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Leadership Strategies to Improve Business Performance in the Information Technology Industry

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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MS, University of Liverpool, 2014

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Ineffective leadership adversely affects performance at both the organizational and individual levels. Information technology (IT) leaders are concerned about ineffective leadership because it can result in the deterioration of employee morale, an increase in employee turnover, and decreased profitability. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore leadership strategies managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. The six participants were senior and mid-level managers of two IT firms in Beirut, Lebanon who had at least 5 years of experience managing their organization's leadership strategies. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and public documents. Through thematic analysis, four themes emerged: (a) emotional intelligence (EI), (b) facilitators to implementing successful leadership strategies, (c) measuring the effectiveness of leadership practices, and (d) barriers and challenges. A key recommendation is that IT leaders promote employee EI training to improve communication, management, problem solving, and relationships in the workplace. The implications for positive social change include the potential for managers to retain employees and improve job satisfaction. The successful retention of employees in any business environment could increase wealth creation and enhance the community's economic health.

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Dedication

I thank God for giving me the ability to complete the doctoral study. I dedicate this study to my beautiful daughter, Victoria Sofia Faria Turay, as well as my supportive wife, Lady Ana Maria Faria Alves, my brothers and sisters, Robert Turay, Marty Turay, Abu Turay, Eila Turay, and all who supported me throughout this educational process. My deceased parents, Abu Edward Turay and Janet Turay, consistently shared their passion for education and learning with me from an early age. Without the presence and support of my family, there is no way I could have achieved this major milestone. I thank you and will forever be grateful for your patience, love, encouragement, and support.

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I want to acknowledge the support of people who contributed to this study's success. My first acknowledgment goes to my committee chair, Dr. Jill Murray, for her unique guidance, encouragement, expertise, and prompt responses to my reviews. My second acknowledgment goes to the second committee member, Dr. Cheryl Lentz, whose depth in the subject area provided good guidance on concept and rubric compliance. These committee members' contributions enabled me to achieve the highest academic standards at Walden University. My third acknowledgment goes to UNIFIL IMTC and New Horizons Lebanon for their support throughout this doctoral journey. Finally, I acknowledge my family for the encouragement and support I received to make this journey a success.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Ineffective leadership in the information technology (IT) industry could result in immense problems in the workplace, such as a decline and deterioration in employee morale, failure in performance, and an increase in turnover (Verma & Kesari, 2020). Due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, IT leaders faced many challenges while improving business performance due to a predominant shift to a virtual workforce (Brynjolfsson et al.,2020). Since 2020, 50% of U.S. employees moved to the virtual workforce (Sull et al., 2020). According to Hill and Bartol (2018), the key leadership strategies to support face-to-face employees and virtual workers that could improve business performance were (a) frequent communication, (b) emotional and social support, (c) employee engagement, (d) adequate technology, and (e) assistance in maintaining the work–life balance for employees. The intention of the current study was to bridge the gap between effective and ineffective leadership so IT managers can understand the relevance of leadership strategies.

Background of the Problem

Unsuccessful leadership strategies in the IT industry often result in the failure of projects and a decline in business performance because IT managers do not consider the motivational needs of their employees (Mitchell et al., 2020). Due to these adverse effects, managers are responsible for understanding the causes of bad leadership practices and developing and implementing strategies to improve organizational business performance (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Employees often are not self-actualizing and depend on extrinsic motivation (e.g., incentives) to perform at a high level in the

workplace. Managers can improve employee morale by providing extrinsic motivation that could encourage face-to-face and remote workers to become intrinsically motivated and act as self-actualized employees (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The findings of the current study may provide IT managers with a deeper understanding of leadership strategies that they might use to successfully implement change initiatives within their organization.

Problem Statement

Ineffective leadership strategies of managers in the IT industry could lead to a decline in employee morale and commitment (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). The challenge of ineffective leadership strategies is especially apparent in the IT industry, where 70% of employees will leave the workplace by 2025 because of managers' insufficient leadership strategies and emotional intelligence (EI) levels (Miao et al., 2020). The general business problem was that IT managers' inability to adapt to new leadership practices may reduce productivity and prevent employees from reaching organizational goals. The specific business problem was that some IT managers lack effective leadership strategies for improved business performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore effective leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. The target population consisted of senior- and mid-level managers of an IT firm in Beirut, Lebanon with successful experience in strategies to improve business performance. The implications for positive social change include the potential for managers to improve leadership strategies to retain employees and improve job

satisfaction. The successful retention of employees in any business environment could increase wealth creation and enhance the community's economic health.

Nature of the Study

The research method for this study was qualitative. Qualitative designs include ethnographic, narrative, phenomenological, and case study (M. N. K. Saunders et al., 2019). According to Yin (2018), qualitative researchers explore, describe, and interpret how and why phenomena have occurred or are occurring based on individual perspectives. Because the goal of the current study was to explore social and cultural phenomena to determine potential areas of improvement, qualitative methodology was appropriate. Quantitative researchers use numerical data to test hypotheses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The quantitative method was inappropriate for the current study because the goal was not to gather numerical data to test a hypothesis. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a deeper and broader understanding of a phenomenon is referred to as a mixed-methods approach (Yin, 2018). The mixed-methods approach was not appropriate for the current study because the goal was not to gain a deeper and broader understanding of a phenomenon by combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

A case study design was appropriate because my aim was to gain insight into a complex phenomenon using multiple data sources and collection techniques. A researcher studies complex contemporary phenomena in a case study using multiple data sources and collection techniques (Yin, 2018). Because my aim was to gain insight into a complex phenomenon using multiple data sources and collection techniques, a case study

design was appropriate. A multiple case study design was not appropriate because I was not going to develop theories by analyzing and comparing similarities and differences among cases. An ethnographic researcher uses observational and interview data to explore participants' cultures in real-life scenarios while immersing in the culture (Yin, 2017). The ethnographic design was not appropriate for the current study because there was no engagement in participants' culture or studying their everyday behavior. In phenomenological studies, the researcher focuses on understanding the participants' lived experiences with a phenomenon (Mihas, 2019). Because the focus of the current study was not on lived personal experiences regarding a phenomenon, the phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study.

Research Question

What effective leadership strategies do managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance?

Interview Questions

1. What effective leadership strategies did you use to improve business performance?

2. How did you involve the employees in developing and implementing emotional intelligence strategies?

3. What strategy did you find worked best to increase EI in employees?

4. How did you measure the effectiveness of your leadership strategies to improve business performance?

5. What key barriers did you face implementing leadership strategies to improve business performance?

6. How did you overcome the key barriers?

7. What additional information would you like to share regarding your leadership strategies to improve business performance?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory (two-factor theory; Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg's research on the two-factor theory, developed in 1959, conceptualized job satisfaction and motivation as encompassing two dimensions (Herzberg et al., 1959). The basic principle of Herzberg's two-factor theory is that internal motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, promotion, and advancement lead an employee to job satisfaction. In contrast, external hygiene factors such as organization policy, supervision, relationship with managers, work conditions, salary, and relationship with peers lead an employee to job dissatisfaction. Herzberg described motivation factors as intrinsic to the job and hygiene factors as extrinsic to the job. The two-factor theory's main concepts are motivation factors operate only to increase job satisfaction, whereas hygiene factors reduce job dissatisfaction (Bundtzen, 2021).

