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Strategies Uber Drivers Use to Enhance Competitive Advantage for Increased Profits and Incomes

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Abstract

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MBA, University of Benin, 1998

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Uber drivers are usually from economically disadvantaged groups, with most drivers reporting lower incomes than typical workers. Uber drivers who fail to improve their profits and incomes lower their families' standard of living. Grounded in transaction cost theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes. The participants were six Uber drivers in Lagos, Nigeria who successfully used strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase their profits and incomes. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, financial transactions with Uber, transactions from car rental companies, and transactions from offline trips with customers. Thematic analysis of the data revealed four themes: technologies, surge pricing and profitable trips, flexible work hours, and customer service and relationships. A key recommendation for Uber drivers is to familiarize themselves with the available technologies and engage in surge pricing. The implications for positive social change include the potential for Uber drivers to achieve long-term sustainable growth, generate employment, reduce poverty, and enhance local communities' economic well-being.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my deceased grandparents, especially Mr. and Mrs. Irojiegbe, who strived and were known for their business entrepreneurship in a palm plantation, clay products manufacturing, and marketing businesses. My late parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tamunoigoni Samuel Moses Hart; wife, Dame Fortune Keyibi Atemie Hart; aunty, Mrs. Oruene Rose Mark Kalio; and brother-in-law, Chief Ngogo Omoni-Alete. They shaped my existence, my combined perception of academic, scholarly, and business interests. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my loving children—three sons and two daughters, Kingsley Tamunoala, Kelvin Adonye, Kelsey Kalanne, Kenny Adango, and Kevia Tamunomiebi—for their support, patience, and understanding during my studies. My gratitude to my sister, Mrs. Gloria Ngogo Omoni-Alete; my in-laws, Elder and Mrs. Lawrence Fubara Jumbo; my cousin, Chief Reginald Abbey-Hart; my step brother, Elder Gibson Ogolo; and my friend, Venerable and Dr. (Mrs.) Arinze Asuzu, for their support, prayers, and encouragement.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Advances in information, communication, and digital technology have transformed global socioeconomic activities, developed the sharing economy, enhanced collaborative consumption, and created the ridesharing platform marketplace in the transportation industry (Davies et al., 2017). Major cities with high populations, high unemployment rates, and limited transportation systems have embraced Uber's ridesharing services in partnership with Uber drivers. Vanderschuren and Baufeldt (2018) posited that ridesharing services fulfill transportation needs for individuals who cannot own private vehicles and are not satisfied with the level of services available in public transportation, in addition to providing employment and income for those willing to share their cars. The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage to increase their profits and incomes.

Background of the Problem

The Uber driver partnership business is an integral part of the transportation industry with high accelerated growth in major urban cities (Pepic, 2018). Since its establishment in 2009, Uber has disrupted the transportation industry worldwide. In 2018, 3 million drivers were associated with Uber, serving 75 million riders in over 600 cities worldwide (Eisenmeier, 2018). The lack of adequate strategies to enhance competitive advantage makes it difficult for Uber drivers to match traditional taxis in terms of profit and income to sustain their families and communities.

With a current population of approximately 182 million people, Nigeria is the most populous Black Country globally (Muhammad et al., 2017). A growing community

is one factor responsible for the continuous growth of unemployment (Adekola et al., 2016). Lagos is the commercial capital and an industrial city in Nigeria, with approximately 21 million inhabitants (the sixth-largest city in the world; Onwuemele, 2018). Lagos's highways are often too congested, partly because of the city's layout (Mobereola, 2009; Onwuemele, 2018). Lagos did not have an organized mass transit system until the state government introduced bus rapid transit (BRT) in 2006 (Mobereola, 2009). The available transport services in Lagos are inferior quality and delivered mostly by individual bus operators (Mobereola, 2009). Lagos city is potentially a large market for ridesharing services such as Uber and Lyft that may draw traditional taxi drivers and new entrants onto their platforms as an expansion strategy. There is a need to explore strategies that Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increased incomes and profits.

Problem Statement

Uber drivers in both developed and developing countries are usually from economically disadvantaged groups, with most drivers reporting lower incomes than typical workers (Berger et al., 2019). A survey of Uber drivers conducted in Brazil indicated that Uber drivers retain approximately 35% of gross revenue after deducting costs and expenses (Valente et al., 2019). Uber drivers could increase their profits and incomes using competitive advantage strategies (Kumar et al., 2018; Wakhu & Bett, 2019). The general business problem is that Uber drivers need to increase their profits and incomes to raise their standard of living. The specific business problem is that some

Uber drivers lack strategies that enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that Uber drivers in Lagos, Nigeria, use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes as drivers. This study's target population comprised 6 Uber drivers in Lagos city who successfully implemented strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase their profits and incomes as Uber drivers. The implications for positive social change of this study include strategies that Uber drivers may use to increase their profits and incomes and reduce the income inequality prevalent in developing countries such as Nigeria, which could lead to higher quality of life for the Uber drivers' families and communities.

Nature of the Study

There are three research approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method (Almalki, 2016). I used a qualitative approach. Saunders et al. (2015) posited that qualitative researchers have methodologies associated with an interpretive philosophy because they need to understand the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about a phenomenon. Additionally, qualitative research is conducted within a natural setting to establish trust, participation, access to implications, and an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2015). Quantitative researchers examine a research question by collecting and analyzing data to test hypotheses about variables' characteristics or relationships (Coy, 2019). To address the purpose of the

current study about Uber drivers' partnership businesses in Lagos city, I did not need to test such hypotheses; therefore, the quantitative method was not appropriate. Mixed-method researchers integrate quantitative and qualitative research to understand complex phenomena (Coy, 2019). A mixed method was not necessary for the study because the qualitative method was adequate to answer the research question.

In the study, I considered the following qualitative designs: (a) case study, (b) narrative, (c) phenomenological, and (d) ethnographic. The research design strategy that I used in this study was the holistic multiple case study. Researchers use a narrative design strategy to explore participants' life history and biography (McAlpine, 2016). A narrative design strategy would not have been useful because I did not study Uber drivers' personal life stories and the context in the form of a biography. Phenomenological researchers investigate the individual meanings of participants' life experiences with a concept or phenomenon (Alase, 2017). A phenomenological design strategy was inappropriate because I did not investigate and interpret the personal meanings of Uber drivers' lived experiences. Ethnographic researchers engage in prolonged observations of behaviors, values, and interactions among one or more groups' everyday cultures (Mohajan, 2018). An ethnographic design was unsuitable because it would have focused on Uber drivers' ethics and beliefs in understanding their culture. A case study is an in-depth inquiry into the topic or phenomenon within its real-life setting (Saunders et al., 2015). Gustafsson (2017) posited that a single case study only depicts one story, which can be inadequate and may affect result validity. I selected a holistic multiple case study because of the

benefits of exploring and comparing and triangulating multiple data sources from experienced Uber drivers for analysis to generate findings and themes.

Research Question

What strategies do Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies did you use to enhance competitive advantage and increase profit and income?
2. How has Lagos as an urban city location affected the strategies you used to enhance competitive advantage and increase your profit and income?
3. What key internal and external challenges did you experience in implementing the strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase your profit and income?
4. How did you overcome the key internal and external challenges?
5. How did you measure the success of the strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase profit and income?
6. What future opportunities do you foresee in your current location that will add to your strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase your profit and income?
7. How do you intend to utilize the future opportunities?

8. What additional information can you share about the strategies Uber drivers could use to enhance competitive advantage to increase their profit and income?

Conceptual Framework

I selected transaction cost theory (TCT) for the conceptual framework of this study. Williamson developed the framework for TCT in 1975. This theory pertains to an economic organization's study regarding the transaction as the basic unit of analysis. Transaction cost economizing is central to the study of an organization, and applications of this approach require that transactions are dimensionalized and that alternative governance structures are described (Williamson, 1981). As stated in Williamson (1981), the TCT approach to the study of organizations has been applied at three levels of analysis: (a) in relation to the overall structure of the enterprise, (b) in relation to the operating parts, and (c) in relation to the organization of human assets. Williamson's framework for transaction costs includes the concepts of (a) bounded rationality, (b) uncertainty, (c) opportunism, (d) asset specificity, and (e) transaction frequency.

The market for Uber drivers is a sharing economy. Like most companies in the sharing economy, Uber employs an online rating system for employees, independent contractors, Uber drivers, and customers (Pepic, 2018). Henten and Windekilde (2016) posited that TCT is a central theoretical tool to understand the sharing economy, and Internet-based platforms facilitate drastic reductions in the transaction costs between users (Uber riders) and providers of transportation (Uber drivers). TCT was an appropriate lens for understanding strategies to enhance competitive advantage and

increase drivers' profits and incomes because Uber drivers (a) experience uncertainty in the Uber market, (b) practice bounded rationality, (c) act opportunistically, (d) use assets that are to a large extent specific, and (e) face dynamic and inconsistent transactions.

Operational Definitions

Competitive advantage: Competitive advantage is obtained when an organization develops or acquires a set of attributes (or executes actions) that allow it to outperform its competitors (Wang, 2014).

Collaborative consumption: Collaborative consumption is a systemic process divided into a product-service system (focus on the concept of ownership through sharing or renting of corporate or privately owned products; Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Independent contractor: Independent contractors are individuals who work for themselves and are not subjected to the provisions of a contract of employment, but rather conform to the requirements of a contract for services (Swartz & Ozoo, 2016).

Ride-hailing: Ride-hailing is an on-demand transportation service where platform providers arrange rides through mobile apps that connect travelers with drivers operating their own vehicles (Beer et al., 2017).

Sharing economy: A sharing economy is a technologically enabled socioeconomic system with five critical characteristics: (a) temporary access, (b) transfer of economic value, (c) platform mediation, (d) expanded consumer role, and (e) crowd-sourced supply (Eckhardt et al., 2019).

Surge pricing: The surge pricing algorithm is designed to protect the health of the dispatch marketplace by balancing supply and demand in real time: When the number of

trip requests seems likely to exceed the ability of the market to efficiently fulfill them, it increases the surge multiplier to ration demand and to attract drivers to the undersupplied area (Lu et al., 2018).

Transaction cost: In the context of a trading strategy such as systematic trend following, transaction cost is the cost of establishing or implementing a trading decision (Tricker et al., 2017).

Uber driver: A self-employed person (entrepreneur) who takes a variety of forms, including owning a business that involves capital investment and managing a payroll; being engaged in a full-time job; working as an independent contractor, independent consultant, or freelancer for one or more clients; and doing occasional informal tasks or work through a mobile app or online platform for businesses or consumers, and who is registered as a driver on the Uber platform app (Abraham et al., 2020).

Web tracking: Web tracking is a widespread internet technique that involves the collection of user data for online advertisements, user authentication, and content personalization (Ermakova et al., 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Research assumptions are essential issues, ideas, or positions found anywhere from the beginning of a study design to the final report that are taken for granted and viewed as reasonable and widely accepted (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). In this study, I made three assumptions. The first assumption was that the participants would provide honest responses, as well as accurate and complete answers. The second

assumption was that the participants selected for this study possessed valuable information and had experience with strategies to enhance competitive advantage to increase their profits and incomes. Third, I assumed that the Uber drivers selected for the study could describe their strategy to enhance their competitive advantage and present accurate accounts of their strategy to increase profits and incomes.

Limitations

Limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study that are out of the researcher's control. Researchers must present the limitations of their research honestly (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). Limitations involve potential weaknesses and are closely associated with the chosen research design or other factors (Simon & Goes, 2013; Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). A limitation of this study was that participants might not offer factual comments about best practices. Additionally, technology might change to limit the value of this study's results, as with the development of driverless cars.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the limitations consciously set by the researchers to define the focus of a research study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Delimitations are concerned with researchers' decisions to set the boundaries or limits of their work so that their studies' aims and objectives do not become impossible to achieve (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Delimitations are characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study (Simon, 2011). A delimitation in this study was that I only included the taxi industry and excluded other transportation industries. I focused on the taxi industry because the Uber driver partnership business faces significant competition from

ridesharing services. Another delimitation was the location. The study participants were limited to one geographic area, Lagos city, in Nigeria; consequently, the results might not reflect the taxi industry worldwide.

Significance of the Study

Both traditional and ride-hailing taxi drivers, including Uber drivers, taxi owners, and other transport and taxi industry stakeholders, could benefit from the study's findings. First, the study results could contribute to the body of entrepreneurial knowledge to benefit both current Uber drivers and prospective Uber drivers. The findings could provide positive social change by enabling Uber drivers to achieve long-term sustainable growth, thus generating employment, reducing poverty, and enhancing local communities' economic well-being.

Contribution to Business Practice

Uber and non-Uber taxi drivers could benefit from this study's results by using or adapting them to formulate a well-organized business strategy to sustain their operations as a competitive advantage. By developing and implementing the research-based strategies, Uber drivers could identify and target available opportunities inherent in the Uber platform and its transactions to increase profit and income and thereby improve their families' and communities' living standards. Using or adapting the identified strategies could enable Uber drivers to operate more profitably with increased profits and incomes. Similarly, implementing the strategy could improve the profits and incomes of Uber drivers' business partners and the vehicle (taxi) owners.

Implications for Social Change

The increased investment opportunities for taxi owners could create employment for potential Uber drivers (Johnny et al., 2018). Uber drivers who use strategies to increase their profit and income could increase the attractiveness of working as an Uber driver for unemployed citizens (Makelane & Mathekga, 2017). A profitable business may lead to increases in profit and income that could help to sustain taxicab business owners and their families. An Uber driver partnership business could contribute substantially to Lagos city's accessibility and provide a comprehensive service benefiting numerous social groups through an increase in tax revenues.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that Uber drivers in Lagos, Nigeria, use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes. Conducting a literature review is essential for all research studies to answer research questions. Snyder (2019) stated that researchers (a) investigate the methodological tools to answer a research question in the literature review; (b) conduct the literature review using either systematic, semisystematic, or integrative approaches; and (c) consider a systematic methodology the most common for social sciences and management studies. Nakano and Muniz (2018) posited that researchers build systematic literature reviews using meta-analysis and critical analysis (CA). A meta-analysis summarizes and combines quantitative studies' results using a mathematical formulated model (Cogaltay & Karadag, 2015; Wu et al., 2018). I did not use meta-analysis because

I was not reviewing quantitative studies to formulate standard formulas from statistical analysis on data from collected studies.

Conversely, CA is a process for reviewing central research concepts and ideas, providing critique, and developing future analysis (Nakano & Muniz, 2018). The purpose of this qualitative holistic multiple case study was to explore the strategies that Uber drivers use to enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes. I conducted a systematic literature review and critically analyzed and articulated research studies from the body of knowledge, using sources such as peer-reviewed journals, government sources, books, conference proceedings, and dissertations. Nakano and Muniz (2018) posited that using a systematic literature review allows a broad range of information sources within interdisciplinary areas and themes. Researchers use literature review to provide transparency through better document design decisions to increase trustworthiness, get meaningful results, and develop a cumulative body of knowledge in their discipline (Templier & Pare, 2018). I used various reference materials for this research (the Walden University Library, Google, Yahoo, SAGA Premier, EBSCO, ScienceDirect, JSTOR, and Emerald Management). Table 1 shows the breakdown of listed source materials, including government publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference proceedings, and dissertations. More than 85% of my references were published within 5 years of my research study's anticipated completion in 2021.

According to Grewal et al. (2016), with the advancement of technology, the internet is now serving as the gateway and literature search tools and methods. I used the keywords

in the research question to search for articles from the library and internet resources. Search words/terms included (a) *Uber drivers*, (b) *sharing economy and theories*, (c) *collaborative consumption*, (d) *triadic platform marketplace*, and (e) *Uber drivers' profits and incomes.*

Table 1

Sources of Reference Materials and Percentages

Types of reference materials	Total	Before 5 years of graduation (2016 >)	Within 5 years of graduation (2016-2021)	Percentage within 5 years of graduation (2016-2021)
Peer-reviewed journal articles	257	32	225	80.7%
Books	6	3	3	1.1%
Government publications	1	1	0	0.0%
Dissertations	1	0	1	0.3%
Conference proceedings	14	0	14	5.0%
Total	279	36	243	87.1%

Researchers use literature review to cover the theoretical background, define basic concepts, and identify possible gaps in their studies (Nakano & Muniz, 2018). I used CA to address evolutionary development, trends, and the conceptual framework of the sharing economy related to TCT. In synthesizing the literature, I delineated the differentiation between collaborative consumption and TCT in terms of their applicability. I evaluated the concepts of the sharing economy, associated collaborative consumption, and TCT. I also appraised competitive advantage in the taxi business, comparing traditional taxis and e-hailing taxis in terms of effective strategies related to performance differentiation, low cost, convenience/comfort, and technology.

The polarized taxi industry's historical revolution has transformed the traditional taxi in a dyadic marketplace into e-hailing in a triadic market in terms of operations and applications (Benoit et al., 2017). I synthesized Uber's growth and challenges as an organization, addressing an issue central to the research phenomenon and taxi market. I summarized the prospects of the taxi and transportation business in Lagos city, Nigeria, considering that Lagos city has a high population density with about 21 million people. Finally, I analyzed the optimization strategies of three pricing policies (local, subsidy, and surge) related to drivers' increased profits and incomes.

Transaction Cost Theory

Researchers have identified existing theories that could be used as research lenses to conduct studies on the sharing economy and collaborative consumption. Researchers built the sharing economy on the concept of collaborative consumption, which refers to a means of sharing resources and replacing traditional ownership with sharing, lending, and borrowing (Akbar & Tracogna, 2018; Henten & Windekilde, 2016). Theories adopted in studies of the sharing economy and collaborative consumption include TCT and others that I considered as alternative theories for this study. I used TCT as a lens to explore the strategies that Uber drivers used to enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Williamson developed TCT in 1975 based on the earlier work of Coase in 1937 and Arrow in 1969. TCT involves the proposition that firms and markets are two alternative governance structures to assign transactions in discriminating ways (Williamson, 1981). Williamson (1981) posited that the two assumptions associated with

TCT are (a) bounded rationality that governs decision making and (b) opportunism based on the features of the business environment. The three attributes of business transactions within the market that are unique to TCT and organizations are (a) transaction frequency occurrence, (b) the transaction uncertainty of the business, and (c) the degree to which transactions are supported by durable and transaction-specific investment, as reported by Williamson in 1979. The five characteristics of TCT are (a) opportunism, (b) bounded rationality, (c) asset specificity, (d) uncertainty, and (e) transaction frequency, based on key assumptions about human behaviors and environmental factors (Williamson, 1981).

TCT is a governance framework for corporations such as Uber that are a product of a series of organizational innovations to economize on transaction costs. Williamson (1981) posited that researchers can evaluate the organization of economic activities in terms of a variety of governance structures of the market using hierarchical and mixed modes. The TCT evolved from the three concerns of market structure theory, the organizational structure theory, and the organization's dynamic innovational changes. A transaction is considered the basic unit of analysis in a firm, as posited by Common in 1934. TCT consists of economizing in a production function framework, which includes costs of planning, adapting, and monitoring task completion under alternative governance (Williamson, 1981). The sharing economy relies on digital platforms as an alternative to the traditional approaches of firms. The sharing economy is driven by information and communication technology (ICT) to create the marketplace. All features of TCT associated with the traditional market are also common to the digital platform market (Baronian, 2020).

