagued the industry, as well as deeper and more systemic challenges driven by the culture and processes of the organization. The acceleration of effective and sustainable integration of vertical development will require transformation at the organizational level.

The work required to make changes in the areas of business alignment, risk-taking, and openness and vulnerability are profound. This work requires an unlearning of behaviors and traditions that have long dominated the organizational way of life. This research was intended to uncover a path forward for effective and sustainable integration of vertical development into organizational practice and while these findings illustrate several steps that can be taken, the most significant implication is the understanding that many organizations may not have the cultures and systems needed to support true vertical development. For this reason, the work to implement vertical development practice may be greater than first anticipated. The persistence and depth of the organizational challenges presented in this data supports the view that vertical development is on a developmental level different from that of most organizations, and that integration of this theory will require a system-level approach to developing the entire organization, not just changing leadership development.

This kind of change is articulated through the organizational application of developmental models discussed in this research (Erickson, 1952; Kegan, 1982; Loevinger, 1976; Torbert, 1987). Organizations, like individuals, can be seen as evolving along a developmental hierarchy, moving from one worldview to another, and in each stage, organizations will behave in very different ways. Laloux (2014) describes the stages organizations move through as they develop. The final stage articulated is Evolutionary-Teal.

This stage of organizational consciousness is similar to the higher stages of individual consciousness, like Kegan's Fifth Order (1982) or Torbert's Alchemist (1987).

In Laloux's (2014) research, only two necessary conditions for the success of an Evolutionary-Teal organization were found: ownership and top leadership. Laloux (2014) says, "The general rule seems to be that the level of consciousness of an organization cannot exceed the level of consciousness of its leader" (p. 239). Additional research tracking the success of organizational transformation initiatives lead by CEOs of varying levels of consciousness indicates that higher level leaders see notably greater rates of success than those at lower levels (Rourke & Torbert, 1998). If higher order leaders are required for deep organizational transformation and organizational transformation is required for the meaningful development of leaders, where should one start?

In order to answer this paradoxical question, the way organizational change and leadership development are understood will have to shift to accommodate these new views. While practitioners in the field of organization development are beginning to pick up theories of vertical development and interpret their implications for the field, this conversation is nascent (Chesley, Egan, & Lahl, 2016). From this work, it can be argued that OD as a field needs to develop a more integrated way of seeing change, from the individual through the whole system. This shift will occur not by seeing organizations through two lenses, one focused on individuals and teams and other focused on systems and strategy (micro and macro), but through one more inclusive and developmental lens. As long as leadership development remains in its own separate body of work, disconnected from the business, the business is not motivated to evolve in ways that support leadership development, and vice versa. For these reasons, the most significant and

far reaching implication of this research is that despite new and improved theories on leadership development, in order to make meaningful change, practitioners can no longer look at leadership development in isolation. Every piece should be examined in relationship to the broader system or else the impact of these changes will be minimal.

Recommendations for Further Study

The strongest recommendation for further study is to examine the relationship between leadership and organizational change in the context of the organizational consciousness paradigm. If organizations are being called to transform, does that transformation depend on the leaders they have? And if leaders are being called to transform, does that transformation depend on the organizational environments they are in? Can leaders and the organizations they lead develop at different rates, or will that incongruence eventually lead one or the other to fail? These central questions are important to understand to overcome the organizational challenges to vertical development articulated in this research and create an approach to change that can mitigate those challenges, allowing vertical development to enter and take root in organizational systems more broadly.

Limitations

This study is limited primarily by its sample. First, it is important to note that the sample was dependent primarily on the personal network of the researcher. Initial attempts at cold-contacting participants had limited success in generating interviews, so both the leveraging of the researcher's own contacts and snowball sampling of participants was used which lead to homogeneity in the respondents. More than half of the organizational respondents, 10 out of 19, were technology companies in the San Francisco Bay Area. The other nine organizations were

from a variety of industries and regions. The external practitioners exhibited more homogeneity than internal practitioners, as they were included through a snowball sampling approach, where internal practitioners who practiced vertical development recommended them as interview participants. All six used some vertical development methodology, and three of the six were located in the San Francisco Bay Area.

While the sample is clearly a limitation in this study, the impact is not clear. It is likely that a more random sample of organizations outside of the San Francisco Bay Area would produce data that includes less detail on vertical development. Likewise, a totally random sampling of external practitioners would likely produce more diversity in approach as opposed to all of the respondents using a vertical development lens. However, had this study included a fully random sample there was no assurance that the topic of vertical development could have been explored at all, so some of the limitations were necessary to ensure relevance of the data to the research questions.

Conclusion

This study reveals three key findings:

1. To effectively implement vertical development practices organizations cannot use a prescriptive model of leadership, nor can behavioral accountability be their philosophy of individual change
2. Current approaches to implementation support existing theories of vertical development, but imperfectly
3. Vertical development faces new variations of some of the same challenges that have always impeded leadership in organizations

The significant implication of these findings is that the acceleration of the effective and sustainable integration of vertical development will require transformation at the organizational level, necessitating that organizational development practitioners shift their view from one focused on leadership development in isolation to one that takes a more holistic view of the entire organization's development.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Understanding Effective Leadership Development: Research Interview Questions

These questions approximate the interview and may not all be asked depending on the conversation.

Questions related to **Aspirations** component of **DDO™** model:

- Tell me about the individual development strategy of your organization. By strategy, mean an intentional approach and/or process for individual development in your organization. How did this strategy come to be?
- What are the components you focus on in the development of your people? Can you provide me with some examples?
 - How were these components or elements identified?
 - How do business leaders engage with/support this development strategy?

Questions related to **Practices** component of **DDO™** model:

- What specific tools or practices do you use to bring this strategy to life in the organization?
- What tools or practices do you use to support the integration of leadership development and task in the day to day work experience?
 - How are these practices institutionalized in the organization? Can you provide a specific example?
- How do you utilize coaching and mentorship in your organization? Please describe your approach and what role it plays in your overall development strategy. (Vertical Development Condition: **Colliding Perspectives/Elevated Sensemaking**)
 - What is the criteria for being a mentor/mentee?
 - Do you use peer-to-peer coaching?
- How do you factor individual development into the ways you promote and assign employees to new roles or projects? (Vertical Development Condition: **Heat Experiences**)
 - Do you have a practice of providing “stretch assignments”? If so, can you provide some examples of stretch assignments and how they were identified and assigned?

Questions related to **Community** component of **DDO™** model:

- How does your organization respond to risk taking? How does that response influence your approach to development? (Vertical Development Condition: **Heat Experiences**)
- What are the norms around leaders discussing interpersonal and relational leadership challenges? Can you share a specific example to illustrate this? (Vertical Development

Condition: **Colliding Perspectives/Elevated Sensemaking**)

- How common is it for leaders to share their growth goals with one another? Could you share what that looks like here, and how people might do it? (Vertical Development Condition: **Colliding Perspectives/Elevated Sensemaking**)
- How do senior leaders, either directly or indirectly, influence the way that leadership is seen, and developed in the organization? (Question added after first two interviews)

Concluding question related to **Immunity Mapping** model:

- What is the one thing you believe would make the biggest difference in your organization's ability to develop your people more deeply and more effectively?
 - What is your organization currently doing that is inhibiting this change?