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) theory shows that motivation factors operate to increase and improve job satisfaction, whereas hygiene factors work to reduce job dissatisfaction. Managers could motivate their workforce by focusing on the nature of the jobs that IT professionals undertake and train supervisors to provide an empowering environment. To

understand motivation and job satisfaction in the IT industry, I explored motivation and

hygiene factors as the two-factor theory's main concepts. Within the context of leadership

strategies, managers could use this theory to understand organizational climate by

developing policies that have enough flexibility to suit the needs of their employees and

clients, while providing a sense of recognition, challenge, and achievement within their

roles.

Operational Definitions

Business performance: Business performance occurs when leaders of any

organization meet the objectives realized from the perspective of how the organization

creates value and disseminates that value to its customers in an optimal manner (Garg et

al., 2020).

Effective leader: An effective leader attracts and retains top talent by creating an

environment in which staff members are engaged and proud of their work and

successfully navigate challenges to move the organization forward (Sonmez & Adiguzel,

2020).

Emotional intelligence (EI): EI is a set of skills that contribute to the expression of

emotion in oneself and others, the effective regulation of emotion in oneself and others,

and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life (Pertegal-Felices et al.,

2017).

Ineffective leadership: Ineffective leadership is a set of negative characteristics

and inadequate leadership capacities that can lead to subpar results in terms of efficiency,

effectiveness, and ethics (Aboyassin & Abood, 2013).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept that refers to a pleasurable emotional feeling from the appraisal of the work or job experience (Bernarto et al., 2020).

Leadership strategies: Leadership strategies are ways leaders use their position to cultivate change and achieve organizational goals (Tegor, 2017).

Transformational leadership: Transformational leadership is a leadership style whereby leaders work with, motivate, and encourage subordinates through challenging tasks that maximize their subordinates' capability and capacity (Gilbert & Kelloway, 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The current study focused on employees in an IT division of a global internet firm in the Beirut, Lebanon. The sample population consisted of three senior-level and three mid-level managers. I selected senior- and mid-level managers to provide different views on leadership strategies to improve the IT industry's business performance.

Assumptions

Assumptions are ideas, concepts, or thoughts a researcher makes relative to a study to ensure that the study is completed promptly within an acceptable budget and that the research question is adequately answered (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The first assumption associated with the current study was that a minimum of three senior-level and three mid-level managers would be willing and available to share their experiences and opinions on IT leadership strategies and business performance. The second assumption was that the sampled population would be qualified to provide relevant

information necessary to add insight into leadership strategies managers might use to improve business performance. The third assumption was that the research participants would provide clear and accurate responses that were truthful.

Limitations

Identifying and explaining limitations in research serves two primary purposes. First, it is essential to identify limitations pertaining to research to explain weaknesses in the study that may impact the results (Price & Murnan, 2004). Second, the challenges researchers face in maintaining and assessing rigor in qualitative research provide an opportunity for future research (Greener, 2018). The first limitation of the current study was the small sample size; the sample was too small to generalize the findings beyond two IT firms (see Franco & Matos, 2015). The second limitation was the choice of the data collection method. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of the study, I conducted online personal interviews through Zoom instead of face-to-face interviews to ensure the participants' and my safety.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the intentional limitations of a study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Delimitations are the boundaries the researchers set to limit their work so that the study's aims, and objectives do not become impossible to achieve (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The first delimitation in the current study was the target population. I conducted semistructured interviews with three senior-level and three mid-level managers employed by two IT firms in Beirut, Lebanon to explore their perceptions and experiences intense detail. The second delimitation was the geographical location of the

IT firm (Beirut, Lebanon), which is a hub for IT technology businesses. The existing literature indicated a lack of leadership strategies in the IT industry to improve business performance. Focusing on this area may lead to a generalization of leadership strategies in IT firms located in other regions (Aasi et al., 2017). The third delimitation was the industry. Considering two IT firms for the study was a delimitation.

Significance of the Study

Effective leadership involves the fundamentals of trust, consistency, building positive relationships, and having a depth of experience (Franklin & Marshall, 2019). Managers could use the findings of the current study to increase their understanding of effective leadership strategies, business performance, and organizational goals. The study results may yield practical leadership strategies for managers to enhance employee job satisfaction and motivation. The value to business and society of this study is that it may provide IT managers with insights into leadership strategies grounded in EI competencies. By using an emotionally intelligent approach in business, leaders may see the world through the lens of those around them and better address situations.

Contribution to Business Practice

The aim of this study was to explore the leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. The study results may contribute to business practice by providing managers with an awareness of leadership strategies to motivate employees to excel and improve business performance. Leaders could use the study's findings in the IT industry to gain new perspectives on developing strategies that may improve business performance, profitability, growth, and competitive advantage.

Implications for Social Change

Good leaders are the key to shaping communities and organizations for innovation (Bărbînta & Mureșan, 2017). The implications for positive social change include the potential for leaders to improve leadership strategies, retain employees, and improve job satisfaction. The successful retention of employees in any business environment could increase wealth creation and enhance the community's economic health.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The professional and academic literature review included various sources to explore leadership strategies for improving business performance. To find relevant articles to conduct the literature review, I used the Walden University Library to access ABI/Inform Complete, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Emerald Management Journals, SAGE, and Google Scholar. In this study, I located peer-reviewed articles, seminal books, business-focused textbooks, and government reports using the following search terms: *benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace*, *current findings in emotional intelligence*, *effective leadership*, *emotional intelligence*, *emotional intelligence* and *team performance*, *emotional intelligence theory*, *employee motivation*, *Herzberg's two-factor motivational theory*, *ineffective leadership*, *leadership development*, *leadership strategies*, *leadership style*, *talent acquisition*, *talent management*, and *comparative theories*. This study's findings could help managers in the IT industry gain new perspectives on developing strategies that may improve business performance, profitability, growth, and competitive advantage. In this study, a total of 180

references were cited, of which 85% were peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2017 and 2022. The literature review encompassed recent research meeting Walden University's guideline of 85% current sources and 15% older sources related to key variables and constructs of interest.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivational Theory

In this qualitative case study, I explored and described strategies that managers used to improve business performance in the IT industry. The conceptual framework for this study was based on Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivation-hygiene theory, which is also known as Herzberg's two-factor theory. The two-factor theory guides managers to ensure the sufficiency of hygiene factors to avoid employee dissatisfaction, thereby concentrating on the nature of work to ensure that it is motivating and rewarding enough to enhance the business performance of IT leaders. The two-factor motivational theory holds that workplace factors promote job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction.

In 1959, Herzberg et al. published the two-factor model of work motivation and developed the motivation-hygiene theory. The motivation-hygiene theory developed by Herzberg et al. had an influential impact on the scientific and practical notion where the difference between motivation factors and hygiene factors constituted the main concepts. Over time, Herzberg et al. revealed that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction developed from two different sets of factors, identified as hygiene and motivation factors. The first factor pertained to hygiene, which Herzberg et al. defined as essential workplace components that are not intrinsically motivating to stimulate the employee to perform at a higher level but are necessary to create a healthy attitude toward work. Hygiene factors

included salary, benefits, working conditions, policies, the quality of supervision, and interpersonal relations with colleagues (Bundtzen, 2021). Hygiene factors are considered less critical to job satisfaction than motivation factors, , which included the intrinsic rewards of the work itself and the delights of additional responsibilities. Motivation factors could contribute a great deal to the level of job satisfaction and employee experiences at work.