The three features of TCT assumptions about environmental characteristics are frequency, uncertainty, and asset specificity, which are critical for efficient contractual arrangement and administration of marketplace business transactions (Akbar & Tracogna, 2018; Martin et al., 2017; Williamson, 1981). The two extreme structures of organizations in terms of TCT are markets and hierarchies. Akbar and Tracogna (2018) stated that marketplaces are most appropriate for managing transactions characterized by low frequency, low uncertainty, and low asset specificity. Simultaneously, hierarchies are suitable for high frequency, high uncertainty, and high asset specificity transactions (Akbar & Tracogna, 2018). Most organizations use a hybrid model of markets and hierarchies for managing business transactions. Akbar and Tracogna posited that the sharing platform (Uber) represents a marketplace for transport that promotes transactions through the meeting of supply (Uber driver) and demand (Uber rider). In terms of hierarchies, the sharing economy directly intervenes in transaction arrangements among parties (Uber drivers and Uber riders) through contractual, centralized management processes and algorithm-based applications for connections and payments. Akbar and Tracogna stated that for the sharing economy, the nature of the transactions and the strategic decision of the platform owner, such as Uber, are the two governing factors that relate markets and hierarchies leading to the use of the hybrid model. In this study, I adopted the hybrid model of markets and hierarchies for managing transactions in terms of the five TCT assumption characteristics: (a) opportunism, (b) bounded rationality, (c) asset specificity, (d) uncertainty, and (e) frequency between Uber, Uber drivers, and Uber riders in the e-sharing economy.

Opportunism

Opportunism, one of the two TCT assumptions related to human behavior, is fundamental to TCT because, in the absence of opportunistic behavior that is subtly and overtly deceitful, contracts would be costless to enforce (Martins et al., 2010). In a collaborative buying-supplier relationship, opportunistic behavior is self-interest-seeking with astuteness and includes both positive behaviors such as care, honesty, and truth and negative behaviors such as lying and cheating, as well as more subtle forms of deceit, such as violating agreements, based on TCT (Ramon-Jeronimo & Florez-Lopez, 2018). Therefore, TCT relates to the ridesharing platform marketplace in which an organization such as Uber attempts to create and enforce costless contracts between drivers and riders. Uber is a ridesharing company that partners with Uber drivers, who are attracted to the platform because of the opportunistic flexibility that Uber offers, the level of compensation, and the fact that earnings per hour do not vary much with the number of hours worked (Hall & Krueger, 2018). Therefore, the Uber platform, a shared economy market, provides an opportunistic marketplace for Uber drivers (suppliers) and Uber riders (demands) to trade.

Bounded Rationality

Bounded rationality is the second assumption of TCT regarding human behavior. Bounded rationality reflects an individual inability to process large amounts of information and difficulty predicting a future event in the market. Economic actors use a contract to effectively organize all economic exchange expected in the marketplace (Martins et al., 2010; Williamson, 1981). The digital sharing economy refers to economic

activities that involve the use of digitized information and knowledge as a critical factor of production, the use of new information networks as valuable activity market space, and effective use of ICT (Chen & Wang, 2019). The sharing economy's contemporary activities are enabled by different advanced collaborative consumption platforms and driven by ICT (Lee et al., 2016). The platform driven by ICT facilitates transactions and allows responsive interaction involving users such as Uber drivers and Uber riders in car-sharing activities with Uber. Martin et al. (2017) identified the role of government regulators as significant stakeholders developing policies to mitigate challenges associated with sharing economy markets to achieve the desired bounded rationality. The Uber ridesharing service, based on the sharing economy market, has affected the traditional taxi market. The impact of Uber relates to offering lower prices, faster and higher quality service, and a greater degree of transparency in choosing drivers and determining fares (Pepic, 2018). Therefore, bounded rationality is well adapted to the digital sharing economy marketplace and driven by ICT.

Asset Specificity

Asset specificity is one of the three TCT assumptions about environmental characteristics, referred to as durable investment undertaken in support of the particular transaction to maximize values (Akbar & Tracogna, 2018; Martins et al., 2010). Williamson in 1985 asserted that transactions, according to TCT, often involve idiosyncratic attributes so that writing contracts is not costless. Martins et al. (2010) stated, as posited by Williamson in 1989, that the six different types of asset specificity are (a) site, (b) physical, (c) human, (d) dedicated, (e) brand name capital, and (f)

temporal. The degree of asset specificity varies from nonspecific, to partial idiosyncratic, to idiosyncratic, as posited by Williamson in 1985.

Yuan et al. (2020) posited that based on TCT, logistic outsourcing success depends on the asset specificity investment, which includes tangible assets (equipment, facilities, and hardware) and human assets (knowledge and specifically trained employees). Akbar and Tracogna (2018) asserted that the sharing economy provides an integrated hybrid platform, considered as having medium-high asset specificity in TCT. Additionally, transaction processes are aligned with asset specificity because a platform owner such as Uber can take the risk of direct investment in the ridesharing platform (Akbar & Tracogna, 2018). The higher the asset specificity, the larger the value exchanged by the parties within the transactions (i.e., Uber, Uber drivers, and Uber riders).

Uncertainty

Uncertainty is the second TCT assumption about environmental features focused on the availability of information about the past, current, and future states of the market not entirely known considering the human behavior assumptions of opportunism and bounded rationality, as posited by Williamson in 1985 (Martins et al., 2010). Opportunistic tendencies create uncertainties leading to costly contracts and possible legal issues (Martins et al., 2010). Isah and Sackey (2019) stated that for effective and efficient decision making, managers must consider risk and uncertainty impact based on TCT. Akbar and Tracogna (2018) asserted that hybrid management for uncertainty developed considering the low uncertainty for managing markets transaction and high

uncertainty for hierarchies' transactions. Akbar and Tracogna stated that medium-high uncertainty is part of transactions in the marketplace for an integrated sharing economy platform. Further, platform owners such as Uber can assure centralized governance of transactions between the triadic parties (Uber, Uber drivers, and Uber riders) and manage medium-high uncertainty levels, allowing for an extension of the required timespan of transactions (Akbar & Tracogna, 2018). Consequently, the Uber ridesharing platform marketplace aligns with the TCT environmental assumption of uncertainty.

Frequency of Transactions

The frequency of transactions is the third assumption about the environmental features of TCT. The frequency of transactions focuses on the volume, number, and temporal spread of transactions as the governance structures of TCT (Martins et al., 2010). Thus, the justifiable factors for alternative governance structure include transaction volume, number, and temporal spread of transactions, as posited by Williamson in 1985. Occasional, recurrent, or frequent business contracts such as agriculture and construction directly impact the transactional cost in searching for partnership, negotiation, and monitoring (Deng & Zhang, 2020; Man et al., 2017; Mugwagwa et al., 2020). In the sharing economy, platforms such as Uber, Uber riders share, and Uber drivers' services occur at a medium-high frequency (Akbar & Tracogna, 2018). An integrated ridesharing platform such as the Uber platform marketplace could increase the frequency of transactions when the platform owner, Uber, integrates one side of the market, becoming the prevailing party to a transaction (Martins et al., 2010). Therefore, the frequency of transactions in the integrated ridesharing platform

marketplace aligns with the medium high-frequency transaction of the frequency environmental assumption of TCT (Martins et al., 2010).

In this study, the Uber driver, an independent contractor, engages in the Uber ridesharing platform marketplace as an opportunity. The Uber driver requires transactional and information rationality for decision making considering the dynamic transactions, surge pricing, and flexible work environment of the ridesharing platform (Kooti et al., 2017; Ma et al., 2018; May et al., 2017). The Uber driver considers the rented vehicle's cost from a third party on an hourly basis and uses it as a specific tangible asset (Zin et al., 2017). An Uber driver provides direct labor service driving the rented vehicle and is aware of the uncertainty and frequency of locating riders in a competitive environment to enhance their competitive advantage for increased income.

Alternative Theories

Theory of the Firm and Organizational Theory

Researchers treated the marketplace's governance structures independently or in combination, resulting in different theories for their theoretical/conceptual framework, such as the firm's theory, markets, and the organization theory. The firm's theory was unsatisfactory because market structure with exchange transactions outside the firm and entrepreneurial structure is coordinating production factors, as Ronald Coase observed in 1937. Organizational theory was considered from centralized and decentralized structures as posited by Simon in 1947 and 1962 to include a rational hierarchical structure. Innovational changes in organizations contributed to firms' division and multifunctional enterprises, as Chandler posited in 1962 and 1977. Researchers have used the following

theories and concepts to explore the sharing economy and collaborative consumption research. I considered the following alternative theories to TCT: resource-based view (RBV), agency theory (AT), social exchange theory (SET), value co-creation (VCC), social cognitive theory (SCT), complexity theory (CT), a theory of planned behavior (TPB), and social capital theory (Altinay & Taheri, 2019; Meksia, 2017). Below are brief discussions on each alternative approaches and concepts and why they were not suitable for this study.

RBV is used by researchers as a lens to conduct studies on the sharing economy and collaborative consumption. Barney created RBV in 1991 to analyze and interpret organizational resources to understand how organizations achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019; Kull et al., 2016). The RBV focuses on the concept of difficult-to-imitate attributes of the firm such as Uber ridesharing platform, sources of superior performance, and competitive advantage as posited by Barney in 1986. Kull et al. (2016) stated the features of RBV as a resource must fulfill the following characteristics: valuable, rare, imperfect imitability, and non-substitutability (VRIN). Chen et al. (2017) used the perspective of the RBV to investigate the success of the sharing economy for value co-creation through the relationships among resource complementarity, relational capabilities, and performance. In this study, I did not investigate the Uber platform as organizational resources (rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable).

Agency theory (AT) is one of the researchers' approaches as a lens to conduct a study on the sharing economy and collaborative consumption. Agency theory focuses on

principal-agent relationships as a reflection on the efficient organization of information and risks bearing costs. Both the principal and agent have different risk preferences, which create agency conflict in risk-sharing (Bendickson et al., 2016; Panda & Leepsa, 2017). The agency conflict problems include principal/owner, agent/managers, majority owners, minority owners, owners, and creators. Cohen and Kietzmann (2014) used AT to examine the optimal relationship between service providers such as Uber drivers and agents and local governments (principals) to achieve a common objective of sustainable. In this study, I did not explore the relationship between Uber drivers and agents and Nigeria's government as a principal to achieve a sustainable transportation system in Lagos city.

Social exchange theory (SET) relates to human interactions driven by certain basic economic principles revolving around rewards and costs as posited by Homans in 1950, 1958, and 1961 (Boateng et al., 2019). Researchers have used SET in conducting studies on the sharing economy and collaborative consumption. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) and Sabatelli et al. (2018) posited that social exchange is not a single theory, but instead, consists of different exchange perspectives that share a set of core assumptions and key concepts with the foundational ideas of (a) rules and norms of exchange, (b) resources exchanged, and (c) relationships that emerge. Boateng et al. (2019) used SET as a framework to determine customers (Uber riders) participation in ridesharing, especially in terms of their return on investment such as comfort, convenience, trust, security, and social connection. I did not seek to determine the factors of Uber riders' preference for Uber services.

Value co-creation (VCC), created by Vargo and Lusch in 2004, and posited that marketing is moving toward a more service-centered logic with a multidimensional construct consisting of two higher-order factors and seven dimensions. Merz et al. (2018) posited that the dimensions include customer-owned resources (brand knowledge, brand skills, brand creativity, and brand connectedness) and customer motivation (brand passion, brand trust, and brand commitment). Researchers have used VCC as a framework lens to conduct studies on the sharing economy and collaborative consumption. Nadeem et al. (2020) posited that trust and commitment do not influence VCC intentions in the sharing economy platform. Still, the satisfaction of the customer, such as Uber riders, does influence VCC. VCC was not the focus of this study, but the strategies Uber drivers use to enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Social cognitive theory (SCT) consists of five necessary human capabilities identified by Stanford psychologist Albert Bandura. Researchers recognized five features capabilities as the core of SCT: (a) symbolizing, (b) forethought, (c) vicarious learning, (d) self-regulation, and (e) self-reflection (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2002). Some constructs of SCT have been used by researchers as a lens to explore the sharing economy and collaborative consumption. Zhu et al. (2017) used SCT to investigate and establish that functional, emotional, and social values critically motivate customers such as Uber riders to adopt the Uber ridesharing platform. I did not use any of the SCT constructs in this study.

The CT evolved from chaos theory and focused on the complex systems that operate with nonlinear dynamics. The components that characterize the systems include (a) increasing return, (b) self-organization, (c) continuous adaptation, (d) sensitivity to the initial condition, and (e) nonlinearity (Pappas, 2019; Sammut-Bonnici, 2015). Pappas (2019) used CT to explore the complexity of the factors that influence overall perception among tourists who use sharing economy platforms for accommodation and the primary influence as price-quality, risk perspective, and social interaction. In this study, I did not examine the complexity of factors that influence of Uber riders.

Ajzen created the TPB in 1973. TPB is a compilation of other theories. TPB focuses on human beings' behavioral decision-making processes to understand, predict an individual's behavior, and advocate that individuals will control successful completion of by individual will (Akbar & Andrawina, 2019; Zhang, 2018). TPB constructs include belief (behavioral, normative, and control), attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention. Kim et al. (2018) built a theoretical framework that integrates TPB with other models to investigate how Uber riders' intention to use Uber ridesharing platform services relate to their personal and subjective norms and behavioral attitude and control. In this study, I did not use TPB to investigate the effect of Uber riders' intention to ride with Uber drivers.

The social capital theory attributed to Robert D. Putnam in 1993 is referred to as a collective asset in shared norms, values, beliefs, trust, networks, social relations, and institutions that facilitate cooperation and collective action for mutual benefits. The social capital theory's significant elements include social networks, civic engagement, norms of

reciprocity, and generalized trust (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Researchers have used social capital theory to explore the sharing economy. Zmyślony et al. (2020) adopted social capital theory to examine the impact and role of sharing economy on local communities and the tourism industry. In this study, my focus was not on investigating the relationship of Uber drivers with the community in Lagos city but on enhancing their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Concepts of Collaborative Consumption and Sharing Platform Marketplace

There are two challenges associated with marketing in the sharing economy. Chen and Wang (2019) posited that the digital economy nature is critical and essential to the sharing economy. The market environment for the sharing economy in emerging markets lacks the institutional basis found in developed markets. An Uber driver is the unit of analysis in this study, operating in a platform marketplace, collaborating in consumption, and sharing economic activity. It was essential I differentiated the sharing economy concepts, collaborative consumption, and the platform marketplace relative to the alternative traditional marketplace in which taxicabs operate.

The sharing economy concepts are sharing and economy. Wahlen and Laamanen (2017) posited that sharing refers to the acts and practices through which people gain access to resources (tangible and intangible) in each virtual network, groups, or communities; and mode of exchange, transfer of ownership, and form of co-ownership. Sharing types include (a) sharing interpersonal relationships of time, (b) emotion and feeling, (c) sharing commodities and resources in the socioeconomic context of consumption and production, and (d) sharing in a virtual environment, an exchange of

data on a social network peer platform (Wahlen & Laamanen, 2017). Sharing also has economic implications. Researchers refer to the sharing economy as a particular form of social and economic organization that focuses on sharing and accessing resources through a network facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs). Hamari et al. (2016) identified the sharing economy's characteristics, including online collaboration, social commerce, the notion of online sharing, and consumer ideology. Uber drivers are involved in the sharing economy through a virtual environment, the Uber platform.

Collaborative Consumption

Collaborative consumption is an alternative to traditional consumption, a new economic and production model that promotes the conservation of resources and market access for individuals isolated due to lack of resources (Alzamora-Ruiz et al., 2020; Li, & Zhang, 2018; Viglia, 2020). As posited by Botsman and Rogers in 2010, collaborative consumption is a systemic process divided into a product-service system, which are focused on the concept of ownership through sharing or renting of corporate or privately owned products).

Redistribution markets, which are focused on pre-owned products exchanged for free or sold. Collaborative lifestyles focus on sharing space, skill, time, and currency (Wahlen & Laamanen, 2017). The primary stakeholders to collaborative exchange relationships are the customer (C), business organization (B), and government (G) who create dyadic exchange combinations which include (a) common B2B, B2C, B2G, G2B, G2C, and G2G; (b) emerging C2C; and (c) unique to used or pre-owned goods C2B,

C2C, and C2G (Ertz et al., 2017; Wahlen & Laamanen, 2017).Collaborative consumption, especially the emerging C2C, is driven by technologies, marketing strategies, economics, politics, and societies (Benoit et al., 2017; Li et al., 2019; Ruslan et al., 2020). One of the sharing economy categories and collaborative consumption is mobility and transport, including ridesharing, car-sharing, bike-sharing, public transportation, and agencies for arranging lifts (Wahlen, & Laamanen, 2017). Uber drivers, Uber riders, and Uber operate in the triadic sharing platform marketplace within mobility and transport.

Sharing Platform Marketplace

The platform-based sharing economy occurs where service providers such as Uber drivers and customers such as Uber riders create a two-sided market around the platform, the Uber platform (Sung et al., 2018). The triadic, two-sided market and the platform-based sharing economy, is a technology-enabled socioeconomic system with essential characteristics (Eckhardt et al., 2019). Researchers classified the Uber platform as a franchiser with a high degree of rivalry between platform participants (Uber drivers and riders) and tight control exerted by the platform owner, Uber (Constantiou et al., 2017).

The Uber Company, founded in 2009, provides ridesharing through the sharing economy platform, a digital marketplace for collaborative consumption in the mobility and transport industry (Matherne & O'Toole, 2017). Uber matches drivers and their private cars with riders wanting to get to a destination of their choice within the same urban area (Constantiou et al., 2017). The ridesharing two-sided marketplace is a

network-type market where two different groups, Uber drivers and rider, interact with each other (Feng et al., 2019). Uber drivers provide tangible constraint assets, the vehicle, and intangible service assets, labor. Wirtz et al. (2019) posited that riders gain temporary access to drivers' vehicles and services for a trip. Uber does not own cars, but it matches drivers and their vehicles (with underutilized capacity) with riders using an online platform. Drivers share tangible assets (i.e., cars) and services (i.e., driving service) with passengers. Uber mediates between Uber drivers and riders in terms of payment, search, matching, feedback, and retains a high degree of rivalry and tight control on the platform transactions as a franchiser (Constantiou et al., 2017; Newlands et al., 2018). Uber provides application devices to Uber drivers and riders to access the details of marketplace platform governance, including chargeable commissions, contacts, destination trackers, and pricing estimates (Garud et al., 2020; Wells et al., 2020).

Researchers used the triadic sharing economy platform marketplace to typify ridesharing transaction processes between two locations for a willing Uber rider (Gossling & Hall, 2019; Henten & Windekilde, 2016; Kumar et al., 2018; Lo & Morseman, 2018; Newlands et al., 2018; Wirtz et al., 2019). A typical ridesharing process starts when a willing Uber ride uses the App to initiate Uber's transaction requests, providing a phone number, current location, and destination (Lu et al., 2018). Uber automatically responds with either not available or provides details of available Uber drivers closest to the request with a GPS tracker indicating road networks between request location and intended destination, and estimates of price ranges (Matherne & O'Toole, 2017). Based on Uber's response, the potential Uber rider chooses whether to

ride and communicate with Uber. If the Uber rider decides to ride, Uber then allocates the transaction to the appropriate possible Uber driver with the details of the potential Uber rider, and sends the likely Uber rider the details of the potential Uber driver and estimated pickup time (Lu et al., 2018). The Uber driver often initiates a phone connection with the Uber rider, and both track each other through GPS until the Uber driver arrives, picks up the Uber rider, and starts the trip using the App. On arrival at the destination, Uber uses digital data with a transaction algorithm to calculate the journey's cost, which serves as a bill to Uber rider. The transaction is complete when the Uber rider pays the bill, rates the trip/ Uber driver, and the Uber driver rates the trip/Uber rider (Lu et al., 2018). I reviewed each of the three actors Uber, drivers, and riders.