To explain this theory, Herzberg et al. (1959) identified a variety of workplace settings with different types of motivational orientations. The ideal setting was one with high levels of hygiene and motivation in which employees could perform at their maximum capacity, and the other setting had high levels of hygiene but low motivation where the pay and working conditions were adequate but there was little effort to make employees feel engaged in their work (Herzberg et al., 1959). Employees may seem complacent in the second situation, even though it might not be unpleasant. In contrast, workplaces with low hygiene and high motivation are typical in health care or small start-ups. Employees may find the work exciting but may labor under poor working conditions and inadequate pay relative to the effort they expend. According to Syptak et al. (1999), a motivator creates satisfaction by fulfilling individuals' needs for meaning and personal growth. Herzberg et al. argued that employees may not be expected to endure intolerable conditions and be motivated by statements made by the organization about its higher vision. Instead, an ideal motivational environment would encompass both factors (high levels of hygiene and motivation and low hygiene and high motivation).

The central notion of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) theory was the difference between motivation factors and hygiene factors. Alshmemri et al. (2017) supported the idea that motivation factors were significant and could lead to job satisfaction due to the individual's need for self-growth and self-actualization. Dion (2006) stressed that Herzberg's theory was widely used to identify and describe the experience or phenomenon of job satisfaction. Herzberg (1966) and Herzberg et al. (1959) highlighted the need for self-development as an essential part of attaining an organization's long-term business objectives.

Parsons and Broadbridge (2006) criticized the two-factor theory by stressing the concept of work motivation, which did not include an explanation of the individual differences of needs and value and, in some cases, was insufficiently situational in context. Herzberg's theory proved to be useful in its simplicity as a conceptual model as researchers continued to use the approach to determine and identify the level of job satisfaction in various international settings. According to Wang et al. (2017), job satisfaction could influence motivation, staff performance, and retention, which in turn affect the successful implementation of health system reform.

Alrawahi et al. (2020) extended the works of Herzberg et al. (1959) by conducting a mixed-methods study of the two-factor motivational theory in clinical labs in hospitals in Oman. Through focus groups, Alrawahi et al. found out that the dissatisfaction factors included lack of health and safety protocols, heavy workload, poor salary, lack of opportunity for promotion, poor recognition, and poor organizational policies. The impact on employee satisfaction included positive relationships with coworkers and leaders and

opportunities for professional development. The absence of hygiene factors was the cause of dwindling motivation, while motivation produced satisfaction in the workers. Herzberg's theory as a conceptual framework was a frequently used strategy in the nursing field. In the health care field, there has been inadequate job satisfaction caused by poor working conditions, low income, and limited opportunities for career development (Hotchkiss et al., 2015).

Kacel et al. (2005) employed Herzberg et al.'s (1959) theory in their conclusion mentioning that both hygiene and motivation factors contributed to job satisfaction. Improving hygiene factors, especially salaries and compensation, improved job satisfaction, while Russell and Van Gelder's (2008) study on job design and job satisfaction using Herzberg's theory of motivation found that motivation factors, including achievement, recognition, the work itself, and responsibility and advancement, led to job satisfaction. Promoting feelings of fulfillment through promotions, recognition, salaries, and the achievement of goals was key to job satisfaction (Ausloos & Pe kalski, 2007).

Alshmemri et al.'s (2017) findings on job satisfaction supported Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivation-hygiene theory and asserted that the hygiene factors were less important to job satisfaction; on the other hand, the motivation factors were essential and led to job satisfaction. The influence of EI in determining performance and the mechanisms underlying this relationship among group members in large projects connected motivation and EI. Khosravi et al. (2020) showed a connection between motivation and EI and EI was beneficial as a preventive strategy. Organization leaders

could use EI in any work environment to manage negative influences throughout large projects where tensions and frustrations could set in over time. Different combinations of motivation and hygiene factors might lead to situations in which workers exhibit a high level of performance and are free of complaints that lead to dissatisfaction (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017). In conclusion, there is a mechanism derived from the two-factor theory for evaluating satisfaction levels and clarifying how positive or negative employee outcomes occur.

Hygiene Factors

According to Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor motivational theory, hygiene factors caused workers to work less hard if they were not present. In contrast, motivational factors caused workers to work harder if they were present. Hygiene factors were vital to ensure that employees were working to meet expectations. Hygiene factors were the necessary conditions or the essential foundational elements that every workplace needed to keep employees engaged and happy (Holmberg et al., 2018). Hygiene factors were essential and required to meet employees' expectations and prevent them from having feelings of job dissatisfaction (Chiat & Panatik, 2019). Hygiene factors were described as the factors related to the environment in which the job is performed. The hygiene factors included the organization's policy, the quality of the supervision by the company, the working environment and condition, the employees' relationship with the owner, salary paid, and the employee's relationship with their peers. Hygiene factors may seem like minor and subordinate factors to be satisfied by the employees to increase their job satisfaction (Nanayakkara & Dayarathna, 2016). The

factors were highly fragile; once the factors were fulfilled and not present as the expectation by the employees, hygiene factors like the working environment and condition of the employees caused the level of the job dissatisfaction to increase and forced the workers and employees to give up on their jobs. Many organizations frequently use motivation and hygiene factors to overcome the problem of turnover of the employees and in turn maximizes the employee retention rate.

Motivational Factors

Motivational factors were different; employees were encouraged to apply themselves even more and work harder to achieve objectives (Thant & Chang, 2021). Not every organizational workforce could provide its employees with hygiene factors and motivational factors, which is why performance lagged in some workplaces and exceeded expectations in others (Hur, 2018). Thant and Chang (2021) researched the factors that led to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in a government office in Myanmar and established that hygiene factors and motivational factors were vital to maintaining workers' job satisfaction.

The connection between Herzberg et al.'s (1959) and Thant and Chang (2021) corresponds with Baek et al. (2019), who concluded that when the organizational needs of the employees were met, employees were more likely to be interested in meeting the needs of the organization, creating the perception of a symbiotic give-and-take relationship that compels the employee to engage and work hard. Herzberg et al. (1959) explained this phenomenon through the two-factor theory, highlighting the categories of hygiene and motivation factors as the best way to frame and understand the issues

shaping why employees work hard and why some do not.

Comparative Theories

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory validated how to motivate employees to maximize performance in a digitalized world. Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity were identified as factors that shape the workplace environment and alter the leader's perspective on employees (Bundtzen, 2021). Consequently, it may not be enough to consider hygiene and motivation factors, as Herzberg et al. suggested, but rather a leader might consider the impact of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in a workplace environment, all of which might impact managers and employees. Management theories such as Scrum and Lean could help mediate these additional factors and enhance the Herzberg approach. Herzberg et al. (1959) tested the theory of effectiveness in a contemporary workplace, using the theory of personal construct, which stated that the differences between people result from the different ways used to predict and interpret events worldwide. Herzberg et al.'s findings showed that intrinsic passion for the job and efficient working conditions were significant factors in stimulating motivation. Leaders who support motivation and provide emotional support to their workers are less likely to demotivate their employees (Vito & Sethi, 2020). Leaders who engage in communication to enhance leader–worker relationships while providing efficient workplace environments to create a feel that they can do their jobs effectively develop a sense of high morale (Li, Y et al., 2022). Other factors included allowing workers to demonstrate creativity and applying a democratic leadership style when the situation allows. Providing opportunities for development could also help. When these

conditions are met, enhancing business performance with the right leadership strategy may lead to organizational success regardless of the challenges.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

There was a contrast between Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory and Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory. According to Vroom, motivation was a factor that caused individuals to behave according to the creation of different outcomes, and the individual must value the result. Vroom's research was founded on the belief that effort increases performance based on perceived positive rewards.

Parijat and Bagga (2014) expressed that Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory examined effort, performance, and outcomes. Expectancy theory was based on an individual's belief that initiating a specific effort will result in the desired performance while receiving a perceived award. To meet the employee's perception and expectation of their results, leaders have the responsibility to know what motivates employees in the workplace (Lunenburg, 2011).