Uber's business model is to profitably provide a peer-to-peer platform that matches travelers with drivers who are independent contractors and work under flexible conditions (Baron, 2018). There are cardinal strategies for competitive advantage growth, including entering, penetrating, and dominating the existing taxi and transport industry/market by increasing its network to carry passengers with minimal regulation (Baron, 2018). The strategy also entails maintaining and strengthening the Uber platform market position in the challenging institutional environment by classifying drivers as independent contractors (Baron, 2018). The strategy involves extending the Uber platform to accommodate complementary activities such as UberEATs and delivery services and transform them into autonomous vehicles with the associated challenges.

Rosenblat and Stark (2016) posited that an Uber driver is anyone with a car in Uber's service area who has passed the Uber screenings, given an Uber iPhone, and is

active on Uber's online tracking system. Uber customers are subscribers with the App downloaded in their phones, and when they need a ride or to track a booked car, they use the App. Uber promised higher incomes for drivers relative to traditional taxis (Valente et al., 2019).

Uber provides convenience, comfort, and cost savings relative to a conventional cab while providing accident insurance for Uber riders (Paronda et al., 2017). Uber riders' main expectations from Uber and Uber drivers includes; ease of payment, short wait time, the fastest way to a destination, and convenience (Rayle et al., 2016). Specifically, Uber riders require service satisfaction and ride reliably at reduced costs with comfort/convenience, safety/security, good driver behavior, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Balachandran & Hamzah, 2017; Jahan, 2019; Siagian, 2019). Uber provides two-way performance ratings and evaluation of drivers and riders. A continuous low rating of an Uber driver results in deactivation. Rosenblat (2015) posited that Uber prompts passengers to rate drivers on a 1 to 5-star scale, and drivers must maintain an overall rating between 4.6 out of 5-star to avoid the risk of deactivation.

Uber drivers are independent contractors with flexible work schedules, and they can be either professional or non-professional drivers (Baron, 2018). As non-employees of Uber, drivers are not protected under labor laws and they are ineligible for overtime pay, vacation, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, and unionization (Baron, 2018). Uber drivers are responsible for the costs associated with the vehicle's maintenance, fuel, and tax. Most Uber drivers are attracted to the platform because of the

flexibility, compensation level, and dynamic and enhanced earnings per hour (Hall & Krueger, 2018).

Researchers classified Uber drivers according to three main groups (a) part-time, whose aim is to earn extra money, (b) drivers who are full-time, and this is their only source of income, and (c) professional drivers. Professional drivers are Uber drivers trying to keep pace with the durable landscape and competitive marketplace (Peticca-Harris et al., 2018). An Uber driver provides a vehicle that the Uber driver owns, borrows, or rents for sharing as a tangible asset. The intangible asset is the Uber driver's self-labor of driving (Valente et al., 2019). I focused on the Uber-driver who is a professional driver, works full-time, and rents the vehicle from a third party.

Uber Drivers' Business Competitive Advantage Strategies

Uber drivers are attracted to the sharing economy through Uber's digital platform for ridesharing and disruptive innovation in the taxi and transportation industry. For sustainability, Uber drivers develop strategies to enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes by considering transactional cost inputs and processes with precision (Akbar & Andrawina, 2019; Henten & Windekilde, 2016). A competitive advantage exists when an Uber driver can deliver better service with higher benefits compared to (a) other Uber drivers (competitors), (b) other ridesharing drivers, and (c) traditional taxi/cabs in terms of lower cost (cost advantage) to passengers (Wakhu & Bett, 2019). Uber drivers delivers additional benefits to riders and Uber that exceed competing services such as other Uber drivers and traditional taxi/cabs (differentiation advantage). Stofberg and Bridoux (2019) posited that the triadic relationships between Uber, drivers,

and riders are governed by three factors (a) communal sharing (CS), (b) equality matching (EM), and (c) market pricing (MP) as modeled by Fiske in 1991 and 1992.

In a ridesharing platform marketplace, Uber's competitive advantage is based on economic benefits rather than social. Stofberg et al. (2019) used relational models that showed how members perceive the relationships among participants, such as the dyadic traditional taxi marketplace or the triadic Uber ridesharing marketplace. Stofberg et al. stated that riders, in either case, choose the relationship with substantial differences in CS (high on communal sharing), EM (high inequality and reciprocating matching), and MP (low in market pricing). The internally developed resources, complementary resources, managerial effectiveness, and group routines could positively lead to Uber drivers' competitive advantage (Lechner & Gudmundsson, 2008). However, there are some core values of competitive advantage factors of which Uber-drives must be aware including lower cost and service differentiation inherent in the triadic relationship in the ridesharing marketplace (McGee, 2015). There are dominant strategies and tactics drivers in the ridesharing economy, such as Uber drivers, use to enhance their competitive advantage (Limpin & Sison, 2018). Uber and the car owners' income depend on the income of Uber drivers (Appah, 2018). I have briefly discussed five strategies Uber drivers could use to enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Technology Strategy

The sharing economy developed ridesharing marketplace is driven by ICT (Bashir et al., 2016). Each Uber driver has an iPhone as an operational tool for the platform. Every Uber driver is familiar with the platform operating system's features to derive the

highest values and benefits. Selamat and Shafie (2016) stated that web technology could be among the powerful tools an organization uses to share information with customers. Berger et al. (2018) posited that new technology associated with the sharing economy can fundamentally alter the future of work by displacing traditional jobs. Affluence and abundance characterize the digital economy and technological knowledge, if developed or acquired, can be reused infinitely at minimal cost (Geissinger et al., 2020). The number of smartphone users is growing, which tends to increase the interest of digital services, and Uber drivers who use the App have benefited from growing potential riders (Stalmasekovs et al., 2017). Therefore, an Uber driver with knowledge of the Uber platform digital technology can enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Customer Satisfaction Strategy

In the triadic relationship on the Uber platform, the two parties who meet face-to-face are Uber drivers and riders from the pickup site through the ride to a destination location (Mahapatra & Telukoti, 2018). After the transaction, each of the parties is prompted by Uber to rate one another. Rosenblat et al. (2017) and Sthapit and Bjork (2019) posited that the focus of the rating on customer satisfaction (Uber rider's continuous patronage, the attraction of other passengers, and retention of Uber drivers with good performance records) because Uber riders need convenience and comfort. Customer satisfaction is the perception of customers including expectations of the product (vehicle) and service (ride) meeting or exceeding perceived performance (Abror et al., 2018; Murali et al., 2016). Consequently, Uber drivers with an excellent record of

customer satisfaction will sustain their Uber partnership with possible growth of profits and incomes (Kumar et al., 2018; Mahapatra & Telukoti, 2018).

Flexible Working Hours Strategy

As an independent contractor with flexible working schedules, Uber drivers must have an in-depth understanding of Uber operations and dynamic pricing to effectively utilize the flexibility to enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes. Lehdonvirta (2018) posited that the Uber digital ridesharing platform provides extreme temporary flexibility to Uber drivers, giving them full control over how they allocate each hour and minute of the day. The responsibilities associated with the flexible work environment include self-responsibility for developing skill, steady income flow, time, and space arrangement (Pichault & McKeown, 2019). While many Uber drivers work part-time, others work full-time, depending on their ridesharing income (Ma & Hanrahan, 2019).

Researchers have identified that effective utilization of a flexible work environment can enhance competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes (Chen et al., 2019). Uber drivers earn more than twice the surplus they would in less-flexible arrangements and reduce the hours they work by more than two-thirds (Chen et al., 2019). The competitive strategy includes Uber drivers' ability to process and make informed decisions based on real-time (frequency, volume, and uncertainties) ridesharing transactional information and opportunities for increased profits and incomes (Chen et al., 2019). If Uber drivers use their flexible work schedule effectively in terms of decision making on hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly bases, they can maximize their income,

time, and space (Chen et al., 2019). The flexible work option initiates Uber drivers to switch opportunistically between being online or offline (Cheng et al., 2018). The flexible ridesharing scheme is not limited to Uber drivers alone but is also exercised by Uber. Uber drivers provide riders with optimal, high-quality, and ridesharing group planning (Mahin & Hashem, 2019).

Dynamic and Surge Pricing Strategy

There are strategic behaviors regarding when and where to drive that can substantially increase drivers' profits and incomes. Chaudhari et al. (2018) posited that Uber drivers are self-taught, using heuristics of their devising or learning from one another, and employ relatively simple analytics dashboards such as Sherpa Share. Uber drivers are affected by specific incentives such as surge pricing, responsible for effectively relocating Uber drivers during periods of high-demand, robust dynamic pricing, and strategic matching between supply and demand (Chaudhari et al., 2018).

Lam and Liu (2017) posited that market conditions continuously change in the ridesharing platform marketplace. The intersection of the dynamic demand of riders and Uber drivers' supply results in a dynamic pricing market equilibrium. Uber drivers should be aware of Uber's different pricing mechanisms to enhance the triadic relationship of the ridesharing marketplace (Newlands et al., 2018). Uber has launched varieties of carpooling options considered affordable and reliable for riders and drivers (Lo & Morseman, 2018). Uber drivers who strategized to respond to dynamic surge prices, understand the pricing mechanism, and utilize the suitable carpooling option could enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Safety and Security Strategy

The safety and security issue in a triadic ridesharing platform between Uber, drivers, and riders is complicated primarily because Uber is a faceless mediator (Zuo et al., 2019). The parties' involved in the face-to-face contract, rideshare, and rating, interact as expected (Zuo et al., 2019). Uber participants (drivers and riders) are faced with potential risks to their physical safety and security because a rider might be concerned that a driver might attack, kidnap, or assault them (Mohajeri et al., 2017). A driver might be worried that a rider could damage their car or inflict personal injuries. Kamais (2019) posited that in a technology-based ridesharing platform there is a need to take reasonable security precautions to reduce security risks faced by participants and recommended a review of the existing system, which lacks government and security agents' involvement.

Meanwhile, Uber drivers develop safety and security strategies based on the existing Uber strategy focused on trust between the triadic parties. Chaudhry et al. (2018) stated that Uber offers GPS for tracking all journeys and provides regulations that regulate actions against the driver or rider. The rules include physical contact with passengers, driving unsafely, breaking the law while riding, abusive behavior, or language with the rider or driver. Other standards include safety support by dashcam and watchdog network, distress alarm, and having an indoor light on for after-dark hours (Chaudhry et al., 2018). Each Uber driver could add to the list from their routine surveillance reports. Uber drivers with robust safety and security strategies can enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes. Kamais (2019) posited

that Uber ride-hailing operations are associated with some unique security risks such as abduction, carjacking, sexual harassment, murder, robbery, and burglary.

Profits and Incomes Strategy

According to Fielbaum and Tirachini (2020), Uber drivers do not know their earnings' full details. The uncertainty is due to waiting for profitable trips opportunities, the number of trips required to earn improved and competitive incomes, and managing offline periods for other income generation activities (Fielbaum & Tirachini, 2020). Full-time Uber drivers enhance their competitive advantage by designing flexible work schedules and deciding when and how long to work on Uber's platform in response to wage and income fluctuations (Wang & Yang, 2019). An Uber driver's profitable strategy involves deciding to accept or reject a trip upon receiving a rider's request from the platform broadcasts (Wang & Yang, 2019). According to Chu et al. (2018), Uber providing Uber drivers with rider information and decision rights through the platform can increase drivers' profits and incomes. The rider's origin and destination could impact subsequent trips in terms of the general dynamic surge pricing location, time spent without passengers, time to travel back and forth between areas of low and high ridership, Uber driver residential location, or driving expenses (Chu et al., 2018; Henao & Marshall, 2019).

Hall and Krueger (2018) stated that Uber drivers often desire to smooth fluctuations in their income as one of their reasons for partnering with Uber. In a two-sided marketplace, the supply side of the ride sourcing such as Uber platform affects transaction volume, service level and quality, and service price (Wang & Yang, 2019).

Wang and Yang identified four factors that affect Uber drivers incomes: (a) independent and flexible work environment, the level of compensation, and the earnings per hour which do not vary much with the number of hours worked; (b) Uber drivers supply elasticity which Uber uses to develop its dynamic and surge pricing mechanisms while Uber drivers decisions are based on hourly, daily, and monthly income targets; (c) Uber drivers strategic behavior regarding when and where to drive to increase their incomes because top-performing Uber driver could earn about 25% more in a given period than those with mediocre seeking strategies; and (d) the determination of the fare charged to Uber riders, the wage paid to Uber drivers, the commission withheld by Uber, and the interactions between these factors. Fielbaum and Tirachini (2020) estimated that Uber drivers in Chile travel with riders an average 53% of their working time and Uber charges 25% commission discounted on Uber drivers' earnings. The average hourly gross income of Chilean Uber drivers is between $8.30 and $9.30 (Fielbaum & Tirachini, 2020). Therefore, Uber drivers who make informed and rational decisions from information broadcast by Uber and other job options can enhance their profits above base hourly gross income.

Fielbaum and Tirachini (2020) estimated the monthly net income as the difference between the monthly gross income and monthly expenses. Henao and Marshall (2019) identified factors that affect Uber driver's expenses, including cost of rented vehicle (finance, depreciation, license, insurance, registration, and tax) and operating cost (fuel, maintenance, upkeep such as washes and cleaning, mobile device and data fees, packing and traffic violations, and risk of crash or injury). Therefore, the total monthly expenses

include all monthly payment Uber drivers spent on fuel, maintenance, all relevant costs, and renting the vehicle (Fielbaum & Tirachini, 2020). However, in the U. S., Uber drivers earn on average a gross hourly average wage of $19.35 and work 50 hours less per week than traditional taxi drivers (Hall & Krueger, 2018). Assuming Uber drivers' total expenses (fuel, maintenance, and insurance) is $6.79 per hour aggregate net income is less than one-third of traditional taxi drivers (Hall & Krueger, 2018). Therefore, Uber drivers' monthly income increases if they engage in profitable trips and reduce their expenses.

Overview of the Taxi Industry

Uber drivers are independent contractors who provide investments in assets and services through the ridesharing, taxi, and transportation industry. Tchanche (2019) identified four modes of transportation: road, air, maritime, and rail, and in sub-Saharan Africa such as Nigeria, road transport is the dominant model. Road transport includes other sub-modes such as walking, animal-based transportation, carriages, taxis, moto bikes, tricycles, and buses. Tchanche listed some challenges in the road transport sector, such as poor road infrastructure and maintenance, pollution, frequent accidents, and lack of local industry. These challenges require critical and innovative ideas from various actors in the sector. In partnership with Uber, drivers may overcome some of the obstacles within Lagos' road transportation section.

Traditional taxi drivers operated before the advent of Uber driver's partnership and currently work side-by-side with Uber drivers. A typical cab or taxi operates in a conventional taxi market, and the car could be five-seat vehicles painted with a specific

color: yellow, green, and mix of yellow and black (Tchanche, 2019). Taxi drivers carry one or several passengers to one or several destinations. A trip's cost is either approved by the government, transport union, or negotiated with the passenger (Tchanche, 2019). Drivers and vehicle owners are licensed and regularly pay assurance and other taxes (Berger et al., 2019). In transport companies, drivers are either employed or hired on full-time or part-time to work as taxi/cab drivers for the company's vehicles or rent cars on established terms and conditions (Akimova et al., 2020). Comparatively, the challenges faced by the traditional taxi market include the ridesharing platform market growth and competitive position (Karyono & Suryo, 2020).

Traditional taxi drivers enjoy less flexible work schedules than Uber drivers; however, both have an equal dedication to different markets (Cuevas et al., 2016; Mezulanik et al., 2020). Traditional transport companies and the ridesharing platform (Uber) use developed models to plan or determine a driver's income (Cuevas et al., 2016). There are different types of profit-focused taxi models. Cuevas et al. (2016) posited that most of the taxi models include regulated conditions, demand, waiting times, and drivers' earnings. Sejourne et al. (2019) and Zhang et al. (2015) used an analytical model to develop an autonomous mobility-on-demand system for dynamic and surge pricing similar to Uber's drivers' model. Etminani-Ghasrodashti and Hamidi (2019) and Mezulanik et al. (2020) posited that services of the traditional taxi industry and Uber ridesharing platform operations differ in terms of characteristics of drivers, trips, vehicles, passengers, and cities. Etminani-Ghasrodashti and Hamidi posited that the Uber ridesharing platform model is ICT based, cost-effective, and provides trip security. Other

model related factors include collaborative consumption, shared mobility, and environmental concerns. Mezulanik et al. stated that traditional taxi services are under strict regulations regarding safety. Other conditions of traditional taxis include policymakers setting the price tariffs, duration of the journey, and waiting period. However, the Uber ridesharing platform's travel time is shorter than the traditional taxi services as posited by Rayle et al. in 2016 and Sum et al. in 2019.

Uber ridesharing services have substantial economic, social, and impacts in developing the emerging markets globally (Jahan, 2019; Makelane & Mathekga, 2017; Matar & Aoun, 2018). Researchers considered the sharing economy as especially desirable in developing countries because it aims to maximize assets and resource mobilization and minimize transaction costs and competitive pricing mechanisms (Hira & Reilly, 2017). The sharing economy introduces efficiencies into social and economic processes that enhance communities' ability to resist the effect of resource shortages for the growing population while addressing quality of life issues for the poor urban neighborhoods. Henama and Sifolo (2017) showed that in South Africa, which has an unemployment rate of 27%, Uber could reduce the need for a second family car, reduce traffic congestion, and increase the nighttime economy by increasing job opportunities.

Uber drivers are usually from economically disadvantaged groups, with most drivers reporting lower incomes than typical workers (Berger et al., 2019). The high level of Uber driver satisfaction is due to work flexibility and autonomy (Berger et al., 2019). A survey of Uber drivers in Brazil indicated that drivers retain approximately 35% of gross profits after deducting costs and expenses (Valente et al., 2019). Therefore, every

full-time Uber driver needs to be aware of the controllable factors that could enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Lagos City

High population growth and youth unemployment in Nigeria have had an endemic social, economic, and developmental impact on poverty and income inequality. Nigeria's population was estimated at 195.9 million in 2018, with an unemployment rate of 23.1% (Rabiu et al., 2019). Low wages, poverty, and youth disempowerment have created a situation where youth become involved in deviant behaviors such as crime, drug trafficking, prostitution, internet scamming, election rigging, and other fraudulent activities that threatened peace and national security (Afolabi & Awopetu, 2020; Surajo, 2016). One of the solutions to poverty and youth unemployment is increasing opportunities for employment in both the public and private sectors.

Nigeria is a developing country. One of the significant challenges Nigeria faces is its transportation sector. Hira and Reilly (2017) posited that the sharing economy is more desirable in developing countries such as Nigeria than elsewhere. Sharing economy aims to maximize asset, resource mobilization and minimize transaction costs resource with job creation impact. Cavalic (2017) posited that engaging in the sharing economy could reduce unemployment, enhance resources, strengthen social capital, and increase foreign investment. Cavalic asserted that using a sharing economy, such as the Uber ridesharing platform, could functionally reduce unemployment, especially youth unemployment and marginalized groups in the labor market. Dirgova et al. (2018) added that the competencies required for successful employment in the sharing economy labor market

include positions that offer flexibility and full-time or part-time options. Other competencies include creativity, learning and gaining information, practical application of knowledge, communication skills, and information technology control, working in a team, solving a problem, acting independently and responsibly, or planning and managing. In Lagos city, there is potential for ridesharing growth as 51.5% of households do not have a car, while 26.4% have only one car; 96.7% have access to mobile phones; and there is 6.3% unemployment (Salau, 2015). Uber and Lyft entered Nigeria and started operations in the federal government territory, Abuja, and the commercial city, Lagos, in 2014 (Meagher, 2018).