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory consists of three variables: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. According to Vroom, expectancy is an employee's anticipation of a reward in return for their performance efforts. Vroom affirmed that individuals have different sets of objectives and are inspired if they believe (a) their performance will result in a positive reward, (b) a positive relationship exists between effort and performance, and (c) the reward would satisfy a critical need. Vroom further established that motivation is based on a combination of instrumentality and valence.

Leaders may use Vroom's (1964) theory of motivation to increase job satisfaction

for employees. Instrumentality was the belief by employees that organizations offer

rewards for performance, where transparency is necessary (Vroom, 1964). Valence was

defined as how suitable the reward is to the individual after the endeavor, to the

perceptions of the reward (Vroom, 1964). Through HR practices, leaders could use the

expectancy theory to influence motivation by understanding the link between effort,

performance, and employee motivation (Vroom, 1964). Herzberg et al. (1959) focused on

motivators and hygiene factors, while Vroom (1964) based his research on three

variables: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. The expectancy theory was an

opposing theory to the two-factor theory due to the various variables used in each

approach. Vroom's view of instrumentality differentiated the two contrasting ideas as

employee perceptions were not a factor in the two-factor theory.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Not everyone is motivated by the same things and as time goes by motivation

could change. Researchers have consistently used the Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of

needs theory, Scrum and Lean Management theories to show what motivates people and

when that motivation would occur. In this section, provided was an overview of each of

these theories. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory indicated that people are motivated to

achieve specific needs (as cited in Guss et al., 2017; Maslow, 1943).

Maslow's (1943,1954) hierarchy of needs affirmed that every individual has five

basic needs that motivate them throughout their lifetime. Maslow's hierarchy takes the

form of a pyramid, where the primary motivators are lower in the pyramid. The higher

needs could only become motivating forces when the lower needs are all met in the

pyramid. The five-stage model included physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love need, esteem needs, and self-actualization (Güss et al., 2017). Physiological needs included, people performed better when they have those who can support them (Anderson et al., 2017).

Safety needs refered to individuals concerned with the leadership's ability to provide them with adequate security and guarantee their safety (Reisel, 2016). People need safe and stable environments. Basic need included individuals who require their basic needs to be met to survive effectively, and the physiological needs of the person always overruled all the other needs (Jiang et al., 2017). Esteem needs referred to an individual's feeling of accomplishment. It made people feel that they could achieve more based on their belief in their ability to perform (Anderson et al., 2017). Self-actualization needs according to Rouse, (2004) referered to the process of satisfying one's potential. This required doing something creative, reorganizing oneself, and creating another higher-level homeostatic state. A good number of basic needs beginning with physiological needs and safety needs were found at the bottom of the pyramid followed by the psychological needs of belongingness and love, and then esteem. An individual might reach the self-fulfillment stage of self-actualization once these four groups of needs have been met; at which time a person can be motivated to achieve one's full potential.

Motivation was a critical aspect of the relationship between leadership and employee performance, and the correlation between the two may be demonstrated using Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory (as cited in Ștefan et al., 2020). At this point, when all lower needs are met, the person can reach self-actualization, where they

motivate themselves intrinsically. Leaders could help their employees become self-actualized by engaging employees' lower-level needs, especially the levels of love and esteem, which leaders often ignore (Velmurugan & Sankar, 2017). The reality is that people like to feel valued by others, and they like to feel appreciated and loved by their leaders. That gesture motivates them to want to do a good job, as Ștefan et al. (2020) has shown. That is why Maslow's hierarchy of needs still applies in 2023 and is why leaders can apply the theory to help motivate their workers and improve performance overall.

Scrum Management Theory

Scrum is the method of leadership that managers in today's business environment use. A Scrum is an approach that fosters an environment of shared leadership, were the dedicated Scrum Master is a leading enabler who adheres to empowering a team to work agilely and share leadership with others (Spiegler et al., 2021). Scrum was associated with identifying short-term goals and focusing on how well everyone is doing to achieve those goals. Scrum was also associated with a goal-driven approach to leadership that relies heavily on constant communication flow, trust, and the notion of shared leadership. The Scrum master is not there to stand over anyone's shoulder; instead, the scrum master organizes the meeting of minds and ensures employees are accountable for their actions.

The theory of Scrum is that individuals are forced to self-actualize and significantly reinforce through constant awareness of the organization's needs. Scrum master was essentially an inversion of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy in the sense that rather than focusing on the needs of the individual, the Scrum Master focuses on the needs of the job (Spiegler et al., 2021). A leadership enabler transforms followers into leaders

while the team matures, and the Scrum Master does not aim at a specific quantity or quality of output (Bäcklander, 2019). Scrum Master is a leading enabler who follows the goal to empower a team to work in an agile way and share leadership.

Lean Management Theory

Lean management theory was another leadership approach that focused on optimizing resources to enhance customer value by eliminating waste in the production process, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement, and demonstrating respect for people so teamwork and growth are natural outcomes in the workplace (Miao et al., 2019). The ideas underpinning lean management were no different from the ideas underpinning Maslow's (1943) needs hierarchy or Scrum. Lean management theory help organizations decrease their expenses by eliminating waste, improving qualities, and increasing customer satisfaction (Moayed & Shell, 2009). Scum master focuses on the effectiveness of the scrum team and creates good communication between the different stakeholders for the delivery of a successful product.

Lean management is like combining the two approaches, inverted from one other. The lean theory focused on teamwork, just as Scrum theory. The main idea was to serve the customer (i.e., the task), but it also focuses on respect for people, which underscored Maslow's (1943) theory. This combination of respect for others and constant improvement satisfies the customer by creating customer value by eradicating wasteful practices. The production process served as the lean management theory approach that entrepreneurs turn to because of its hybrid nature that satisfies both employees and customers (Moayed & Shell, 2009).

Employee Motivation

Employee motivation was undoubtedly an essential topic in the literature on leadership strategies to improve the IT industry's business performance. One key area that Khan et al. (2020) identified as vital to motivation was communication. Khan et al.'s findings on communication in the oil industry indicated a positive correlation between communication effectiveness and employee motivation. Communication which implicitly figures into the findings of Khosravi et al. and Alrawahi et al. (2020), suggesting that there was some overlapping correlation between communication, relationships, and emotional intelligence enhancing performance among workers.

Khosravi et al. (2020) and Alrawahi et al. (2020), findings suggested that EI was a way to engage with workers and to provide them with emotional support to reduce the risk of negative emotions from causing setbacks and delays in the project. EI in managers as a means of engaging employees aligned with Khan et al. (2020) research, as shown. Khosravi et al. and Alrawahi et al., findings demonstrated how meaningful relationships between leaders and workers are in the workplace and how these relationships contributed to and positively fostered employee motivation.

The effect of transformational leadership (TL) in stimulating employee creativity (EC) led to organizational innovation (OI), were the transformational leader could assess the moderating role of Intrinsic Motivation (IM) between TL and EC. The study by Shafi et al. (2020) confirmed that employee motivation indicated the advancement of leadership strategies like stimulating creativity. Contrast to the findings by Alrawahi et al. (2020) and Khosravi et al. (2020) show that giving employees room to develop their

ideas created the necessary intrinsic motivation to see projects through to completion. EI and motivation were a crucial factor in promoting and encouraging employee creativity, and leaders should pay more attention to it.