Lagos is Nigeria's commercial capital and industrial city, with approximately 21 million, the sixth-largest city in the world (Onwuemele, 2018). Due to urban migration from rural areas, unemployment is higher in Lagos city than the Nigerian average (Saheed et al., 2018). Aiyegbajeje (2019) stated that in Lagos, the vast majority of taxi transport services are traditional taxi yellow cabs, followed by red cabs, and the newly emerging ridesharing, Uber. Aiyegbajeje added that Uber recorded the highest preference for passengers, with 41%, an indication of a growing opportunity for unemployed and potential Uber drivers. In Lagos, the formal transit system's publicly-owned transportation services are inadequate due to inefficiency, safety and security concerns, and unreliability (Alcorn & Karner, 2020). In most urban cities in the U.S., passenger preferences increased for Uber ridesharing, car rentals remained relatively consistent, passengers' complaints fell, and ridesharing fares are lower than for conventional taxis

(Cetin, 2017). Therefore, I explored the strategies Uber drivers in Lagos city use to enhance their competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Transition

In Section 1 of the study, I discussed the background of the problem, the purpose statement, and its nature. I also addressed the research question with the interview questions, conceptual framework based on TCT, the study's significance with the contribution to business practices and implications for social change, and literature review. In Section 2, I discuss (a) the purpose statement from Section 1, (b) analyze my role as the researcher and the participants, and (c) include an overview of the research method and design, population and sampling methods, and ethical research. I define the data collection measurement tool, data analysis technique, data organization, and data documentation within the section. In Section 3, I discuss the research study results and findings, applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for future study, and conclusions.

Section 2: The Project

In this section, I discuss the purpose of my research and details of my role as the researcher, the Uber drivers as the participants, and the research methods and design that I applied. I also describe in detail the population and sampling technique and approach. Furthermore, I state the importance of conducting ethical research. In Section 2, I provide details of myself as a data collection instrument and describe the data collection technique, the data organization technique, and the data analysis method. I also address the research quality in terms of reliability and validity considerations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that Uber drivers in Lagos, Nigeria, use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes as drivers. This study's target population comprised 6 Uber drivers in Lagos city who had successfully implemented strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase their profit and incomes as Uber drivers. This study may contribute to positive social change by providing information on strategies that Uber drivers use to increase their profits and incomes and reduce the income inequality prevalent in developing countries such as Nigeria, leading to a higher quality of life for Uber drivers' families and communities.

Role of the Researcher

A researcher's role is central and fundamental in a research study, from developing a concept, to implementing a research design, to collecting data, to conducting data analysis, to reporting research findings. There are academic and

practitioner norms, ethics, and standards that a researcher must conscientiously comply with for a successful research study (Hurley et al., 2016). A researcher must conduct ethical and credible research in three dimensions, ensuring that (a) the analysis is reflective of practitioners' perspectives, (b) participants' safety and privacy are protected, and (c) the technical competences of the researcher are reflected in the study (Cumyn et al., 2019). Researchers should reflect on the ethical dimensions relating to each step of their research from conception and formulation of the research question to reporting the research findings (Cumyn et al., 2019). The researcher's role is to protect and respect participants in the research, which includes ensuring that the research process minimizes harm and that there is constant communication throughout the research period (Cumyn et al., 2019; Thomas, 2016). Researchers require procedures to meet ethical norms, technical compliance, and a code of moral guidelines for research studies (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Cumyn et al., 2019).

The extent of my relationship with the participants could be considered as service providers (Uber drivers) and I as an occasional consumer (Uber rider). Like some of my friends and family members, I am an occasional Uber rider. I did not have business relationship with any of the participants in this study, other than as an Uber consumer and researcher. Researchers engaged in qualitative research should avoid personal bias to ensure the reliability and validity of their study results. Saunders et al. (2015) stated that ethics refer to the standards of behavior that guide an individual's conduct relating to the right of those subject to or affected by the individual's work. Saunders et al. identified three types of potential biases: (a) researcher/interviewer bias, (b) participant/interviewee

bias, and (c) participation bias. Galdas (2017) described strategies to avoid these biases, which I adopted to avoid viewing data through a personal lens. First, as a researcher, I complied with the rubric/handbook and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) provisions and ensured compliance at all stages of the research process. Second, I limited bias by asking all participants the same indirect and open-ended questions (see Appendix A). Third, I used a semistructured interview method to maintain a neutral stance in an effort to ensure that all participants told their in-depth stories. Fusch et al. (2018) stated that one approach to promote social change, mitigate bias, and enhance reaching data saturation is through triangulation using multiple sources of data.

I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) to reduce bias. Castillo-Montoya (2016) and Yeong et al. (2018) posited that a reliable interview protocol is of fundamental importance and must cover all research objectives, especially the research question, in order to support the collection of good-quality interview data. An interview protocol is a structured interview process outline that a researcher uses to create an in-depth discussion that participants will understand (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Yeong et al., 2018). Using an interview protocol aids in consistency and reduces personal bias (Yeong et al., 2018). In this research, I noted issues that could impact the interview protocol and made appropriate revisions.

Participants

This research was a multiple case study, with an Uber driver representing a “case” and 6 Uber drivers serving as multiple cases and research participants. Yin (2018) posited that to derive multiple case studies from single case situations, a researcher should

replicate the same phenomenon under different conditions. I selected Uber drivers who had knowledge about and could answer the research question. I ensured that individual cases predicted a similar result and replicated others within each situation and across situations. Each Uber driver met the following specific qualifications: (a) was willing to participate in the research, (b) had worked full time as an Uber driver in Lagos city for more than 6 months, (c) rented a vehicle used for the Uber taxi business from a third-party partner at a cost, and (d) was at least 20 years of age at the time of the interview. In this study, I did not consider participants' income and marital status are characteristics to control for possible differences in the strategy deployed by each participant to enhance their profits and incomes.

I conducted this research in Lagos city, Nigeria. There are various strategies for recruiting participants for a research study. Yin (2018) posited that any plan for participant recruitment should not involve an extensive screening procedure, suggesting that researchers should streamline the process with a standard for selecting participants. Patel et al. (2017) suggested five strategies for recruiting participants for a research study: sending an invitation letter through email, advertising in general practitioner email newsletters, and seeking help from existing research networks, recruiting through friends and acquaintances, and using social media. Occasionally, some of my friends, my family members, and I engage Uber drivers offline especially while travelling out of Lagos city. I informally searched for participants through friends because Uber does not grant access to drivers' details on the app. However, the process presented the risk of bias associated with the snowball sampling technique (Naderifar et al., 2017). After that, I sent each

participant an invitation letter (see Appendix C), and those who agreed to participate signed an informed consent letter. I used a focused case study interview format, and I conducted each interview within approximately 1 hour with open-ended questions.

It was important that I provide a convenient interview location for ethical reasons and bias mitigation. Taylor et al. (2016) stated that it is essential to consider a site's physical attributes and the people present with a participant, especially during an interview. Moreover, participants may feel empowered in their interactions with the researcher if the interview setting is comfortable (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The interviews were not observation-interviews; I did not ride with any of the Uber driver participants. Instead, I used an office environment with an exclusive location to provide an appropriate site with the expected agreement from each participant. I was aware that participants would take off time from their daily schedules to attend the interview and provided each participant with a $25 gift card. I provided the options of a face-to-face interview or a virtual interview to allow for the COVID-19 restriction order in Lagos city continuing. However, at the time of data collection, the lockdown restrictions in Lagos had been lifted, and all participants opted for a face-to-face interview, which I conducted.

Feedback from research participants is vital. Thomas (2016) posited that researchers should maintain contacts with participants during the period in which research data are analyzed to ensure that any concerns about the interview data are addressed in a timely manner before the findings report are reviewed for publication. I maintained contact with all participants through email and telephone, as outlined in the informed consent and communicated appropriately with each participant.

Research Method and Design

There are various research methods and designs that researchers use to conduct research. Creswell (2014) developed a research design framework and identified three key components: (a) philosophical worldview, (b) research methods, and (c) strategies/designs of inquiry. Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) stated that researchers choose a specific research design based on their worldview or paradigm. Postpositivists, for instance, seek a traditional and scientific form of research and prefer a quantitative approach. Social constructivists, who rely on participants' views of situations, prefer a qualitative research approach. Pragmatists, who conduct investigations based on actions, circumstances, and consequences rather than prior conditions, prefer an approach that integrates both qualitative and qualitative methods (i.e., mixed method). Almalki (2016) asserted that researchers must be aware of their skills sets in terms of the research topic, purpose, aim, and objective; must be knowledgeable regarding the research participants, location, and cost; and must understand the time required to conduct the research. The research methods and findings in this research body should answers to what, why, who, where, and when related to the research question.

Research Method

Researchers use research type, methodology, and approach interchangeably (Almalki, 2016). Researchers use research methods as instruments and tools deployed to administer any form of investigation (Almalki, 2016). Qualitative (mono-method and multimethod), quantitative (mono-method and multimethod), and mixed method (simple and complex) are the main types of research approaches (Saunders et al., 2015).

Researchers may focus on a single target or multiple targets for a simple or a complex investigation. Each method is unique, with peculiar characteristics used by researchers for decision making, planning, and selection based on time, cost, skill, and motivation (Almalki, 2016).

Researchers use a qualitative research approach to explore and understand individuals or groups within a social environment to achieve an in-depth description and interpretation of the associated phenomenon (Almalki, 2016; Mohajan, 2018). Saunders et al. (2015) posited that researchers use a qualitative research approach for an inductive process of theory development. Mohajan (2018) explained that qualitative researchers are interested in people's beliefs, experiences, feelings, perspectives, and behaviors. Mohajan identified common characteristics of a qualitative research approach:

- The researcher has the opportunity to collect data directly from the participants through one-on-one interviews.
- The researcher seeks an understanding of people's thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, values, opinions, experiences, feelings, and behaviors.
- There is a focus on discovery, description, and understanding, which requires flexibility in research design.
- The researcher is responsible for obtaining valid information and ensuring the participants' ethical treatment.
- The research findings are themes, categories, concepts, or tentative hypotheses, propositions, or theories.

In this study, I used a qualitative research approach to collect interview data from the participants (Uber drivers) directly. I explored strategies that Uber drivers use to increase their profits and incomes. In conducting this study, I used a flexible research design (multiple case study) and performed thematic data analysis.

Researchers use the quantitative research approach to conduct surveys, gather numerical data, generalize data across a group of the population, consider objective realities independent of the observer, emphasize the relationships between variables, and develop, test, and reproduce hypotheses (Almalki, 2016). Saunders et al. (2015) described the quantitative research approach as a deductive process of theory development. Apuke (2017) stated that the quantitative research approach involves unique characteristics that differ from those of other research approaches. In this research, I was not isolating cause and effect, utilizing statistical techniques, formulating hypotheses, using structured measurement instruments, or making a highly generalizable prediction; therefore, the quantitative method was not appropriate to answer the research question.

The mixed method is another research approach. Mixed methods research is empirical research that combines the elements, collection, and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data and is described as an abductive process of theory development (Almalki, 2016; Saunders et al., 2015). I did not use quantitative analysis; therefore, a mixed methods approach was not appropriate for this study.

Research Design

Yin (2018) indicated that every type of empirical research has an implicit or explicit research design, which is the logical sequence that connects the observed data to

the study's initial research question and ultimately to its conclusions. Creswell (2014) stated that in determining an appropriate research design, a researcher must address three key considerations: (a) the unbiased and ethical knowledge claim and theory required in the study; (b) reflection on the research designs that the researcher intends to use; and (c) how the researcher will collect and analyze data. In this study, I selected the qualitative method and multiple case design. Below are details on each of the qualitative research designs that I considered and their characteristics.

Mohajan (2018) and Saunders et al. (2015) stated that qualitative research designs include case study, ethnography, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology. Yin (2018) identified five components of case study research design and posited that researchers should (a) endeavor to understand "how" and "why" questions; (b) provide essential evidence and literature regarding the case study; (c) identify the study proposition with direct attention to something to monitor within the scope; (d) relate to the case as the unit of analysis, such as managers, drivers, and leaders; and (e) collect research data that link to the proposition or purpose and the criteria for interpreting the strength of a case study's findings. The four types of case studies are (a) holistic single case, with a single unit of analysis; (b) embedded single case, with multiple units of analysis; (c) holistic multiple case, with a single unit of analysis; and (d) embedded multiple case, with multiple units of analysis (Ishak & Bakar, 2014; Yin, 2018). Multiple case studies are more robust and reliable (Gustafsson, 2017). The researcher in a multiple case study can clarify whether the conclusions are valuable and create a more convincing theory compared to a single case study, as posited by Eisenhardt and Graebner in 2007 (Gustafsson, 2017). In this

study, I used a holistic multiple case study because this design is more robust and reliable and I could ensure data saturation, which enhanced the validity of the findings.

Ethnography is another qualitative research design. Mohajan (2018) stated that the focus of researchers in ethnographic research is conducting prolonged observations of a group's everyday life, including behavior, values, and interactions among group members. Thus, the researcher in an ethnographic study engages in a systematic process of observing, detailing, describing, documenting, and analyzing the lifeways or patterns of a culture within the environment, as posited by Leininger in 1985. Sharp et al. (2016) explained that the ethnographic method's central tenet is describing another culture from a member's point of view. In this study, I did not study Uber drivers' cultural environment, focusing on ordinary details, conducting analytical case, and describing academic reviews. Therefore, an ethnographic research method was unsuitable for this research.

Narrative inquiry is an additional qualitative research design. McAlpine (2016) stated that narrative investigations focus on the participants' story in terms of temporality and the meaning of interhuman relations in a social, historical, and cultural context. Adama et al. (2016) posited that narrative inquiry integrates time with a culture that participants experience and through an in-depth understanding of participants' thoughts and values. In this research, I did not focus on Uber drivers' stories in terms of sociality, temporality, or spatiality; instead, I focused on their strategy for competitive advantage for increased profits and income. Therefore, narrative inquiry was unsuitable for this study.

Phenomenological research is another qualitative research design. Mohajan (2018) explained that researchers use phenomenology to explore people's everyday life experiences in relation to concepts experienced by one or more individuals. In this research, I did not investigate the lived experience of Uber drivers. Therefore, the phenomenological research method would not have been adequate for this study.

Researchers use data saturation to determine when to discontinue data gathering in a qualitative multiple case study. Saunders et al. (2017) posited that saturation is a criterion for discontinuing data collection and analysis commonly used in qualitative research. For a qualitative research case study interview, saturation focuses on how many interviews are needed until nothing new is apparent (Saunders et al., 2017). I ensured data saturation by conducting open-ended interviews with 6 Uber drivers and I obtained data saturation at the 6th interview.

Population and Sampling

Researchers are concerned about the ability to generalize research finding(s) to the target and general population (Asiamah et al., 2017). Researchers have identified the following determining factors for transferability (a) the research approach either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method; (b) population category either general, target, or accessible; (c) population composition either homogeneous or heterogeneous; (d) researchers' disposition based on time, cost, and space (Asiamah et al., 2017; Mohsin, 2016). Asiamah et al. (2017) explained the importance of researchers specifying the general, target, and accessible populations in their qualitative research study, especially when the study population is large. The target population was Uber drivers in Lagos city,

I selected six Uber drivers as participants.

Researchers should ensure that samples derived from the general population and the applicable methodology mitigate sampling bias and systematic errors (Asiamah et al., 2017). Sharma (2017) stated that purposive sampling is non-probability and referred to as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. Sharma added that purposive sampling reflects to a group of sampling techniques that rely on the researcher's decision when it comes to selecting the participants and the case that are to be studied. Types of purposive sampling techniques include homogeneous, maximum variable, quota, matching, and snowball (Etikan et al., 2016; Mohsin, 2016). In this research, I used the social media sampling technique. Sikkens et al. (2017) posited that social media are suitable expediters when recruiting hidden populations for research.

Social media sampling is a sampling technique. Lee and Spratling (2019) modified snowballing sampling using social media as a strategy for recruiting research participants. Gelinas et al. (2017) and Sikkens et al. (2017) explained that social media are useful expediters, enable researchers to reach wider segments of the population, and to target individuals on the basis of personal information that allows researchers to infer their eligibility for particular studies. Saunders et al. (2017) stated that a researcher should operationalize saturation to be consistent with the research question. In this study, I used the social media sampling technique to find Uber drivers and ensured data saturation expectations were consistent with the research question (see Appendix B).

Most researchers report justifications for sample sizes in their qualitative research studies (Constantinou et al., 2017; Saunders & Townsend, 2016; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

The most common approach used by researchers to determine sample size is data saturation. Constantinou et al. (2017) established that the saturation threshold is between the 5th and the 7th Interview. In this study, I interviewed six participants and achieved data saturation after the 6th interview.

A critical step for researchers is to determine who the appropriate sample participants (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Participants are those who are available, willing, and have lived experiences and knowledge about the topic of interest (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Careful planning includes developing the best ways to contact potential participants, obtaining informed consent, arranging interview times, and determining convenient locations for both participants and researchers (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). In this study, I asked participants their preference for either a virtual or face-to-face interview and provided information about the interview setting. Also, the six participants preferred the face-to-face option and the participants also accepted to have the interviews conducted at my office location in Lagos.

Ethical Research

Researchers can use different data collection techniques to conduct a semistructured interview with open-ended questions. Research is an activity with ethical principles, beliefs, norms, values, cultures, and methodologies. Saunders et al. (2015) advised that researchers follow ethical principles such as integrity and objectivity, respect for others and avoidance of harm, privacy and voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw. Other ethical principles include the participants' informed consent, ensuring the confidentiality of data and maintenance of anonymity, responsibility in data

management and analysis, reporting of findings, and ensuring the safety of both researcher and participants (Saunders et al., 2015). In this study, I observed all ethical principles, including informed ethical consent processes, participant free will to withdrawal from the study, incentives for participants, protection, security, and confidentiality of participants, and ensured Walden institution review board IRB approval; the IRB approval number for this study is 01-11-21-0994421.

Research guidelines and ethical protocols guide researchers. Cragoe (2017) examined some research guidelines, including the Belmont Report, the IRB, and the American Sociological Association's code of ethics and ethical review. I followed the protocols of the Belmont Report and IRB in this research study. The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (NCPHSBBR) (1978) and Cragoe posited that the Belmont report contained in the National Research Act of 1974, described three ethical principles (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice. Cragoe stated that the principles further provided for individual autonomy, the researchers' responsibility to respect and protect that autonomy, and fairness in both the bearing of risk and the benefits of research.

Researchers must seek participants' consent individually, through surrogate, or community leadership as part of research ethics. Al Tajir (2018) stated that respect, beneficence, and justice are the three principles of research ethics posited by the *Belmont Report* in 1979. Researchers should implement the policies through the informed consent process, privacy and confidentiality, risk-benefit analysis, and fair recruitment. Spruit et al. (2016) posited that informed consent pertains to the features of relationships between

researchers and research participants. Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) and Sidin (2016) stated that the five elements of informed consent: disclosure of information, understanding, voluntariness, competence, and consent. The disclosure of information includes the aim, objective, benefit, and consequences of the research to the participants. At the same time, understanding involves the knowledge, education level, psychological condition, and age of a participant (Sidin, 2016). Competence refers to the ability of research participants to respond to research questions in terms of psychologically and physically. Simultaneously, voluntariness means research participants' involvement based on their own decision without force or influence from other circumstances (Sidin, 2016). Consent refers to commitment in writing or verbally by the research participants, which permits a researcher to obtain research data from the participant (Sidin, 2016). Yin (2018) asserted the importance of gaining informed consent from all persons who may participate in a study and formally solicit their volunteerism in participating in the study. Each participant signed an informed consent form and agreed to participate in the research study.