Effective Leadership, Ineffective Leadership, and Job Satisfaction

In every organization, company, life experience, there is leadership. To cultivate healthy working environments and communities, effective leadership is vital. Effective leadership in management inspires positive behaviors in their employees, like organizational citizenship behaviors, job satisfaction, and employee organizational commitment (Cummings et al., 2018). Effective leadership was linked with employee job satisfaction, while ineffective leadership was associated with employees' job dissatisfaction (Baek et al., 2019). When leaders are authentic, they are seen as influential leaders who engage with workers, build trust, and help to create relationships in which everyone feels happy (Alilyani et al., 2018). Authentic leaders highlight their members' strengths, create an open atmosphere that encourages sharing opinions and information for decision-making, and promote positive development and outcomes (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Laschinger et al., 2013). If a leader does not demonstrate authentic, and transparent behavior, employees may feel detached from the leader, and their satisfaction with their job is diminished.

Ineffective leadership caused employees to feel unhappy with their roles and performance. The leader comes across to the employees as someone who does not care about them, who does not value them, who does not care about the work as a result, and then fosters an environment in which there is no real incentive to perform. Because there

is no incentive to perform, workers feel unsatisfied with their jobs and look for opportunities elsewhere (Maslow, 1943). In the end, it is all in accordance with the idea that workers want to feel that their work and effort matters and is being appreciated by a leader (Stefan et al., 2020). A discussion of ineffective leadership should not lead one to believe that ineffective leaders cannot be changed.

Managers who encourage employees to talk about their concerns or consider their opinions for critical decision-making at work effectively promote their organizational commitment (Gardner et al., 2005). Organizational managers with authentic leadership could make a fundamental difference in the workplace by helping employees find meaning and connection at work through greater self-awareness. Workers who are satisfied with their tasks, their work environments, and the way their organizations treats them are likely to feel a deeper connection to their organizations and accordingly increase their organizational commitment (Benevene et al., 2018). If the manager is engaged and demonstrating an appreciation of the worker's efforts, in that case, the worker is more likely to feel engaged and appreciate the openness and discovering that the workplace is one where effort and performance matter, which creates a feeling of satisfaction with one's job (Chang, 2015).

Effective leadership from management inspires positive behaviors in their staff, like organizational citizenship behaviors, further job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Cummings et al., 2018). Organizational managers with effective leadership behavior could improve employee morale, performance and reduce turnover by implementing leadership strategies that resonate and are viewed positively by workers.

Emotional Intelligence Theory

Goleman's (2021) theory of EI stressed the ability to identify, evaluate, and control one's own emotions and others or even whole groups. In Goleman's approach, EI and social intelligence were inextricably linked: one could be adequately utilized without the other. EI was the essential element of leadership in Goleman's theoretical model: it obliged one to use critical thinking when it came to how emotion governs one's actions and the actions of others; and it required one to monitor constantly this governance to be able to effectively guide one's thinking and one's actions (Shaffer, 2020).

Critical thinking was required so that the leader could analyze the relevant emotions and signals and determine which were most meaningful and why. The leader then could make decisions and take action based on the emotional cues that he had identified and interpreted. From this point on, the leader then must use this information to shape how he thinks and acts to facilitate the achievement of the goals he has set for himself and the group. Goleman's (1995) theory of EI helped researchers to understand why and where EI was relevant and applicable and how EI concept helps individuals to recognize their feelings and those of others for motivation and management of emotions for themselves and their relationship with others.

According to Fiori and Veseliy-Maillefer (2018), emotional intelligence theory (EIT) confirms that emotions can be perceived and understood by another who could assist in regulating others' emotions. The EIT has taken various developments in recent years, focusing on whether one is born with it, as in trait theory, or something that one could learn through training (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019; Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018).

Other researchers suggested that leaders who consistently outperform their peers not only have the technical skills required but more importantly, have mastered most of the aspects of EI (Goleman, 1998). There were three different approaches to understanding EI: (a) EI as a trait, (b) EI as a competency, and (c) EI as an intellectual capability.

EI as a Trait

Trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) refered to as a pattern of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies and incorporated the affective aspects of personality (Petrides et al., 2007). The first approach demonstrates that EI was an innate dispositional tendency that allowed for emotional well-being (Bar-On, 1997). Proponents of this view argued that EI was significantly associated with cognitive intelligence and certain personal qualities.

Cognitive ability was proposed as a moderator of the relationship between trait EI and performance (Mavroveli & Sanchez-Ruiz, 2011; Petrides et al., 2004). Referring to performance potential, instead of performance itself, understanding EI and other cognitive intelligence offered a more comprehensive view of an individual's performance potential.

EI as a Competency

The second approach in relation to the different factors for understanding EI holds that EI was a set of acquired skills and competencies essential for leadership effectiveness and job performance (Goleman, 1995). EI was referred to as set of competencies that enable individuals to engage in complex information processing about emotions and emotion-relevant stimuli and incorporated this information as a guide for thinking and

behavior (Krueger et al., 2009). In one such study, Al-Faouri et al. (2014) delivered EI training to 70 nurses in a hospital for 2 hours per day for 7 weeks. The researchers Al-Faouri et al. found an increase in the nurses EI scores and their job satisfaction. In contrast, Slaski and Cartwright (2003), findings on EI training for managers showed a significant increase in a trait-based measure of EI for trained participants.

EI as an Intellectual Capability

The third approach in relation to the different factors for understanding EI, shows that EI is distinct from competency and personality (Mayer et al., 2003; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This approach considered EI as a new type of intelligence characterized by the ability to perceive emotions, access and generate emotions to assist thought, understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth reflectively (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). EI was first introduced to the scientific community a quarter of a century ago, stressing the point that EI was conceptualized as an ability, how EI can be measured and predicted, and how EI can be both consciously and unconsciously utilized. It was important to note that those with high EI had a more outstanding balance of motivation, friendship, focus, fulfillment, peace of mind, awareness, balance, self-control, freedom, autonomy, contentment, appreciation, connection, and desire (Fiori & Veseliy-Maillefer, 2018). Knowing that EI was a complex construct, it seemed unlikely that one perfect measure that would capture all the different components of EI was foreseen, and the main characteristic of the ability approach is that EI was conceived as a form of intelligence. The general framework for understanding EI conceptualized as an ability was helpful to researchers because there

was a clear indication of how the existing literature is processed and incorporated into one's actions.

Many theorists have disputed the fact that EI was more of a trait than an ability that can be learned (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019; Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018). The research on Trait EI has expanded significantly during the last few years (Petrides et al., 2016). The roots of trait EI lie in the long-standing study of emotions within personality psychology. Petrides and Furnham's (2006) study showed that high trait EI was associated with lower levels of stress and higher levels of perceived job control, satisfaction, and commitment. Perceived job control had a negative effect on stress and a positive effect on satisfaction. Stress had a negative effect on satisfaction, which, in turn, had the strongest positive effect on commitment.

Emotional Intelligence

EI had traditionally been measured both as a set of personality traits and behavioral tendencies and as a set of cognitive abilities (Roberts et al., 2008). Research findings suggest that EI is a concept that researchers and scientists for several decades have debated its advantages and whether individuals could benefit from the teaching of EI (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). Lee and Chelladurai (2018) defined EI as the ability to understand human emotions and emotional needs by reading the tone, body language, and behaviors of others to know how to respond positively and supportively. Leaders were expected to possess EI skills to motivate followers and assist them in navigating challenges that might prevent them from achieving self-actualization and resilience (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2018). When leaders demonstrated deep feeling and genuine

expression, they had increased job satisfaction and experienced less burnout than those whose feelings were only surface level and not particularly genuine (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2019).