Any participant that had given informed consent could freely withdraw at any stage of the research study. Lynch (2020) posited that participants' rights are fundamental within and outside a research setting. Melham et al. (2014) stated that the right to withdraw consent is a central tenet of research ethics and frame the relationship between researcher and participant. Researchers should prepare for the possibility of participant withdrawal, respect participant's withdrawal without penalty, and incorporate measures to avoid participant requests for removal (Lynch, 2020). Researchers could mitigate the

impact of potential participant withdrawal by improving regular communication with participants and incorporating contingency in the research plan. In this study all the participants who signed the consent forms and agreed to the interview schedule participated so I did not have to activate my contingency plan which included provisions for two additional participants.

Participants' time, space, and efforts may require some form of compensation and incentive. Mweemba et al. (2018) stated researchers might offer money as reimbursement with payment covering participants' expenses as posited by Dickert et al. in 2002, Phillips in 2011, and Ripley in 2006. Also, the researchers and IRB must approve the reimbursement. Mweemba et al. posited that participants and their community leaders could advise non-monitory offers, such as food, transportation, and educational materials, in low- and medium-income countries. However, where there is no existing model such as a minimum wage based model, the researcher and IRB could discretionally approve reasonable reimbursement for the participants. I engaged each participant and negotiated a non-monetary incentive of $25 gift card for the period they suspended their driving schedule, travel to the research site (car park for a virtual telephone interview due to COVID-19 pandemic social distancing restrictions), and attended the interview session.

Researchers are responsible for the protection, security, and confidentiality of participants in the research study. Surmiak (2018) referred to privacy as when the researcher protects the participant's identity and conceals participant's contributed information to the research. Yin (2018) stated that anonymity serves to protect real

participants, critical in research ethics. In this research, I systematically converted participants' real identities to fictitious codes such as P1, P2, etc. In the era of digital technology, researchers preserve data and data analysis generated from the research study both in passive and inactive time intervals (Navale & McAuliffe, 2018). Consequently, the IRB recommends that individual research data be secured and preserved for 5 years in a password-protected external hard drive. To ensure confidentiality and protection of the data, I stored the interview questions and answers (raw and transcripts), field notes, and some significant data analysis on a flash drive and locked the flash dive in a safe; I will store the data for 5 years following approval of this study after which time all data will be destroyed.

Data Collection Instruments

In all research, appropriate identification and use of data collection instruments are critical. Moser and Korstjens (2018) stated that researchers should define a flexible data collection plan. For a qualitative research study, the most frequently used data collection tools are participant observations, interviews, and focus groups (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). Each of the data collection methods is unique and should be selected based on the case, unit of analysis, time, cost, and space (Clark & Veale, 2018). Qualitative researchers gain access to the participants' natural environment and are the research instrument used for data collection and analysis (Clark & Veale, 2018). I was the instrument to collect and analyze the research data. As the researcher in this study, I used semistructured interviews and direct observation tools for data collection. The qualitative research interview is one of the data collection tools which involves interaction between

the researcher(s) and the participant(s) based on interview questions (Guest et al., 2017; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I used semistructured interview with open-ended questions following an interview protocol (see Appendix A and B). I contacted and obtained consent of full-time Uber drivers to engage in open-ended and semistructured interview.

To ensure and improve the credibility of qualitative research data from semistructured interviews, researchers use the member checking process. Member checks refer to interview participants' involvement to review, comment, and correct: a summary of the interpretation of the interview, a copy of emerging findings, and a draft copy of a research report (Candela, 2019; Thomas, 2016). Caretta and Perez (2019) opined that researchers use member checking to attain transactional validity. One of the qualitative research credibility tools researchers use is member checking, returning interpretive interview summaries and research findings to participants to determine if the interview summaries and results reflect their experience (Moon et al., 2016; Tong & Dew, 2016). In this study, I conducted member checking of each interview by summarizing the transcribed recorded interview and asked participants to review the interpreted summary for accuracy and feedback. I did not receive any changes to the transcribed interviews.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers could use different data collection techniques to conduct a semistructured interview with open-ended questions. The traditional technique is direct face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participants while the advance in telecommunication and ICT has created other data collection options (Tran & Lương, 2020). Krouwel et al. (2019) explained that while face-to-face interviews are considered

the highest standard, other reliable data collection techniques using semistructured interviews could include telephone, email, instant message, and video call. Salmons (2015), posited that the ICT driven interview technique creates interactions between researchers and participants through computer-mediated communication. Researchers may obtain a full range of virtual and verbal exchange and non-verbal signal. Salmons opined that nonverbal communication could limit the interview's effectiveness as chronemic, such as pacing, the timing of speech, and length of silence before a response to a conversation. Also, paralanguage communication such as volume, pitch, and quality of voice; kinesics' interaction such as eye contact and gaze, facial expressions, body movement, gestures, and postures; and proxemics communication such as the use of interpersonal space to communicate attitude (Salmons, 2015). I used face-to-face and during the interviews I noted verbal exchanges, non-verbal signals, and paralanguage communication.

The face-to-face data collection technique is one of the most popular techniques researchers adopt for semistructured interviews using open-ended questions. McGrath et al. (2018) posited that qualitative semistructured interviews afford researchers opportunities to explore, in an in-depth manner, unique matters to the participants' experiences, allowing insight into how participant interest is experience and perceived of different phenomena. McGrath et al. noted that researchers ought to be familiar with data recording equipment and that the selected venue of the interview is comfortable and convenient for the participants and free from potential disruptions and noise (McGrath et al., 2018; Ranney et al., 2015).

Researchers should conduct interviews per the guidelines contained in the interview protocol and the IRB. Researchers should build rapport and trust with the participants during the interviews (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Yeong et al., 2018). Building rapport is a process and researchers do not have typical have an automatic rapport with participants (Hoolachan, 2020). It is possible and desirable for researchers to achieve rapport by the end of each interview session. McGrath et al. (2018) advised that researchers, as the prime instrument of data collection, should manage the interview process professionally, talk less with active listening, seek opportunity for reflection, and make changes in the interview protocol. Researchers should be prepared to handle unanticipated emotions (Varpio & McCarthy, 2017). Researchers should transcribe the interview in good time, check the quality of the data in terms of member checking, and initiate data analysis early to determine the depth, quality, and richness of the performance of the interview (Bailey, 2008; Hammersley, 2010; McGrath et al., 2018; Stuckey, 2014). I used the face-to-face data collection technique and adhered to the protocol (see Appendix A and B).

The face-to-face interview and the telephone interview are essential techniques for research data collection, but each has unique features. I selected the face-to-face interview technique. Oltmann (2016) explained that face-to-face interview features include: synchronous communication of time and place, intensive, costly due to travel, limited geographically, and less likely to have technological problems except with recording devices. Other features are that the interview location could be endangered depending upon location and time of the meeting and note-taking could obtrusive, but the

researcher captures non-verbal language and cues. There are unique benefits and drawbacks of using interviews over either the telephone or online.

Face-to-face semistructured interviews are flexible, adaptable, based on personal interactions, and researchers can control the survey environment (Szolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013; Tran & Lương, 2020). Researchers observe physical and non-verbal languages (Szolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013). The drawbacks of face-to-face interviews include high researcher bias, high cost per participant, geographical limitations, and time constraints (Szolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013). I conducted this research in Lagos city where the Uber drivers operate, I did not make additional travel. The other feature associated with the participants is scheduling, which was at participants' convenience, confidentiality, which I protected, and privacy/ invasiveness, which I managed during the interview. Afolayan and Oniyinde (2019) posited that interaction between the researcher and participant could be conducted over the telephone, especially if there are safety concerns such as the era of COVID-19. I considered adopting a telephone interview if the COVID-19 pandemic continues and become a safety issue but this was unnecessary as Lagos city was safe for a face-to-face interview option. I used an audio-recorder with backup for the open-ended questions and semistructured interview.

Researchers have used both manual and automated system for the transcription of audio-recorded interview data (Bokhove & Downey, 2018). There are freely available web-tools to use for the first drafts of transcripts and to improve the accuracy of interview transcription, however, researchers should listen to the audio-recorded interview data and compare the auto-generated transcripts with what was said (Bokhove

& Downey, 2018). In this study I used an automated system to generate the first draft of the audio-recorded interview data and reviewed the transcripts for accuracy. I conducted member checking by sending through email, a summary of my interpretation of participant's responses to each participant for review and acceptance. In this study, I did not receive any changes from the participants on the transcribed interviews. Member checking is one technique researchers use to explore the credibility of qualitative research results and findings (Birt et al., 2016).

Data Organization Technique

The qualitative research process from beginning through research design, data gathering, data analysis, and research findings and reporting involve high data generation, organization, and researchers' management. The researchers' concern is how to organize, collect, manage, store, retrieve, analyze, and give meaning to the information obtained during qualitative research (Austin & Sutton, 2015). Researchers classify data into substantive data, para-data, metadata, and auxiliary data (Kroehne & Goldhammer, 2018). In this study, I based the data organization on para-data, further categorized into access-related (contact, setting, and devices); response-related (answers and input); and process-related (micro and macro). I organized all data generated in files written in Microsoft Word. I maintain the records on my personal computer with restricted password access and a password protected flash drive which is locked in a safe located in my office. I will destroy all data 5 years after study approval.

Researchers adopt the data organization process from data transmission, external storage, and retrieval through Web tracking (Ermakova et al., 2018). Web tracking is a

widespread Internet technique that collects user data for online advertisement, user authentication, and content personalization (Ermakova et al., 2018). Web tracking includes advanced website analytics, social network integration, and website development, as posited by Sanchez-Rola et al. in 2016. Researchers' access websites from a local device such as the personal computer through internet services providers (ISPs) such as MTN, GLO, and ETEL (Kadiri & Lawal, 2019). Web tracking dimensions of reliability include the advancement in technology (web-tracking methods, tracking behavior, and web-tracking on mobile devices); privacy (problems and tools to protect privacy); and commercial (business). I used Web-tracking for date transmission between external storage and my personal computer throughout the period of this study. I organized all interview data: (a) using word processing and spreadsheet software, (b) saving each interview in a separate file with the date of the interview, (c) loading each interview data into the NVivo-12 software for data analysis, and (d) transferring relevant reports and findings from NVivo-12 software to the word processing spreadsheet software.

Data Analysis

Researchers develop different approaches to qualitative research data analysis, centered on theme development. Vaismoradi et al. (2016) stated that researchers use the theme as an attribute, descriptor, element, and concept. Farquhar et al. (2020) posited that triangulation is a good practice in conducting case study research because researchers use triangulation to provide research validity through a convergence of findings, sources, or methods. Data combination or data triangulation in most qualitative studies may

constitute a large volume of data to manage (Bengtsson, 2016). Jentoft and Olsen (2017) stated that researchers described triangulation as an approach used to strengthen study's credibility. Jentoft and Olsen added that triangulation include researcher's use of multiple methods, several theories, or different data sources in terms of time and space, or separate independent researchers.

The four triangulation types include methodological triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and data triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018; Renz et al., 2018; Yin, 2018). Method triangulation incorporates multiple research methods to collect data, which entails using quantitative methods (such as questionnaires) and qualitative approaches such as interviews (Moon, 2019; Weyers et al., 2014). The methodological triangulation is not applicable because this study is not a mixed method research approach study. Investigator triangulation uses more than one researcher from the same or different disciplines to collect and analyze the same data (Moon, 2019; Weyers et al., 2014). I was the sole researcher in this study and did not involve other researchers in data collection and analyses. Theory triangulation includes multiple theories or perspectives for the research design, research study implementation, and interpretation, such as the combination of TCT and RBV (Moon, 2019; Weyers et al., 2014). I used TCT as the theoretical lens to explore the research phenomenon. Therefore, theory triangulation was not applicable. Data source triangulation focuses on the evidence produced when different techniques if compared, reveal similarities and commonalities to serve as validation of the data or incongruences that indicate faulty procedure or data sets (Fusch et al., 2018; Weyers et al., 2014). In this study, I used data triangulation because the six

Uber drivers were at different locations. I interviewed the participants on different day and times, and combined all collected data for analysis.

There are five types of theme-based data analysis that yield practical results in a qualitative research study: (a) comparative analysis, (b) content analysis, (c) cross-case synthesis, (d) narrative synthesis, and (e) thematic analysis (Cruzes et al., 2014; Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Yin, 2018). Researchers consider thematic data analysis in terms of both latent contents as a theme and manifest content as categories in data analysis (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Maguire and Delahunt (2017) posited that the most widely accepted framework for conducting thematic analysis involves a six-step process similar to the cross-case synthesis by Yin in 2018. I interviewed six Uber drivers. For each participant, I combined the initial interview data, the interview notes, and member checking review to developed themes. I then related the emergent themes to the literature.

In the first of the six steps of thematic data analysis researchers familiarize themselves with the collected research and second, generate initial codes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Xu & Zammit, 2020). Third, the researcher searches for themes through code categorization and fourth reviews identified themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Xu & Zammit, 2020). The fifth step includes defining and naming themes, and the sixth step involves researchers producing their findings and reports (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Xu & Zammit, 2020). In this study, I followed the six step process. I read and re-read the transcripts starting from the primary interview data (before and after member checking) and made notes on each participant's critical impressions. Additionally, I generated the

initial codes systematically by identifying chunks of meaning related to the research question, strategy of purpose, and value drivers of each participant. Thereafter, I searched for themes through code categorization by reviewing the initial codes of successive interview data iteratively seeking patterns that captured significant and common categories. I used strategic and major trends on potential themes observed and used these as follow-up questions during subsequent interview(s). Next, I checked the identified themes to determine if they were realistic, representative, supported by triangulated data, overlapped, related to subthemes, or new themes deducible within the triangulated data. Afterwards, I refined the themes by identifying relationships between themes, a commonality of each theme among participants, and a representation of each theme. Finally, I reported and wrote the research results and findings. The report included a relative comparison of the themes identified from the data analysis with the strategies identified from the literature.

Data combination or data triangulation in most qualitative studies may constitute a large volume of data to manage. Jentoft and Olsen (2017) stated that researchers described triangulation as an approach used either as multiple methods, several theories, and different data sources in terms of time and space, or separate independent researchers to strengthen the study's credibility posited by Denzin in 1978. There are four triangulation types (Fusch et al., 2018; Renz et al., 2018). In this study, I used data triangulation because the six Uber drivers were at different locations. I interviewed participants on different days and times, and combined all data for analysis.

Researchers use computer-aided software to enhance data analysis (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). In this study, I used the thematic data analysis because of the systematic six step process with computer-aided qualitative data analysis system (CAQDAS) software support. Using NVivo-12 software requires the researcher's knowledge of the features and usage of the software. Maher et al. (2018) stated that a combination of coding using traditional tools such as colored pens, paper, and sticky notes with a digital software package such as NVivo offers an accurate qualitative data analysis. Maher et al. added that researchers import the interview transcripts from Microsoft Word to the NVivo environment, open and explore the interview, code and compare with other codes, categorize the codes and compare categories within and between interviews. The coding process and the categorization of interviews to create themes, are achieved through NVivo software's features such as query, reflection, visualization, and memos. In this study, I combined the traditional coding experience with the NVivo process and reported the significant output. I compared the research findings in terms of themes with the strategies Uber drivers used derived from the literature. Young (2017) opined that literature is limited to confirming what was previously known and does not express how the new findings add to knowledge.

From the process of data triangulation, researchers generate a large volume of data, which requires CAQDAS software (Maher et al., 2018). Renz et al. (2018) stated that with the advances in ICT, researchers use computerized text analysis software to make extensive data from data triangulation more manageable and enhance the trustworthiness of the research results. Maher et al. (2018) posited that researchers use

CAQDAS and NVivo software for qualitative data analysis. The features of NVivo include data management facilities and all data may be stored digitally and easily recalled. Almaiah (2020) posited that qualitative interview data could be analyzed using thematic data analysis with NVivo software. I used thematic data analysis and NVivo-12 software for data analysis.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are essential attributes of rigor and trustworthiness of a research study. The quality dimensions of qualitative research include dependability, credibility, conformability, and transferability (Abdalla et al., 2018; Forero et al., 2018; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Moon et al., 2016; Tong & Dew, 2016). According to Yin (2018) there are four dimensions of data quality tests associated with a case study: (a) reliability requires a study protocol, case database development, and maintenance of a chain of evidence; (b) internal validity requires conduct pattern matching, conduct explanation building, addressing rival explanations, and using logic models; (c) construct validity involves the use of multiple sources of evidence; (d) external validity consists of applying replication logic in multiple case studies. I used all of the fundamentally co-related dimensions. I evaluated the reliability and validity in terms of dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability.

Reliability

Researchers derive the qualitative case study quality tests from the general qualitative research quality. Moon et al. (2016) reported that reliability commonly used in

quantitative research is equivalent to dependability in qualitative research. Reliability in this study is based on the research dependability.

Dependability

Moon et al. (2016) stated that dependability refers to the qualitative researcher's consistency and reliability. Dependability is achieved by increasing transparency of the research process. Tong and Dew (2016) explained reliability in terms of dependability or coherency across the methodology, design and method, data, findings, and transparency and audibility of the research process. Korstjens and Moser (2018) explained that dependability involves participants' evaluation of results, interpretation, and recommendations supported by the data. In this study, I used the data obtained from six Uber drivers to conduct member checking and ensure the dependability of the study findings. Hadi and Closs, (2016) opined that the aim of member checking is to ensure dependability and credibility of qualitative studies.

Validity

Validity is a typical research quality indicator in both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In qualitative studies, researchers relate internal validity with credibility (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Moon et al., 2016; Tong & Dew, 2016). External validity is equivalent to transferability and objectivity is equal to confirmability in qualitative research (Abdalla et al., 2018; Farquhar et al., 2020; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Moon et al., 2016; Tong & Dew, 2016). I adopted credibility, transferability, and confirmability as research quality validity.

Credibility

Credibility is the equivalent of internal validity and strategically demonstrated through data collection, such as prolonged engagement with participants and triangulation of interview data, consisting of convergence, complementarity, and divergence modes (Farquhar et al., 2020). The strategies include peer debriefing; and member checking, returning interview transcripts and research findings to participants to determine if the transcripts and results reflect their experience (Moon et al., 2016; Tong & Dew, 2016). In this study, I engaged each Uber driver in an interview of approximately 40 minutes. Triangulation of all the data from the six Uber drivers is one of the processes used to establish credibility. I conducted member checking after transcription of the recorded semistructured interview by sending through email to the participant a Microsoft Word version of an interpretative summary of the interview for review and acceptance. After I had completed the data analysis, identified the themes, and reported the research results and findings I conducted a round of second member checking by sharing the findings with all the participants individually through email and phone call. All participants verified the interpretation of their responses.

Transferability

Tong and Dew (2016) and Moon et al. (2016) explained that research transferability is a type of external validity, but not in terms of generalizability. Moon et al. advised that researchers should ensure study findings are applicable and useful to theory, practice, and future research. Moon et al. argued that qualitative research studies are not generalizable because qualitative research findings relate to a single or small

member of the environment or individual as posited by Maxwell in 1992 and Flyvbjerg in 2006. Tong and Dew asserted that to ensure research transferability, researchers should compare their research results with studies conducted in different contexts, regions, or populations. Researchers should provide detailed and describe the study used to judge the findings' transferability to their meaning (Tong & Dew, 2016). In this study, I ensured an accurate description of the data collection process and compared the study findings with similar studies in the literature to validate my research result transferability.

Confirmability

Tong and Dew (2016) stated that every researcher has skills, experiences, and biases likely to affect the research process. Moon et al. (2016) posited that research quality objectivity is equivalent to confirmability in qualitative research. Moon et al. stated that through confirmability, researchers ensure that research findings and interpretations are linked to the interview data and reflect the participants' views devoid of the researcher's bias. Tong and Dew posited that researchers could achieve research confirmability by involving multiple investigators in data analysis, member checking with participants, and linking findings to raw data. In this study I ensured research confirmability by conducting member checking with the six Uber drivers and linking the results to the interview data from the Uber drivers.

Data Saturation

Researchers use data saturation to determine when to discontinue data gathering in a qualitative multiple case study. Tran et al. (2017) stated that in qualitative research with open-ended questions, sample size relies on the principle of data saturation.

Determining the point of data saturation is complicated and depends on the experience of the researcher. Saunders et al. (2017) explained that saturation is a criterion for discontinuing data collection and analysis commonly used in qualitative research.

In a multiple case study saturation relates to the number of interviews necessary until no new information emerges (Constantinou et al., 2017; Saunders & Townsend, 2016; Vasileiou et al., 2018). Saunders et al. (2017) identified four models of saturation: theoretical saturation, inductive thematic saturation, a priori thematic saturation, and data saturation, which relates to the degree to which researchers express new data in previous data. Saunders et al. stated that researchers could decide on saturation based on what they hear within interviews before coding and category development. Constantinou et al. (2017) adopted the conceptual approach and identified data saturation after the 6th interview. I ensured data saturation by conducting open-ended interviews with six Uber drivers. I obtained data saturation from the interview stages, after the 6th interview, and during the thematic data analysis.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 contains information in detail on the purpose statement, the researcher's role, requirements for ethical research in line with the Belmont Report, and the eligibility of participants. Other details in Section 2 include the research design and method. I selected social media sampling techniques and achieved data saturation after the 6th participant' interview. I used semistructured interview with open-ended questions for data collection using either face-to-face or online telephone data collection techniques. I included methods used to organize and store the data and outline the guidelines for

protecting and destroying the data after 5 years from the study approval. In Section 2, I included information on data analysis using thematic analysis techniques with computer-aided software, NVivo, and research quality. The section also includes narratives focusing on dependability, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation. In Section 3, I discuss the findings of the study, and provide the application of the results to professional practices in terms of why and how the results are relevant to business practices. Finally, I present the study implications on social change, make recommendations for action and further research, and state reflections and conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this holistic qualitative multiple case study was to explore business strategies that Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes. This study participants were full-time Uber drivers with 6 months of minimum experience as Uber drivers and a minimum age of 21 years. Participants signed consent forms with Walden University's IRB approval number 01-11-12-0994421, and I held the interviews at the participants' convenience. I gave the participants the options of a face-to-face interview scheduled at my office location or a virtual interview. All participants accepted the face-to-face interview option because the interview site attracted high Uber ridership. Thus, they could pick a ride to and from the area. Additionally, each participant agreed on a convenient date and time, considering their committed work schedules and engagements.

I generated the strategies as themes through thematic data analysis, coding the interview data, categorizing the codes, and supporting the identified problems and the available means of managing problems. The four business strategies that emerged were (a) technologies, (b) surge and profitable trips, (c) flexible working hours, and (d) customer service and relationships. Although every participant used these strategies to enhance competitive advantage by increasing profits and income, the actual strategies varied. Ashkrof et al. (2020) posited that while all Uber drivers strive to maximize their revenue, their strategies can be significantly different from each other. The identified strategies aligned with the research question, confirmed previous literature, and added to

the body of knowledge about the phenomena. The strategies aligned with the TCT constructs of opportunism, bounded rationality, asset specificity, transaction frequency, and uncertainty. The participants recommended implementing these business strategies to help new entrants and inexperienced Uber drivers enhance their profits and incomes.

Presentation of the Findings

The research question for this study was the following: What strategies do Uber drivers in Lagos, Nigeria, use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes as drivers? In line with the interview protocol (Appendix A), I gathered data from the participants using semistructured interviews, in addition to observing their financial transactions with Uber, transactions with car rental companies, and transactions from offline trips with customers. The participants' responses portrayed their experiences, concepts, and perceptions about the strategies that they used as Uber drivers to enhance their competitive advantage and increase their profits and incomes. The six full-time Uber drives responded to the eight open-ended interview questions as contained in the consent forms sent to them earlier. During the interviews, I also asked probing questions and thanked the participants at the end of the session. Following the interviews, I summarized the responses and engaged in member checking.

During the interview stage, I conducted preliminary data analysis using the initial data analysis method to monitor and establish data saturation progressively from Participant 1 (P1) through Participant 6 (P6). The last two participants repeated information already provided by the previous participants; therefore, I obtained no new code or preliminary theme. Saunders et al. (2017) stated that in interviews, when the

researcher begins to hear the same comments repeatedly, data saturation has been reached. Guest et al. (2017) posited that researchers achieve data saturation when the last two interviews do not add substantially to the body of information collected. Therefore, I reached data saturation after interviewing six participants.

I used the thematic data analysis technique with NVivo, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) software. Nowell et al. (2017) posited that for data analysis to be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate it is precise, consistent, and exhaustive. Nowell et al. (2017) proposed six phases of thematic analysis: (a) familiarizing oneself with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing a report. The preliminary analysis that I had conducted earlier was beneficial at the stage of data analysis using NVivo software.

I exported the transcribed interview data for P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 into the NVivo software program. AlYahmady and Alabri (2013) and Nowell et al. (2017) explained that NVivo is qualitative data analysis software developed to manage coding procedures, sort (categorize), and organize an extensive data set into themes. The coding method that I used for my preliminary data analysis was different from the NVivo method. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2016) identified 32 coding practices with various attributes, and NVivo coding applies the words verbatim that participants use to examine the possible dimensions or ranges of categories. I recoded the transcribed interview data for P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 in the NVivo software. The themes as output from the NVivo software program were obtained from the codes through code categorization and theme

generation as the strategies. The four business strategies that Uber drivers used to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes were (a) technologies, (b) surge and profitable trips, (c) flexible working hours, and (d) customer service and relationships. Further analysis included relating the themes with the research theory, research question, literature review, and participants' statements to determine the research findings and develop my final research report.

Main Theme 1: Technologies

The participants identified effective use of technologies and their associated issues as a theme and one of the strategies that Uber drivers use to enhance their competitive advantage and increase their profits and incomes. In Lagos, the telecommunication industry is well advanced and has supported industrial growth in Nigeria. Jais and Marzuki (2020) posited that e-hailing services are known to be on-demand vehicle acquisition services deployed by Uber and their drivers that rely on network dependency and use of a specific digital application through the Internet. Significant technological advances have led the Internet to become prevalent, making technologies a crucial aspect of life; this is the case with Uber drivers' operations (EL Fikri et al., 2019). Amuji et al. (2019) posited that in Nigeria, telecommunication has created opportunities for both service providers such as MTN, GLO, 9MOIBLE, and AIRTEL and subscribers to do their separate but related businesses and earn their living. However, none of the internet service providers has uninterrupted service.

All participants used multiple internet providers as a strategy to mitigate the failure of any of them and enhance competitive advantage. P1 stated, "I think many

people can just pick up any phone or you can pick up any SIM [subscriber identity modules] even on the road and use it to register and start taking orders." Kuboye (2017) stated that broadband networks in Nigeria are still developing and need a lot of improvement, and this requires collaboration between the government and the service providers. Fasiku et al. (2020) explained that internet service is quite reliable but poor when considering dissemination of information to users regarding downtime, schedule maintenance, and other forms of bottlenecks. P5 quantified the network providers as "performance in the case I have network failure on MTN, I will switch to my MIFI, and in the case, I have network issues because no network is 100% ok in Nigeria."

All of the participants identified network failures as challenging. P1 emphasized that network failure "might reduce your fare because of the network to some apps and some phones." P2 pointed out that "it could be area network sometimes the MTN or GLO, AIRTEL may have a problem in a particular [area]." To mitigate internet failure disappointment, P2 stressed that "I use two SIMs and make sure I have data." Yoshizawa and Preneel (2020) opined that the use of multi-SIM-capable mobile phones has been gaining popularity to enhance access to multiple internet providers. Internet network providers were not as efficient as expected in providing broader coverage in major cities and areas, creating uncertainties regarding Uber drivers' operations and business transactions.

Miyasaka et al. (2018) stated that unfamiliarity with mobile phone technologies is a significant challenge for mobile phone tracking success with 4G. All participants recognized the importance of using high-capacity smartphones to enhance competitive

advantage because 4G capacity is less expensive than a 6G capacity smartphone. P3 remarked that “my phones, an Android phone, and a Samsung phone are with 2 SIMs. The phones are 6G internal random access memory (RAM), so that gives me speed with the internet.” Fondevila-Gascon et al. (2020) identified that Samsung, Apple, Xiaomi, and BQ are some of the mobile telephone companies that produce smartphones for growing social media operations, including those of Uber drivers. P3 noted that “at every point, you must have internet subscription on at least two providers.” P4 remarked that “I am using GLO, and I’m using MTN, so whenever I have a problem with my GLO line, with the network, I switch to the MTN so that I can be on the move.” P5 also provided for two SIM cards: “I make sure I load on my MiFi, and I load on my MTN lines so that [and] if I have network failure on MTN, I will switch to my MIFI.”

Uncertainty and bounded rationality are two of the constructs of TCT, which I used as the conceptual framework in this study. Guevara and Cheein (2020) stated that technologies are crucial to ensure the Internet of Things (IoT) in urban areas and cities and advised that ICT solutions are required to manage public affairs, reduce uncertainties, and enhance business transactions. Uber drivers in Lagos city are concerned with ineffective internet services, which affect their areas of operations and delays in their daily activities. All Uber drivers use multiple internet providers to reduce uncertainty regarding effective internet services and, as a strategy, enhance their competitive advantage to increase their profits and income. Fondevila-Gascon et al. (2020) stated that the quality of smartphones, the price, and the experience are the factors that most influence the decision to purchase a smartphone. Therefore, Uber drivers have to make a

bounded rational decision as a strategy on their smartphone to enhance an effective operation to improve competitive advantage to increase their profit and income. Table 2 and Figure 1 depict the Theme 1 output from the NVivo software program using thematic data analysis.

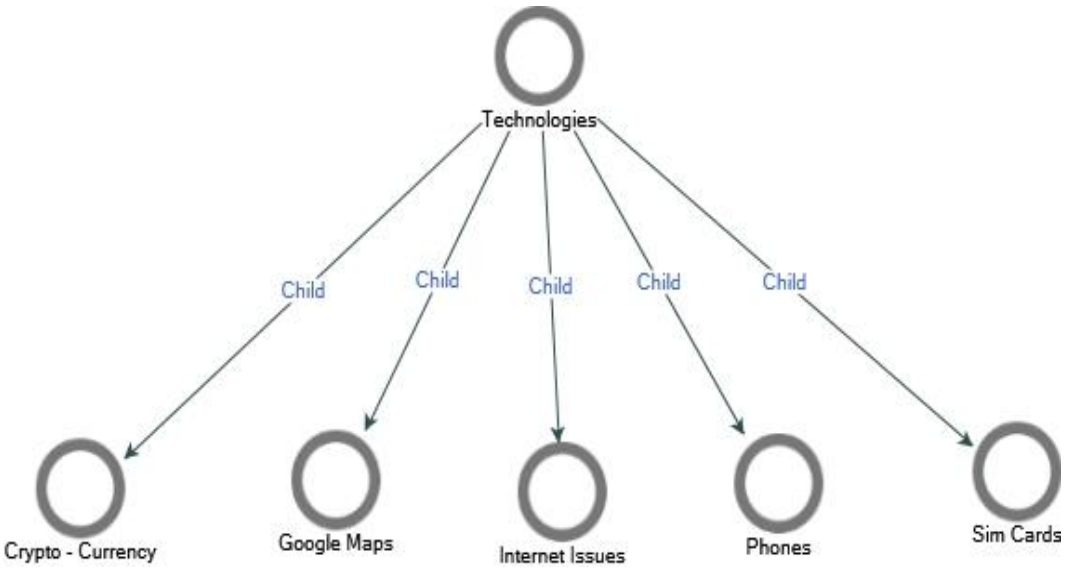
Table 2

References and Coverage per Participant for Theme 1: Technologies

Participants	References	Coverage
P1	11	2.72%
P2	25	7.04%
P3	18	4.11%
P4	5	4.18%
P5	19	4.99%
P6	25	4.73%

Figure 1

Map of Supporting Subjects for Theme 1: Technologies



Main Theme 2: Surge Pricing and Profitable Trips

The second theme that emerged was surge pricing and profitable trips as a strategy that Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes. All participants were concerned about business uncertainty and the margin of profit that they would make from every trip. This uncertainty relates to whether to accept a trip or wait for a more profitable trip, ensuring that drivers meet the required number of trips to earn improved and competitive incomes, and managing offline periods for other income generation activities (Fielbaum & Tirachini, 2020). All participants indicated that surge prices, the minimum number of required trips, and managing their offline periods were elements of essential strategies for competitive advantage and increasing their profits and incomes.

The participants highlighted two types of incentive surge periods and minimum trips packages, respectively. P3 stated that "when there is a surge, the surge maybe 2.5 [multiplayer] that means a trip of N1,000 would be charged at N2,500." P3 identified that "the color range you know includes one is orange [low surge], one is red, and one is thick red [highest surge]." P6 related that "they might give surge, but the surge is not always, so the little time you work, most time you work without surge." P1 posited that "if you are on surge pricing, a surge increases the driver's price though the commission is still the same." The surge pricing algorithm may protect the triadic marketplace (Uber, platform provider; riders, service demand; and Uber drivers, service provider/suppliers) by balancing supply and demand in real time. When the number of trip requests exceeds

the number of drivers, it increases the surge multiplier to ration demand and attracts drivers to the undersupplied area (Lu et al., 2018).

All participants identified seeking or waiting for surge periods as part of their successful strategies. They noted that surge pricing, which increases fares and the number of trips, typically occurs when the number of riders is greater than the number of drivers and during festival periods such as Christmas. The participants indicated that they would stop what they were doing (i.e., standard Uber requests or other forms of engagements) and move to the surge area during surge periods. P4 shared that "[due to surge pricing,] sometimes my online job can make more money than when I'm offline." P3 stated that "where there is surge sometimes you just collapse the activities, go offline and drive to where there is a surge, you will buy the fuel that you burn to that place." Some drivers reported that they did not accept the requests with standard pricing when they were close or on the way to surge pricing areas (Ashkrof et al., 2020).

One of the tenets of TCT is that the frequency of transactions will enhance competitive advantage and increase profits and income. P3 related that "the platform as it is gives room for incentives, so it allows you to start your week with a particular number of rides," and "after 40 trips in a week then the commission rate will drop to say 8% or 5%." P3 added that

> if I could achieve, gather a lot of trips within 2, 3 days and would have gotten the 40 trips needed for the rate, the commission rate to drop to perhaps 8% or 5% then at that point I can settle down and concentrate on working on long trips.

All of the participants preferred urban areas such as Lagos to suburban and rural areas for more riders. P1 related that “Lagos an urban [city] is the place that people are too many people,” and P3 cited “the large number of people residing in Lagos and the businesses and the offices around.” P5 stated that “Lagos is a place where you have a lot of people using the platform.” Nair et al. (2020) explained that trip frequency (i.e., passenger pickup) is higher in urban areas than in suburban and rural areas.

All participants used at least two applications to increase their customer base and opportunity. P2 described “go[ing] online and accept[ing] the request in a particular area.” P1 stated, “I have many apps that I am using; actually, I work on both Uber and Bolt,” noting that “if you are working on the app when you are in traffic, the app, the money does not increase.” P5 shared that “I do both [Uber and Bolt], also, which has increased my profit a lot.”

Uber and Bolt have slight differences in their policies. P6 stated that “When you put on the Uber app and the Bolt app any request coming in so you will not be left out from the customer on Bolt.” P3 pointed out that “Bolt does not give you timing although Uber gives that you can’t work more than 12 hours in a day, in a day midnight till back to midnight in 24 hours,” citing “20% commission for Bolt or 25% commission for Uber.” Limpin and Sison (2018) indicated that called dual-apping occurs when Uber drivers register in multiple transportation network companies (TCPs) such as Uber and Bolt.

Participants also depended on offline runs with some of their online customers. P1 shared that “I don’t only do app work alone, I do offlines, and so in case you are going somewhere else.” P2 stated, “if I want to work with my little off period, it is not about the

app (the request from the app), it is about the offline." P5 added, "it's just because most times when we are doing an online job mostly you don't earn as much as you expected," and P4 reiterated, "Now I do more [offline and] less of Uber because I have a lot of customers and that has increased my profit."

Biswas et al. (2017) opined that the sequential individual rationality offers a better ride experience and increases the provider such as Uber driver's market share. Bounded rationality is one of the TCT tenets geared toward surge pricing and profitable trips. Uber drivers make a determinate rational decision about when to reject, accept, or cancel requests from riders as a strategy to enhance competitive advantage to increase their profit and income. P3 narrated that

> if Uber provides for limits of 4 or 5 trips consecutive cancellation after which I will be penalized. I may receive a long trip [and] at that particular period of the week I'm looking for short trips. If I keep canceling [the long trip request], it will affects my quality of service [rating].

P3 added that

> [occasionally you may have] to talk to the rider at the other end [and appeal] to the rider to cancel the trip with an excuse. At the same time, you wouldn't want to embark on the journey then plead with the rider to please cancel from their end.

Ashkrof et al. (2020) posited that declining a request implies drivers or riders never accept an offer without any ramifications for the driver. However, canceling has consequences. Uber drivers' decisions on surge pricing and profitable trips are critical

and the strategies fundamental. Table 3 and Figure 2 show the Theme 2 output from NVivo using the thematic data analysis of the participants' data.