The management of emotions and the impact on individual well-being within the realm of sport leadership was a clear indication that a follower's emotions could be intelligently understood, and that genuine experience and expression of feeling are cathartic and helpful for making leaders feel that they are doing good work (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2015). Leaders that demonstrated EI capabilities could be seen in terms of how it affects others and how it affects the individual engaged in feelings at a deep level. One's feelings are not something to be avoided, but rather something to be used for a positive outcome at both the personal and the relational level.

The purpose of this study was to examine the construct of emotional labor and its role in sport leadership. Lee and Chelladurai (2018) study confirmed Di Fabio and Saklofske's (2018) findings that emotional intelligence played a much more significant role in resiliency than any of the four personality temperaments. The contribution of EI to self-reported resiliency was vital because it demonstrated the way EI links to personality type in terms of building character and the ability to withstand difficulties and challenges. In summary, these findings added to the rapidly developing literature on personal resiliency and its relationships with both personality traits and trait EI.

Current Findings on Emotional Intelligence

Current findings in the study of EI contributed to predicting academic performance, improve nursing performance, and was used as a coping tool (Kozlowski et

al., 2018; MacCann et al., 2020; Sun et al,, 2019). EI in predicting academic performance affirms the adeptness at recognizing and managing emotional experiences and responses in self and others and then integrating these to enhance thinking and consequent behaviors (Serrat, 2017). Kozlowsi et al. (2018), MacCann et al. (2020) and Sun et al. (2019) complemented one another in identifying the positive outcomes of teaching and applying EI in various fields. Underlying their studies was the idea that EI can be taught and is worth promoting in the training of employees and individuals who want to strengthen their ability to be resilient in the face of adversity.

Examining the mediation effects of EI and coping style between child neglect and psychological abuse and smartphone addiction brought us to Sun et al. (2019) study which was beneficial in confirming how EI assists in regulating emotions in addiction cases. By identifying an individual's emotions and understanding them, their response to negative emotions by controlling what triggers this trait to cultivate a warm response. Di Fabio and Kenny (2019), study compared favorably to the main benefit found by Sun et al. findings which shows how developing EI as a coping tool could help teens overcome their cell phone addiction. In summary, Sun et al. study examined the positive benefits of EI in a multiple mediation model when dealing with addiction and overcoming separation anxiety from the stimulant.

Ugoani (2020) study investigated the relationship between EI and procurement management. The conceptual model for this study shows that managing, understanding, and utilizing emotions can enhance positive behavior leading to responsible procurement management. The conceptual model established that emotional perception and emotional

understanding, as components of EI, enhance positive behavior necessary for transparency and economic efficiency in procurement management.

According to the Mayer and Salovey (1997) study, EI included definition as the ability to perceive emotions, use emotions to facilitate cognitive tasks, understand emotions, and regulate or manage emotions effectively. Four distinct abilities governed EI: the ability to perceive, understand and iterate the emotions one feels, and the emotions others feel; (a) the ability to use emotions to assist in one's thinking; (b) the ability to understand emotions, the language of emotions, and the signals of emotions; (c) and the ability to manage emotions to accomplish one's goals. The four sets of abilities started with perception, empathy, and communication. Without these three elements, the leader cannot discern emotion, cannot understand, or identify emotions, and failed to explain the value of emotion to his subordinates. As a result, perception, empathy, and communication were the fundamental qualities for managers to develop EI skills. In conclusion, there was an indication that the Salovey-Mayer Model of EI lead to positive behavior necessary for dealing with problems in procurement management.

Using emotions to facilitate one's thinking was another set of abilities that managers could develop. The use of emotions to facilitate thinking and how one can support cognitive processes with feelings and what drives these activities, comes back to the critical aspect of motivation and self-actualization (Gopinath, 2020). Understanding emotions, emotional language, and signals were also part of using emotions to facilitate thinking and manage emotions. Having these skill sets was a prerequisite for one to take the following steps to managing emotions. If a manager does not understand how

emotions are cues, one will not guide others or even oneself on the path of positive thinking based on the feelings and signs that one or others are displaying.

Using the theories of Goleman (1995) and Salovey and Mayer (1997) allowed managers to understand what EI was all about and how it could be applied. EI ability was defined as the process of identifying, assessing, and controlling emotions to prevent negative feelings in an individual and promote positive feelings and support to enhance performance. Before business managers can apply the Goleman and Salovey and Mayer theories that allowed managers to understand what EI was all about and how it could be applied, emphasis on perception, understanding, and communication using EI were paramount (Goleman, 2021). To apply EI in a workplace setting, a manager has to be empathetic and engaged while monitoring, interpreting, and managing one's feelings as well as the feelings of his workers.

Benefits of Emotional Intelligence in an Organization

In terms of how EI benefits an organization, the Di Fabio and Kenny (2019) study confirms that EI improves relations between employees when EI is possessed in good measure by workers. Just as Sun et al. (2019) looked at the ways in which managers of EI traits could provide an insight into one's own character, one's strengths and weaknesses, and how it can be used to enable and empower one to overcome emotional difficulties.

Di Fabio and Kenny (2019) study showed that EI benefits in organizations can also improve workplace relationships by enabling individual workers to demonstrate consideration, kindness, and empathy in all directions towards all employees without discrimination. In seeing the humanity of other workers, one can recognize that there are

no fundamental differences between oneself and one's neighbor. EI in a leader could create a foundation for improving relations in a workplace (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2018). A comparison clearly showed how developing EI as a coping tool helped teens overcome their cell phone addiction.

The benefit of EI to an organization may facilitate and fosters communication, strengthens relationships, and improves morale between employees. The development of employee EI in an organization may have a positive job satisfaction rating and have a more remarkable ability to be resilient in the face of organizational challenges. Teams will perform at a more optimal level, and workers can relate more easily to one another. EI in employees facilitates empathy and one's ability to cope personally with whatever challenges one faces (Harter et al., 2003). Organizations need leaders who recognize the importance of relationships for the healthy functioning of individuals and their organizations and are willing and able to cultivate these dispositions for themselves and their employees.

Emotional Intelligence and Team Performance

The impact of team performance can be attributed to the overall dynamic that relates to team members with high EI, understanding one another, creating togetherness with one another, appreciating each other, and understanding the emotional values and meanings that come from one another (Khosravi et al., 2019). As such, EI was viewed as an integral part of trust formation and performance when team projects were concerned. Without EI, teams were less likely to perform at a high level. The workplace itself was likely to have lower morale, lower connectivity among workers, and a less relational

atmosphere. EI traits in managers was a quality worth cultivating, as it facilitated team building, team performance, and team development. The leadership strategies used in face-to-face teams do not transfer quickly to the virtual environment, noting how roles and tasks need to be adapted to encourage greater empathy and EI.

The relevance of teamwork is vital in today's business environment. Given the synergy teamwork brings about in enhancing efficiency and productivity in an organization, we came to the conclusion that, teams ought to be emotionally intelligent for teams to function optimally and for the benefits of employees to realize the benefits of teamwork. Members ought to be aware of their behaviors and emotions and those of others and how they impact team performance. With virtual teams becoming even more commonplace in a world that has essentially become a global village and where geographical distance no longer hinders business conduct, the role EI plays in facilitating team cohesion ought to be investigated. The virtual nature of teams more often than not triggers trust and harmful sentimental concerns/issues that could get in the way of the successful implementation of organizational goals and objectives.

Examining EI and team performance in the workplace, could confirm the role of EI in enhancing leadership strategies for improved business performance. Varshney and Varshney's (2020) study on workforce agility and its links to emotional intelligence and workforce performance confirms that EI plays an essential role in enhancing the task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance of a small business's workforce. Their findings suggested that workers have a degree of agility to respond with flexibility and dexterity to any situations that might arise that call for an alteration in

responsiveness. In a country like India, looking in particular at the role that workforce

agility plays, could be of some significance, but India is also a nation with its unique

characteristics and culture, suggesting that the study does not have a high degree of

generalizability. For researchers examining EI relation in improving business

performance in India, the study may be helpful, but cultural differences make it less

relevant in a nation like the US or even a nation like China. Cultural differences had to be

considered in this case to show that the findings may not relate to all environments.

Emotional exhaustion could also be related to team performance, as shown in the

study by Park and Kim (2021), using emotions in the workplace as part of one's job in the

hotel industry in Asia. Due to the hotel industry similarity internationally, the study

findings may be more applicable to business performance in an organization. To maintain

a high level of EI in business performance by managers who used EI, employees' level of

job satisfaction and performance was vital for identifying with emotional exhaustion.

Teams will perform at a more optimal level and workers will relate more easily to one

another. EI facilitates empathy as well as one's ability to cope personally with whatever

challenges in life one is facing (Goleman, 2021).

Leadership Development

Leadership development can take two distinct and opposite forms: directive or

supportive leadership. Directive leadership focuses on giving orders and telling others

what to do. Directive leadership is explicit and direct, and the leader assumes all the

decision-making; most often, it is associated with authoritative leadership. Supportive

leadership is the opposite: instead of ordering others, the leader listens to others and

encourages them to take the steps they think will be correct. Supportive leadership is more focused on empowering others and is often associated with servant leadership (Mahar, 2021).

Gocen and Sen (2021) validated the identifiable characteristics of supportive leadership of servant leaders using a multinational sample of teachers. The researchers concluded that supportive leadership could be associated with the leader's critical behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes towards followers in the business world and any other sector. The significance of this study was that it examined an important aspect of leadership development that was often lacking in leadership studies—that is, how to identify the key attributes that a leader might possess and apply to foster leadership skills in others (Chughtai, 2018).

While directive leadership may seem like an obvious choice for some leaders who are unaware of any other possible approach to leadership, the overall conclusion was that supportive leadership was not the only possible approach but also one that was well-understood because the attributes needed for its implementation have been observed and documented. IT managers could use a supportive leadership style as part of an effective leadership strategy to cultivate other leaders to facilitate and enhance business performance in their organizations. Leadership preparation had integrated knowledge and skill development through greater use of active learning strategies and experiences. Orr (2020) looked at how active learning could help develop thoughtful, engaged, and proactive leaders. The researcher used three articles to frame how active learning helped leaders develop models for success, apply contextual understanding to enhance

situational leadership, and promote reflection. The findings supported Shafi et al.'s (2020) 's conclusions that focus on transformational leadership, which, when applied, develop leaders from within. Essentially, leadership development could enhance performance in the workplace when nurturing candidates by providing them with the tools to develop their leadership skills. Alrawahi et al. (2020) study supported Orr's (2020) study in their assessment of factors that improved job satisfaction and increased motivation.

Leadership Strategies

Leadership strategies for enhancing motivation, such as allowing employees to be creative and the role EI plays in supporting workers and motivating them to perform at their fullest potential, was vital for good leadership. Other leadership strategies such as (a) Problem diagnosis or opportunity detection (b) Transition: Preparing for action (c) Learning through action (d) Reflection and Repetition within the context of globalizing influences, which may have complicated workplace environments may lead to increased turnover rates in various sectors. Research on building innovative teams based on repetitive task engagement & learning cycle, organizations could rely on expert teams that are not created overnight but evolved after extensive training and leadership.

Taking a newly formed group of individuals and molding them into a tightly cohesive, highly functioning, and innovative team takes a team leader with experience, organizational skills, and a knack for developing talent. The conclusion here was that leadership strategies have to be personalized and relationship-oriented since long-term success could evolve from solid relationships within expert teams. Leadership strategies

that helped to enhance business performance were identified as being associated with those same attributes observed in supportive leadership: speaking from the heart, listening, empathetic communication and interaction, empowering others, personal authenticity, and clarity of communication and purpose (Super, 2020),

As Tirmizi and Tirmizi (2020) determined, servant leadership qualities were universal and could be found across different cultures. The critical point in this body of literature was that supportive leadership played an instrumental role in fostering effective leadership strategies that could be used to enhance business performance. With the excellent leadership attributes, a strategy of empowerment and self-actualization could be engendered, rooted in the development of intrinsic motivation. Self-motivated workers, supported by leaders, could become the most effective and efficient workers, and could support the performance of the business through their industrious and committed application of their talents and skills to daily operations. The critical point in this body of literature was that supportive leadership played an instrumental role in fostering effective leadership strategies that could be used to enhance business performance in the IT industry (Gocen & Sen, 2021).

Leadership Style

Dimitrov and Darova (2016) defined leadership style as a combination and display of behavior executed by leaders when interacting with their team groups and individuals. According to Anderson and Sun (2017), there were many theories and concepts about leadership style, many of which were similar. Leadership styles showed the kind of relationship between leaders and followers for achieving common goals (Al

Khajeh, 2018). Three leadership styles involved collaboration with employees, (a) transformational, (b) transactional, and (c) laissez-faire (Maamari & Saheb, 2018). All originated with different characteristics and levels of power. Leadership style was part of the dynamic in that transformational leadership in managers fostered a supportive role in motivational success.

Caillier (2020) took this subject a step further by testing the effects of autocratic leadership, democratic leadership, and public service motivation on a public organization's performance. Caillier found out that democratic leadership enhanced organizational performance while autocratic leadership was associated with decreased performance. In contrast to Shafi et al.'s (2020) conclusion that leadership style played a part in dynamic and transformational leadership, in contrast, when using democratic leadership style, motivational score ranked the highest when implemented, which suggested again that relationships and communication are vital to motivating workers and developing the kind of rapport in the workplace that increases job satisfaction. Leadership styles comes in many forms—transactional, democratic, transformational, servant, authoritative. Each has its strengths and weaknesses concerning different contexts. The leadership style we will focus on is transactional leadership and servant leadership.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is a significant leadership style used in many organizations. According to Jensen et al. (2019), leaders who practiced the transactional leadership style used a system of rewards and reprimands; if employees excelled at their

jobs, incentives were provided, but if they underperform, they get sanctioned. Organizational management often assigns leaders that possess a transactional leadership style to invite talent based on a system of attractive financial incentives. Transactional leaders clarify expectations and offer recognition, praise, rewards, additional resources, or avoidance of punishments when subordinates achieve agreed goals and deny rewards when they do not achieve these goals (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016).

When coaching a leadership style, it is essential to ask what the goals and objectives of the leader are so that the right style could then be determined—but it is also essential to understand the people with whom one is working and how they are most likely to respond to different styles (Karlsen & Berg, 2020). Leadership styles are usually cultivated to match the environment, the context, the people, and needs.

Servant Leadership

The qualities of servant leadership are appealing to workers in all cultures, which indicates that there are unique attributes possessed by supportive leaders that resonate with people in any given situation. Karlsen and Berg's (2020) finding on the two methods of learning processes suggested that servant leadership could be applied in any context as a universal leadership style that resonates with workers in any situation or industry. Workers like to feel supported and empowered, which is consistent with the literature on leadership development. For managers to implement the appropriate leadership style, the possibility of all leadership styles being rooted in supportive leadership concepts and grounded in EI development was vital.

Talent Acquisition

Using the method of random forest classification could predict the pass level of participants in recruitment and selection precisely in accordance with the profile of each participant, projected achievement of individual performance, and to assist management in making decisions (Geron A, 2019).The method was used to develop a model that could predict the pass level of participants in recruitment and selection in accordance with the profile of each participant, provide insight on the projected achievement of individual performance and assist management in making decisions about the participants in the selection process.