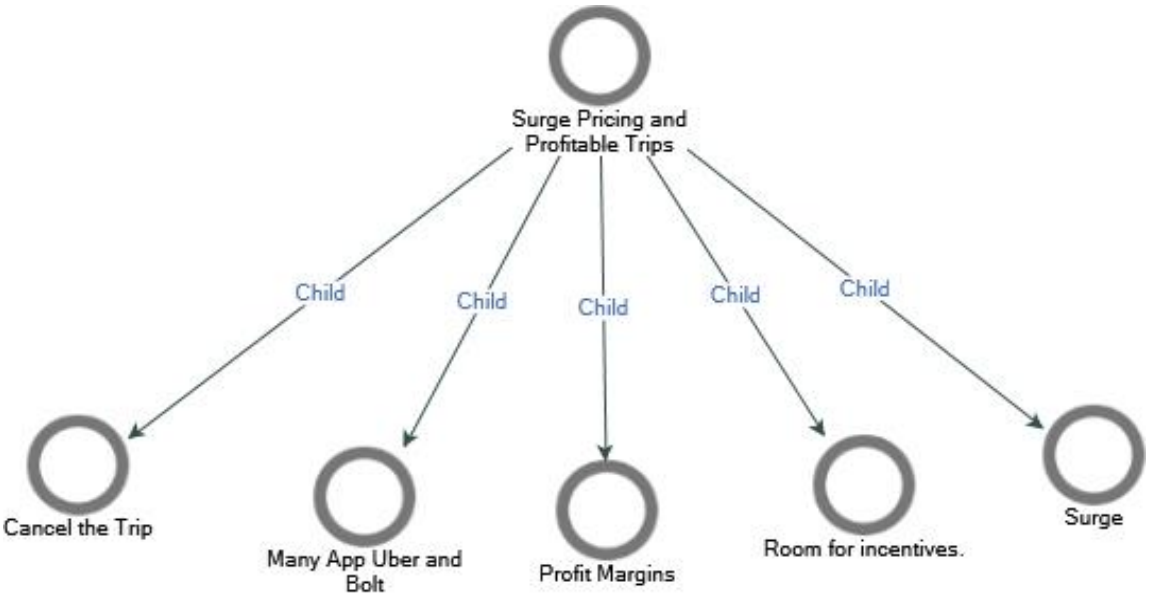
Table 3

References and Coverage per Participant for Theme 2: Surge and Profitable Trips

Participants	References	Coverage
P1	46	10.61%
P2	36	10.10%
P3	78	13.69%
P4	15	8.13%
P5	33	10.32%
P6	31	5.26%

Figure 2

Map of Supporting Subjects for Theme 2: Surge and Profitable Trips



Main Theme 3: Flexible Working Hours

Flexible working hours is the third theme identified by the participants as one of the strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes. One of the tenets of TCT is opportunism. Uber drivers' flexible working hours' strategy is opportunistic, which aligns with the conceptual framework. Chaudhari et al. (2018) stated that e-hailing drivers such as Uber drivers drive opportunistically either as their schedule allows or on a fixed schedule; as strategic behavior regarding when and where to go substantially influences their profits and incomes. Chen et al. (2019) posited that Uber drivers benefit significantly from real-time flexible working hours, earning more than twice the surplus they would in less flexible arrangements. Hong et al. (2020) examined the effect of flexible working hours and security attributes on drivers' willingness to work for ride-hailing such as Uber and how they strategize for value and trade-off combinations of these attributes. All participants developed their work schedules based on the flexible working hours' strategy.

Uber drivers may use different forms of flexibility in working hours by reacting to fluctuations in market demand by increasing or decreasing working hours (Titopoulou et al., 2017). P1 posited that "I do [work] very early in the morning till noon, then I will relax some hours, an hour or two, then work late in the night, from evening till 11:00 PM or midnight." P6 added that "in the afternoon you might not really have much work to do because people have gotten to their destinations and working, but at 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM people are heading back home." And "those timings are very useful." P2 collaborated that "to know the time I don't just go online, accept the request in a particular area, I time

were [to go] and where I cannot go, and where to go [depending on] the timing." P3 related that the beginning of the week is busier and more hectic and therefore they try to focus their attention on attaining 40 trips before Wednesday. However, as P3 noted, Uber requires that drivers cannot work more than 12 hours within a 24 hour period. P4 shared that "I make more money, more income, I make more money for my income early in the morning." P5 narrated that "I sat down and I checked the time of traffic in Lagos, I checked the peak period, and the off period, I checked the peak days and the off days." P5 added that "I have a plan in the form of a timetable for myself on the days I would and wouldn't work. [Any offline customer that needs my services during my off periods would pay me a higher rate]." P6 stated that "in this Uber business, we consider timing as very important, the rush hour timing in the morning like this [time of interview] when people are going to work, people require Uber service." Therefore, timing is an essential element in Uber drivers' strategy for competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

When running online or offline, understanding the city areas' road networks and maneuverability are essential elements to Uber drivers' competitive advantage. Most cities do not have a good road network, such as Lagos city. Allen et al. (2018) stated that the characteristics of e-hailing drivers' operations are in direct conflict with the urban infrastructure with increasingly redesigned in favor of walking, cycling, and public transport. P3 related that "it is not just about doing the work, it is about strategic planning and knowing the environment where to get such trips." P4 shared that they prefer to avoid heavily trafficked areas. P5 stated that "the major [factor for] thriving in Lagos is time,

selecting your time in driving; you will make a lot of money, and most times, I drive during off-peak traffic." P5 added that "there is no time you will go out that you wouldn't see trips, so I can't do this in some other states." It is the optimization of strategic times that increase Uber drivers' profits and incomes. The online-offline, knowing your peak period, environment, and traffic holdup also play fundamental roles in Uber drivers' strategic decision formulation.

Uber drivers with other apps such as the Bolt could either operate the two apps while seeking riders or run on one app online and the other offline when on a trip or offline on both apps when on private trips. All participants endeavor to avoid bad roads and traffic to increase the number of trips per day or week to increase their profits and incomes. P2 shared that "I time myself [so] that I don't need to go to where there are holdups." P3 related that "I know the terrain, I know the land [area], and I know the city." P3 summarized that to "take advantage of it know your terrain, know the route, and know when to maneuver yourself around town." P3 added that you need to know "when not to work with two applications and when to work on only one application for you to get your commission to the low rates because that is where the money is." P3 continued, "I always work at night because working at night increases the price [and] there is always surge."

There are security challenges in the Lagos metropolis (Farinmade et al., 2018). P1 shared that "Lagos has been a great disadvantage especially during this period [after the SARS protest in Lagos] of insecurity and the law enforcement agencies." During this period, P1 stated that "So many people stopped using public transport which affected the income of most." Crime tends to peak during the night hours. P5 observed that "But at

the same time driving at night in Lagos is crazy and risky because there are many threats" and "people trying to steal vehicles and in the process, they kill Uber drivers." Kamais (2019) opined that Uber's potent security risks include abductions, carjacking, sexual harassment, murders, robbery, and burglaries. All participants indicated how vehemently they avoid high crime areas.

Shokoohyar (2018) asserted that generally, drivers consider job flexibility, work/life balance, and meeting new people as the main advantages of working in the ridesharing platforms. Also, flexible working hours are enhanced depending on the dominant double-apping on other platforms such Uber and Bolt by the drivers (Jiang & Zhang, 2018). Table 4 and Figure 3 show the Theme 3 output from the NVivo software program using the thematic data analysis of the participants' data.

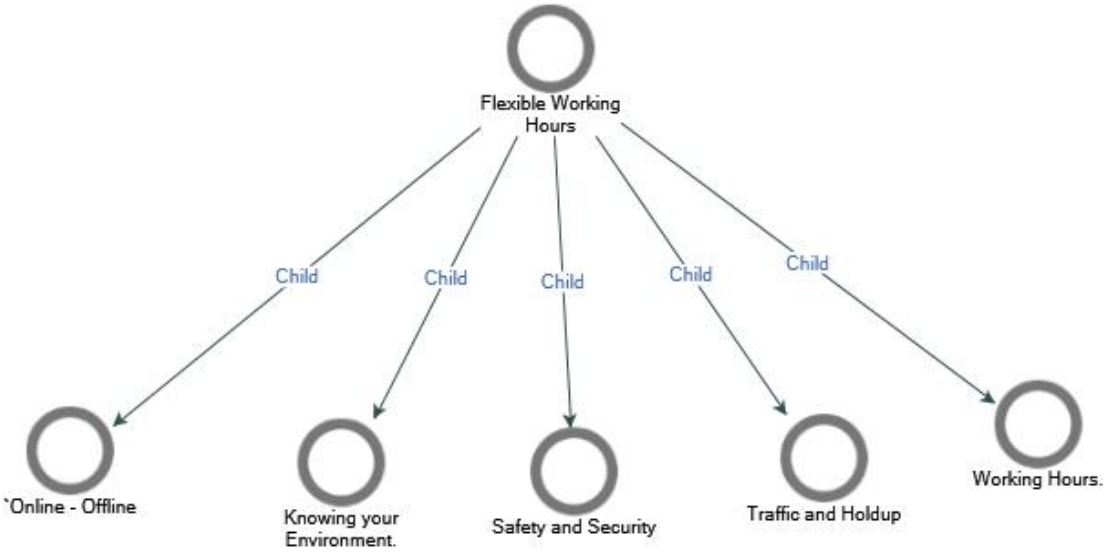
Table 4

References and Coverage per Participant for Theme 3: Flexible Working Hours

Participants	References	Coverage
P1	43	12.34%
P2	31	11.63%
P3	104	22.12%
P4	26	18.80%
P5	50	19.01%
P6	67	16.20%

Figure 3

Map of Supporting Subjects for Theme 3: Flexible Working Hours



Main Theme 4: Customer Service and Relationships

Customer service and relationships is the fourth theme identified by the participants as one of the strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes. The relationship between Uber and Uber drivers, Uber drivers and riders, and Uber drivers and the public such as the law enforcement agents, are critical in formulating Uber drivers' strategy in terms of customer service relation. All participants consider Uber's base commission of 25% high. Valente et al. (2019) posited that after deducting costs and Uber's 25% share, Uber drivers are left with about 35% of the gross revenue. P3 shared that "Bolt runs on a 20% commission rate not 25% like Uber." P3 related that "Generally the [charge/commission] Uber charges is 25% which I believe is high." P6 suggested that "I think 15% or 10% commission is still enough for them."

Ashkrof et al. (2020) stated that currently, Uber provides Uber drivers with limited information for effective decision making. All the participants agreed that Uber provides for the basic deductible commission. However, when a driver is requested, Uber provides the pick-up point, the distance, traveling time, and the rider's rating, but not the trip fare and final destination (Ashkrof et al., 2020). P3 stated that "It would have been better if I could see the rider's destination at that particular moment." Uber drivers pay car owners a weekly rental and maintenance fee of N25,000 on average. Valente et al. (2019) opined that the uncertainty related to increased profits and income indicates a higher risk when the driver considers buying or renting a car.

The Uber platform provides information that enables drivers to understand the routes' dynamics for effective maneuvers. P3 shared that "we have a platform, a Whatsapp platform where we relate and talk [to each other]." P3 added that "we give ourselves information through the Whatsapp application" Uber drivers use the rented car as a specific asset in the triadic market and provide labor services as drivers.

Asset specificity is one of the tenets of TCT. Shi et al. (2018) stated that transaction-specific assets include tangible and intangible assets. In this study, Uber drivers provide rented cars as the transaction-specific tangible assets while Uber drivers' labor services are the transaction-specific intangible assets. These asset specificities align with one of the TCT constructs used as the conceptual framework of this study. Table 5 and Figure 4 are the Theme 4 output from the NVivo software program using the thematic data analysis of the participants' data.

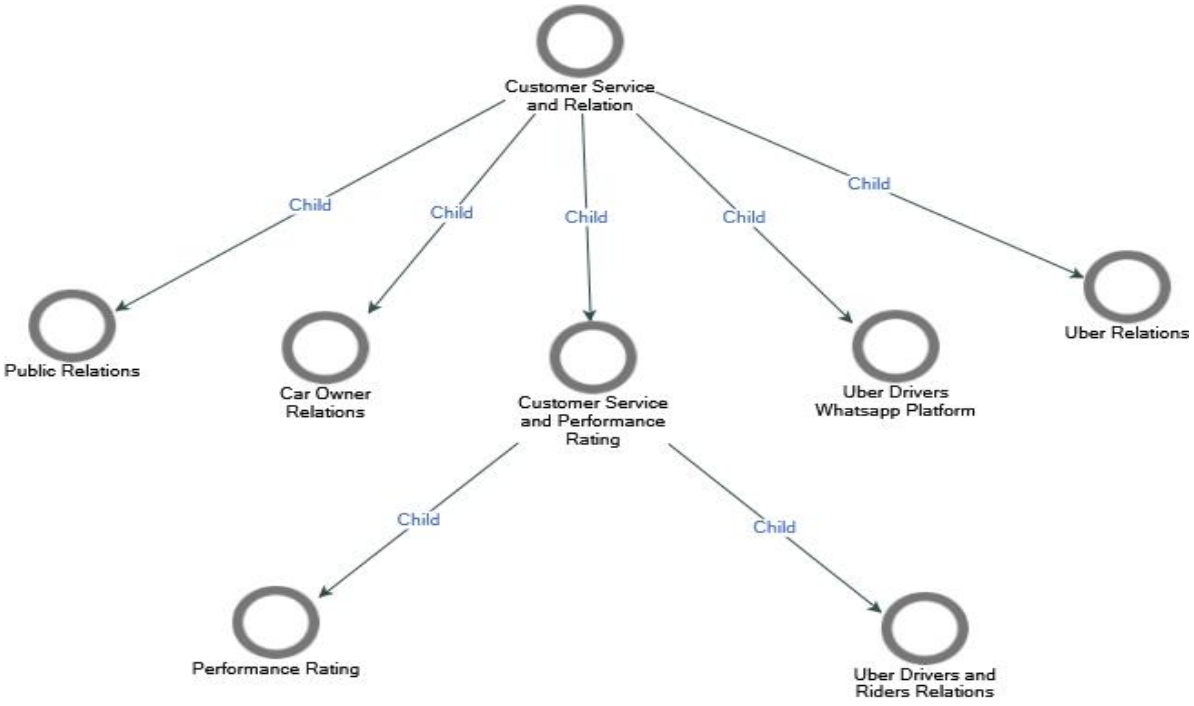
Table 5

References and Coverage per Participant for Theme 4: Customer Service and Relation

Participants	References	Coverage
P1	79	25.17%
P2	8	3.44%
P3	27	4.96%
P4	19	8.58%
P5	39	12.56%
P6	47	13.48%

Figure 4

Map of Supporting Subjects for Theme 4: Customer Service and Relation



Subtheme 1: Customer Service and Performance Rating

Customer service and performance rating is a subtheme identified by the participants as a strategy Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and income. The supporting subjects to Subtheme 1 include performance rating and the relationship between Uber drivers and their riders. All the participants recognized the importance of this subtheme. Sthapit and Bjork (2019) posited that Uber drivers providing high-quality service reduce the number of complaints and receive positive comments and compliments. Murad et al. (2019) opined the five dimensions of customer satisfaction for Uber drivers are tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and reliability. P1 shared that "what I do is try to understand my riders, how [they] are feeling, and [their] emotions just by looking at the person or how [they] reply to me." P1 further narrated that "There are sometimes you carry riders, where the only thing they want is for everywhere to be quiet." P1 added that "'they don't want to hear anything, they don't want to hear any noise and [you need] to understand your riders when you are with them." The ability to provide riders with the atmosphere they want during their ride increases customer satisfaction ratings. P1 and P6 identified themselves as five stars drivers.

Conversely, some drivers are concerned when passengers rate them lower than expected. Hanrahan et al. (2019) posited that it is hard for drivers to know what they did to deserve a low rating, and out of frustration, they begin to speculate a variety of reasons. Participants linked some low ratings to the clients' behavior. P3 stated that "from the comfort of their [clients] houses, you pick them up then you take them to their

destinations." Some riders who view their destination adversely may rate the trip negatively based on this emotion. P6 related that "the first thing I [do is] make lively exchange greetings and ensure that they have a very nice drive to their destination." P6 added that "From the first instance you call me and you do not sound nice on the phone, you do not sound polite I'll end the trip." P2 shared that "Some clients always make us angry." Any repressive reaction could result in a lower rating by the client. P4 stated that "There are rude customers and there are complying customers" and as a driver we have to deal with both of these types of clients. P2 shared that if they cancel too many trips it will reduce their rating by 4 points. P3 stated that "If Uber penalizes me in some ways, it affects my rating at the end of the week." Also, P3 added that "if I've not been accepting trips, then I may be placed on a 3 day, 4 day, or 5 day suspension as well."

Most participants develop rider-drivers relations to maintain their five-star rating, create, and establish offline customer engagement. P3 also stated that "on a good day, sometimes you make good money offline because you have made a connection." P1 shared that "if you can give a good service, then you should be able to earn more, but if you can't give good service [you earn less]." P1 added that "the extra advice I would give is to make sure your car is always clean [and] then [develop] customer relation [ships]." P4 shared that they always try to remain affable and prevent disagreements with customers.

One of the participants indicated that they have developed a relationship with some customers and provide them with offline services. P6 related that "riders tend to want to associate with me as a driver" and ask "can I have your [phone] number [for

future trips]? Can I always call you?" P6 added that drivers strive to form relationships with clients in order to generate more offline profit. P6 said that "when I offer five-star service, I'll say "do [you/client] live in this area?" [And with the response] "Yes, I do." [I would inquire further] "Can I always come in the morning to pick you?" P6 stated that these transactions are done outside Uber or Bolt platforms. P6 reiterated that "when every rider enjoys their ride, they'll have good things to say about Uber drivers." And "by so doing, when they take our rides, they tend to book us [offline] for parties or traveling." Table 6 and Figure 5 are the Subtheme 1 output from the NVivo software program using the thematic data analysis of the participants' data.

I used the TCT as the appropriate conceptual framework to understand the strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase drivers' profits and incomes. The five TCT tenets are market opportunism, bounded rational decision making, asset specificity, transaction frequency, and market uncertainty (Williamson, 1981). All the findings align with these tenets. Firstly, Uber drivers experience uncertainty in the Uber market. The tenet of uncertainty relates to the technologies strategy. In the Lagos city area, internet services, which are fundamental to earning a profit, are inefficient, ineffective, and limited. Secondly, Uber drivers practice bounded rationality when they decide which smartphone (i.e., Samsung, Apple, etc.) to use and how to select profitable trips based on surge pricing. Uber drivers select smartphone by considering and making tradeoffs between quality, price, and experience. Uber drivers carefully determine when to reject, accept, and cancel requests from riders to take advantage of surge pricing and increase their profits and income.

Thirdly Uber drivers act opportunistically. The tenet of opportunism relates to the flexible working hours' strategy. Uber drivers schedule their working time to optimize their profits and income selecting when to work offline and online and using multiple applications. Fourthly Uber drivers use assets that are to a large extent specific. The tenet of asset specificity relates to the customer service and relation's strategy. Uber drivers engage tangible assets such as rented cars and provide intangible asset specificities when driving the rented cars. Fifthly, Uber drivers face dynamic and transaction frequency. The tenet of frequency relates to the surge pricing and profitable trip determination because Uber has an incentive structure that rewards higher trips and reduces the commission rate, for instance, from 25% to 8% or 5% after 40 trips.

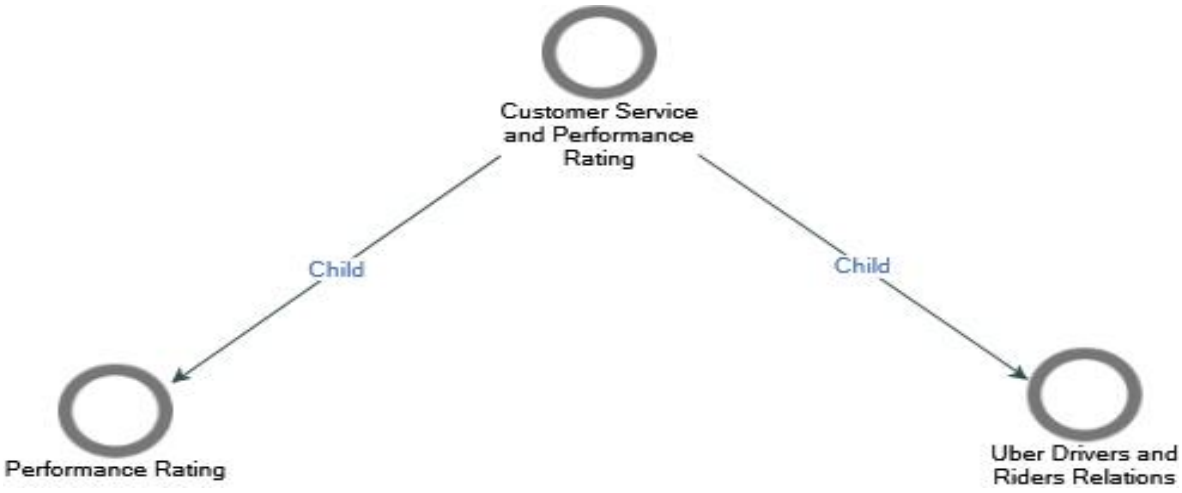
Table 6

References and Coverage per Participant for Subtheme 1: Customer Service and Performance Rating

Participants	References	Coverage
P1	39	13.60%
P2	2	1.48%
P3	14	3.01%
P4	8	3.19%
P5	35	11.01%
P6	23	6.99%

Figure 5

Map of Supporting Subjects for Subtheme 1: Customer Service and Performance Rating



Application to Professional Practice

One of the objectives of every business organization is business sustainability through increased profits and incomes. Gan et al. (2021) stated that taxi drivers working with e-hailing applications such as Uber reformed the taxi industry; the transportation industry, cities, and society as a whole; and changed drivers' strategic fit for increased profits and incomes. Omar et al. (2019) posited that by understanding e-haling drivers' competency, Uber drivers should undertake effective strategies to ensure efficient e-haling services for increased profits and incomes towards sustainable e-hailing business. E-hailing entrepreneurs, especially Uber drivers, could benefit from the result of this study by helping each driver to formulate well-articulated business strategies to sustain their operations and enhance competitive advantage in a business environment. New entrants and experienced Uber drivers may adopt this study's findings as productive business strategies to transform their businesses. This study is an addition to the body of

knowledge and literature concerning the efficient and effective operation of an e-hailing business through the understanding and the applicability of the strategies (a) technologies, (b) surge pricing and profitable trips, (c) flexible working hours, and (d) customer service and relationships.

By developing and implementing these research-based strategies, Uber drivers could identify and target available opportunities inherent in the Uber platform and its transactions to increase profit, income, and improve their families and communities' living standards. Wilhelms et al. (2017) posited that Uber drives' motives include economic interest, quality of life, altruism, and business sustainability. Using or adapting the identified strategies could enable Uber drivers to operate more profitably with increased profits and incomes. Similarly, implementing the strategies could improve the profits and incomes of Uber drivers' business partners and the vehicle (taxi) owners.

Implications for Social Change

Both traditional and ride-hailing taxi drivers, including Uber drivers, taxi owners, and other transport and taxi industry stakeholders, could benefit from the study's findings. First, the study results could contribute to the body of entrepreneurial knowledge to help both current Uber drivers and prospective Uber drivers. The findings could provide positive social change by enabling Uber drivers to achieve long-term sustainable growth, generate employment, reduce poverty, and enhance local communities' economic well-being. Lagos city requires more e-hailing drivers such as Uber drivers and traditional taxi drivers due to the growing population and business activities. Rapid population growth and increasing urbanization in the past decades have

continually demanded travel in big cities worldwide, imposing significant challenges on urban transport systems (Adekola et al., 2016; Diao et al., 2021). Lagos is the commercial capital and an industrial city in Nigeria, with a population of approximately 21 million (Onwuemele, 2018). Inadequate transport supply within the Lagos metropolis poses numerous challenges despite the availability of traditional taxis (Lagos yellow cabs), Uber, Bolt, etc. (Aiyegbajeje, 2019). The business strategies include (a) related technologies, (b) surge and profitable trips, (c) flexible working hours, and (d) customer service and relationships. These strategies could inculcate the desired social change in Lagos city, especially by attracting new Uber drivers and improving experienced Uber drivers' performance to enhance competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

These strategies could help boost investors in the transportation and taxi industry, most notably those who rent cars to Uber drivers. The increased investment opportunities for taxi owners could create employment for potential Uber drivers (Johnny et al., 2018). Uber drivers who use strategies to increase their profits and incomes could increase the attractiveness of working as Uber drivers to unemployed citizens (Makelane & Mathekga, 2017). A profitable business could increase profits and incomes that could help sustain e-hailing and taxicab business owners and their families. An Uber driver partnership could contribute substantially to Lagos city's accessibility and provide a comprehensive service benefiting numerous social groups through an increase in tax revenue.

Recommendation for Action

The purpose of this holistic qualitative multiple case study was to explore business strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes. Investment opportunities exist in the e-hailing market in response to the growing shortage in the transportation and taxi industry in Lagos city. This study provides the strategies Uber drivers need to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes. The business strategies include (a) technologies, (b) surge and profitable trips, (c) flexible working hours, and (d) customer service and relationships. All the strategies are associated with some fundamental supporting element that providers should inculcate in their operational plans. On each of the strategies, I recommend some actions as follows.

Firstly, I recommend that Uber drivers understand and familiarize themselves with the applicable technologies for effective operations. The technological elements include Internet from multiple internet providers such the MTN, GLO, MIFI, etc. Each Internet has a limited area of coverage, and the signal may be weak or strong or could fail; therefore, Uber drivers should maintain two or more SIM cards. An Uber drive must be knowledgeable about using Google maps or the GPS provided on the Uber app or any other application such as Bolt. Also, smartphones required to operate the e-hailing applications such as Uber and Bolt should be at least 4G enabled but with more than 4G capacity, which is expensive. Strategically higher smartphone capacity could enhance internet signals. I recommend that Uber drivers explore the opportunity of accepting other forms of payment such as Crypto-currency. Using multiple SIM cards, internet

options, GPS, Google maps, 4G networks, and alternative currencies, Uber drivers can improve competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes.

Secondly, I recommend that all e-haling drivers such as Uber drivers enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes when considering the strategy of surge pricing and profitable trips. The strategy should focus on the associated elements, including the two incentives; the 40 trips minimum to gain reduced commission from 25% to either 8% or 5%, and the surge pricing that increases the fare multipliers above 1, i.e., 1.2, 1,9, 2.5, etc. Uber drivers could ensure that they strategically attend the 40 trips, run short trips within the first three days of the week with the 25%, and run long trips with lower commission rates. Thus, if the long trips are initiated from surge pricing areas and with a reduced commission, the trip could be highly profitable. Also, double-apping is a strategy that allows Uber drivers to register with other apps such as Bold, and Uber drivers' customer base. Therefore, Uber drivers should strategically estimate the profit margin when rejecting or canceling requests from either of the apps because of the associated ramification of trip cancellation.

Thirdly, I recommend that all e-hailing drivers such as Uber drivers utilize flexible working hours to optimize their monthly, weekly, daily, and hourly schedules to enhance competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes. The supporting elements to consider include work online or offline either on one or both apps in the case of double-apping. Where the two apps are online, a request could come from both apps, and many of them accepted while the other is placed offline. However, both apps could be offline when at rest or on private trips. It is essential the drivers strategically know the

work areas, road networks, traffic and holdups, and environmental challenges with insecurities and criminalities. There are peak-hours, peak-days, and Uber drivers are restricted to working 12 out of a 24 hour periods while Bold has no restricted hours. However, the strategy should create rest hours to prevent unsafe driving and sleeping while driving due to fatigue and ill health.

Fourthly, I recommend that all e-hailing drivers, such as Uber drivers, act professionally and uphold a high standard of customer service and relationships as a strategy to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes. The supporting elements of strategic focus include customer service, ensuring five-star service. Uber penalizes drivers whose average rating is below five-star substantially (4.6). Uber's penalty on drivers includes blocking accounts and suspension from using the app, reducing drivers' profits and incomes. Also, Uber drivers should ensure they comply with the rental and maintenance agreements with renters because any default could lead to the car being withdrawn. The Uber and Uber driver partnership is contractual, and both parties are to keep to the provisions. The Uber drivers' platform provides information to members and considerations for effective decision maneuverability to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and income.

Combinations and optimizations of these strategies, technologies, surge pricing and profitable trips, flexible working hours, and customer service and relationships depend on individual Uber drivers. I recommend education for both new entrants and experienced Uber drivers about these strategies. Uber drivers' performances to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes ultimately affects Uber

earnings from the commission and car renters' earnings from car rentals and car maintenance while the riders enjoy convenient service.

As an independent scholar-practitioner, I will disseminate these research study findings by sharing them with the participants. Melvin et al. (2020) posited that sharing information upon study completion with participants should be done and has value for both participants and researchers. This study will be published formally on ScholarWorks of the Walden University publication to disseminate the research findings. Ross-Hellauer et al. (2020) stated that sharing research study findings goes beyond traditional academic publishing such as scholarly journals, books, or monographs and meetings such as conferences and workshops to achieve more widespread research uptake and understanding. I will use social media, which was the source of recruiting participants, to disseminate these research findings to non-participants. I will traditionally publish this study's findings in a journal and share them in conferences to increase the research's recognition and social impact.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study's findings focused on full-time Uber drivers with a rented car and strategies to enhance competitive advantage for increased profits and incomes as drivers in Lagos city. Further research is needed to explore the strategies of incidental/occasional Uber drivers and part-time users. I recommend researchers to carry out further research, using a qualitative embedded multiple case study combing the three classifications of Uber drivers, incidental, part-timers, and full-timers. This study covers only the city of Lagos, and researchers may want to conduct further studies outside the delimited

geographical areas of this research. I recommend other researchers explore the strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes from diverse geographical locations. In this study, I utilized a qualitative, holistic multiple case study design to derive the strategies. I recommend researchers to carry out further research on Uber drivers' competitive advantage for their profits and incomes employing other research designs and methodologies.

Reflections

I conceived the intention to earn the highest degree in business administration in 1998 after my MBA. Thus, after retiring from Chevron, Nigerian I started the doctoral program with optimism, determination, perseverance, commitment, and determination. The first assignment on the doctoral program was a self-assessment on the doctoral journey using SWOT analysis. I highlighted the need for setting strategies such as time management, funding of the program, and focus on all aspects of the program such as course works, residencies, and the research study. Conscientiously, I have adhered to the strategies, although with some challenges which are deserving sacrifices and have paid off.

The DBA syllabus is comprehensive, intensive, and academically and scholarly challenging. I appreciated the course structures, especial insights into contemporary business challenges, theory and practice of leadership styles, and business strategies and innovation, which are fundamental to the doctoral program. The second phase of the course work and essential business analysis tools include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research methods. These courses provided the required knowledge to

conduct a business assessment to generate transformation strategies at units, department, and corporate levels. Also, to recognize the importance of theories and their taxonomies in a research study and prepare bibliographies of peer-reviewed critical in developing a literature review for research studies. The third phase includes three seminar topics relative to the doctoral program specialized area. The three elected topics related to my specialization courses, global supply chain management (GSCM), include GSCM, IT for competitive advantage, and multicultural management. The seminars are structured to provide the desired presentation skill, focus on the specific business case, and search for relevant peer-reviewed information. Each course has an effective and efficient interaction platform where both instructor and classmates engaged in critical review of the context, content, and alignment of the given rubric and guidelines. I improved my writing, reading, and analytical skills. I appreciate all instructors and classmates I interacted with and their support that aided the successful completion of my course works. The fourth phase is the residencies and this research study. The residencies' critical reflection is the interactions with the diverse Walden University community members, faculty, instructors, supporting staff, students, and alumni.

I appreciate all the participants as they provided in-depth knowledge of their experiences as full-time Uber drivers, although the schedules were challenging because of the active driving engagements. Before data analysis, I purchased the NVivo software and studied the program for easy usage. The four themes, technologies, surge pricing and profitable trips, flexible working hours, and customer service and relation generated from the thematic data analysis reflect the saturated data collected from the participants.

Conclusion

Lagos city is potentially a large market for ridesharing services that may draw traditional taxi drivers and new entrants. The purpose of this holistic qualitative multiple case study was to explore business strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes. The conceptual framework was based on TCT as it affects a triadic marketplace driven by digital technology based on the sharing economy. I collected research data from semistructured interviews with participants and reviewed pertinent financial transactions between Uber, Uber drivers, and car renters. I transcribed the recorded data, engaged in member checking with no significant changes, and performed initial and progressive data analysis using thematic analysis to establish data saturation.

The four themes are the strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for their increased profits and incomes. The themes include: (a) technologies, (b) surge pricing and profitable trips, (c) flexible work hours, and (d) customer service and relation. I recommend actions based on the supporting elements of each strategy. These strategies could help boost investors in the transportation and taxi industry, provide employment in the industry to serve the growing population in Lagos city, and provide a comprehensive service benefiting numerous social groups through an increase in tax revenue.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Specific Business Problem:

The specific business problem is that some Uber drivers lack strategies that enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes.

Research Question/Goal

What strategies do Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes? My goal is that by the end of this research study, determine the strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes and which of the strategies are working or not working.

Participant Criteria

Six Uber drivers operating in Lagos city, Nigeria, will serve the multiple cases' interviewees for the semistructured Interview.

Introduce the Interview

Hi (interviewee). You are welcome, and I appreciate your acceptance to honor my request based on the phone engagements we had. I am aware that the time you will spend with me is a time off from the busy schedule of your Uber partnership business. Like I stated on the phone when we scheduled this meeting, I am Richard Hart. I am a retiree from Chevron Nigerian Limited (CNL) and currently a doctoral scholar at Walden University and am working my doctoral dissertation research using a qualitative research approach. The business area I have chosen for the study is the business of Uber driver partnership in Lagos city. My goal is that by the end of this research study, determine the

strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes and which of the strategies are working or not working.

Main Interview that requires: watching for nonverbal cues, asking follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth data. And remember that qualitative researchers need deep and rich data, and to note that a one-sentence short answer to the interview question may provide partial data at best. The advice is probe, probe, and probe.

Interview Questions

1. What strategies did you use to enhance competitive advantage and increase profit and income?
2. How, has Lagos as an urban city location affected the strategies you used to enhance competitive advantage and increase your profit and income?
3. What key internal and external challenges did you experience in implementing the strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase your profit and income?
4. How did you overcome the key internal and external challenges?
5. How did you measure the success of the strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase profit and income?
6. What future opportunities do you foresee in your current location that will add to your strategies to enhance competitive advantage and increase your profit and income?
7. How do you intend to utilize the future opportunities?
8. What additional information can you share about the strategies Uber drivers could use to enhance competitive advantage to increase their profit and income?

Wrap up interview thanking participant

You have done great. Those are the questions I have for you. Do you have any further comments you wish to make on the topic of Uber partnership? Thanks, I appreciate you so much for your time. Your input is insightful and has been very helpful to my dissertation research study.

Schedule follow-up member checking Interview

I wish you all the best in your Uber partnership business and future endeavors. Would you like me to contact you after I complete this research study? I would be more than willing to share the results of this study with you upon completion. I will finish this research study on August 30th, 2021, and can reach out to you again at that time.

Appendix B: Process to Interview Protocol Refinement

All participants, Uber drivers will be interviewed separately and scheduled at the convenience and agreement of each participant. I will not conduct a group interview. I will adopt the process to interview protocol refinement as posited by Castillo-Montoya in 2016.

1. Ensure interview questions align with research question.
2. Construct an inquiry-based conversation during the interview and seek for additional participants to achieve code(s), theme(s), or induced thematic saturation.
3. Receive feedback on the interview protocol from the institution review board (IRB).
4. Pilot the interview protocol throughout the research period.

Appendix C: Invitation Letter

Date: [Insert Date]

Subject: Request to Participate in a Research Study

Dear [Recipient],

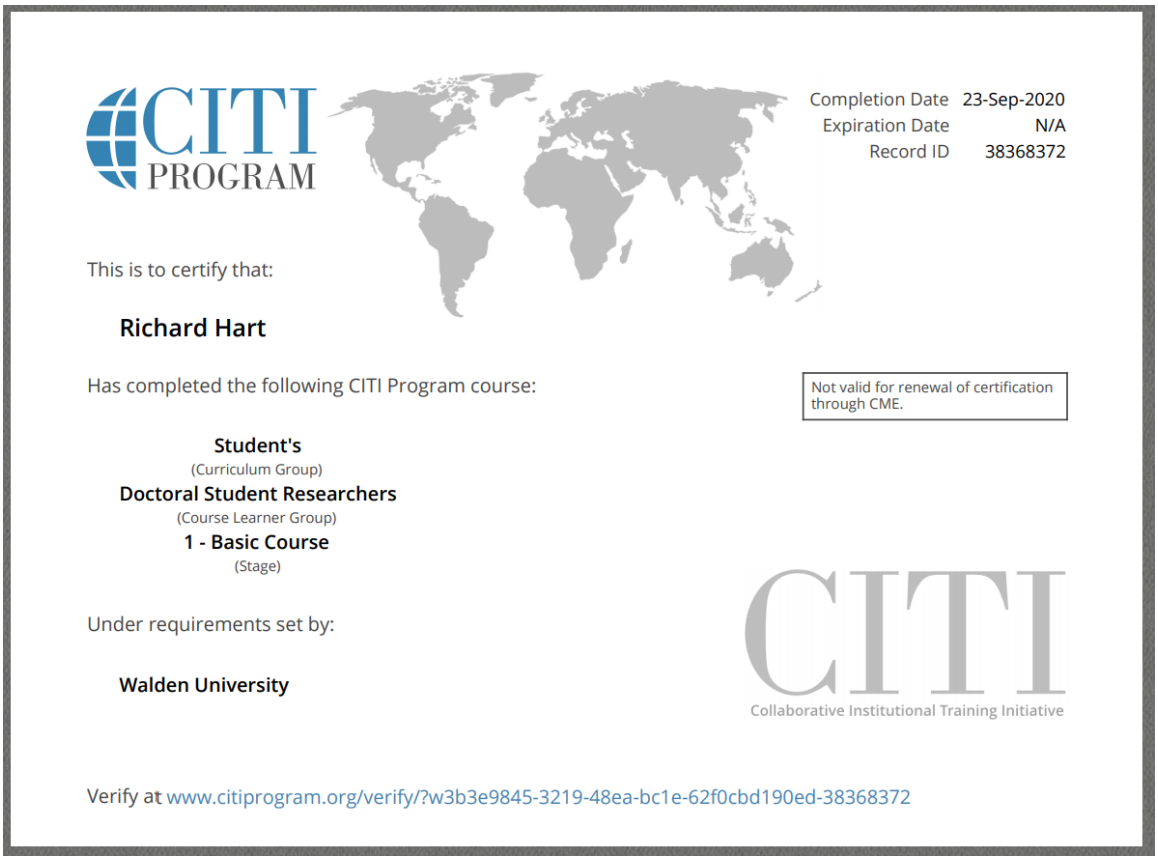
My name is Richard Hart. I am a retiree from Chevron Nigerian Limited (CNL) and currently a doctoral scholar at Walden University and am working my doctoral dissertation research using a qualitative research approach. The business area I have chosen for the study is the business of Uber driver partnerships and operations in Lagos city through at least 6 Uber drivers' experiences.

I would be grateful if you accept my invitation to participate in the research study. Your participation will be in the form of semistructured interviews, which will last for approximately 45-60 minutes. The process for your participation will be consistent with Walden University's confidentiality guidelines. My goal is that by the end of this research study, determine the strategies Uber drivers use to enhance competitive advantage for increasing their profits and incomes and which of the strategies are working or not working. If you are willing to participate, I will send you a consent form through my email: hartra@ymail.com with details of your rights, process, and the purpose of the doctoral research. Please note, our participation is voluntary, and you have the right to decline to continue at any point, even during the interview. I will give you five days' advance notice when the interview will be conducted, including time and venue. However, the final schedule will depend on your convenience. I appreciate in advance your favorable response to my request and participation in this research study.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Hart.

Appendix D: Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Certificate of Completion



CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 23-Sep-2020
Expiration Date N/A
Record ID 38368372

This is to certify that:

Richard Hart

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Student's
(Curriculum Group)
Doctoral Student Researchers
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Walden University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w3b3e9845-3219-48ea-bc1e-62f0cbd190ed-38368372