Utomo et al. (2021) analyzed applicants using the random forest classification method; matching the candidate's skills, traits, qualities, and character with the job description were vital to the author's method. The use of Random Forest Classification in the study demonstrated a prediction model for passing rates (Walford-Wright & Scott-Jackson, 2018). For the short term, the best passing rate prediction model based on the data available in this study was a model using approach one and scenario 3. The accuracy level produced in Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 were unsuitable for the selection process. Whereas in the long run, the prediction model for passing rates using approach two and scenario 3 were very suitable for the selection process, as seen from the previous importance level test results used in the model. The conclusion of the study showed that making people analytics on the process of talent acquisition could be done using the Random Forest Classification method (Brownlee, 2020).The method was developed to determine the class of each predicted data and performance achievements, but model

results show that the level of importance in accordance with the standard level of confidence, was still below 0.05.

Once talent is acquired, the management of talent is paramount. Talent management has become even more complicated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as Haak-Saheem (2020) pointed out. The Haak-Saheem study included examination of how Dubai managed to sustain its global talent pool during the brutal COVID-19 pandemic by tapping the virtual labor market to take advantage of surplus labor even as expatriates' inflows (relied upon in Dubai) dried up as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. The results showed that organizations could stay fluid and dynamic to manage talent in a changing, globalized world, especially one that has embraced a virtual workforce's utility (Haak-Saheem & Brewster, 2017).

Managing talent virtually comes with many more unique challenges than face-to-face. The workplace environment was different from that described in the Herzberg (1959) two-factor model strategy to manage negative influences throughout large projects, where tensions and frustrations could set in overtime.

Acquiring talent depends more upon monetary considerations, as the latest research by Tseng (2020) reveals. Workers want to feel supported, nurtured, and appreciated throughout the onboarding process; they want to feel that they are entrusted to make decisions and be empowered to be successful (Karlsen & Berg, 2016). Receiving a paycheck is only part of the equation and is only a form of extrinsic motivation in the larger scheme of things; workers need intrinsic motivation to achieve the greatest success—and they are implicitly aware of this. They know they possess the skills and

abilities, and they want to work for a business that appreciates this aspect of them. They do not want to be hired to be treated as inferior with a limited skill set. A leader who approaches talent acquisition in this manner may not be successful in landing top-grade talent, due to the lack of understanding, the actual needs and desires of the person seeking employment.

In talent acquisition, there is a need for managers to approach hiring from the standpoint of EI, which allows one to understand the emotional needs and signals of the standard hire by looking at what the typical hire wants from employment: the worker wants to feel satisfied with his job, wants to feel successful, wants to feel appreciated, wants to feel that he can grow in his work, wants to feel that the work is essential to society and is empowered and trusted to do the tasks he has been hired to do (Goleman, 2021). All of this is essential to the idea of applying EI in leadership and leading by understanding the emotions of others and their relevance.

Transformational Leadership Theory

A leadership approach that causes a change in individuals and social systems is commonly referred to as transformational leadership (Roberts, 1985). Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of transformational leadership based on a descriptive approach that involved political leaders. Burns went on to define transformational leadership as the process where people engaged with one another in a manner where leaders and supporters promote each other to achieve a sense of morality and motivation. Burns affirmed that transformational leaders contemplate on connecting their followers' sense of ability and self to the objectives and general facts about what the organization stands

for to serve as a model for the subordinate to challenge and inspire them to be responsible for their work. Bass (1985), transformational leaders encouraged and motivated employees through four attributes: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personal considerations. Employees' attitudes were influenced by transformational leadership theory by embracing and implementing innovation (Guerrero et al., 2016).

In a study conducted by Wang et al. (2016) found that 27 transformational leadership styles positively correlated with effective communication. For instance, small business leaders engaged their subordinates meaningfully through direct and honest communication, constructive feedback, and communication technology. Being accountable, taking responsibility, learning, and adapting to change, along with effective communication, were fundamental leadership skills (Smalley et al., 2016).

Transformational leaders use various behaviors to provoke followers' organizationally healthy behaviors (e.g., better task performance and helping behaviors) by igniting followers' work engagement. That is, employees who are inspired by transformational leadership are more likely to immerse themselves in work, and, in turn, this is likely to result in better task performance and helping behaviors (Lai et al., 2020)

To achieve a collective purpose, organizational leaders should align their leadership with their purpose, and their ability to function as leaders must be judged (Burns, 1978). Using the transformational leadership theory enabled leaders to understand effective leadership strategies to improve business performance. Transformational leadership in managers was a significant predictor of organizational

performance and job satisfaction (Jing, 2017). Burns's initial work on transformational leadership was influential in his decision to expand and conceptualize the two leadership concepts: transformational and transactional.

Transformational Leadership Compared to Democratic Leadership and Autocratic Leadership

Transformational leadership was first introduced by Downton (1973) in a theoretical analysis based on leader-follower relations. Burns (1978) developed transformational leadership as a motivational concept to inspire followers to perform at the highest level. Du Plessis et al. (2020) stressed that transformational leaders could leverage their EI to establish strong relationships with followers and achieve the desired change in their thinking and behavior. According to Kim and Shin (2017), transformational leaders helped followers find meaning in work by alluding to intrinsic values, such as fulfilling purpose and a sense of belonging.

Adha et al. (2020) conducted a study based in the Indonesian public health center, in which they compared and contrasted the effects of different leadership styles to see what worked best. Transformational leadership was unique because it focused on managing change by highlighting a new vision, communicating it to stakeholders, justifying it with logic and reason, and then getting everyone to buy into the transformation by fostering supportive relationships and positive returns to change. Transformational leadership may act as a vital bridge between the followers and leaders to develop a clear understanding of the motivational level, values, and interests, according to Al Khajeh (2018).

Transformational leadership style has proven most effective in increasing employee creativity and organizational innovation (Wipulanusat et al., 2017). According to Burns (1978), there were four main pillars of transformational leadership, (a) idealized attributes, (b) idealized behaviors, (c) inspirational motivation and (d) individualized consideration. Transformational leaders who used the four pillars motivated, initiated, and directed their employees towards a joint organizational mission. There was a form of mutual trust with their employees, which simplified the execution of ideas organization wide.

The transformational leader confronts their subordinates to achieve higher standards, align followers with tasks, inspire their followers towards change, and inspire independent thinking in their employees (Hetland et al., 2018). Employees that worked with transformational leaders had a sense of job satisfaction and no intention to leave the organization. According to Labrague et al. (2020), transformational leadership increased job contentment. There was a relationship of mutual trust with their followers that created positive workplace attributes while decreasing workplace negativity. Prasad and Junni (2016) asserted that transformational leaders could use idealized conduct to inspire and challenge their followers to improve the products, services, and processes existing within the organization. When leadership style is present within an organization, there is a precise formation of organizational culture that supports innovation, generating ideas, and achieving goal achievement (Elrehail et al., 2017).

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership is different in that it focuses on sharing leadership with stakeholders so that decision-making is not concentrated in the hands of one person but shared. Everyone is permitted to have a voice or vote in the decision-making process, and when there is a majority agreement, a voting process by everyone clears the way for a decision. Purwanto et al. (2019). defined democratic leadership as leadership in which decision-making is decentralized and shared by all subordinates. In a democratic leadership style, the potential for weak execution and poor decision-making is very high. On the other hand, democratic leadership was also known to motivate employees to do better, such as their views and opinions are valued.

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership was the exact opposite of democratic leadership. The leader had overall power, authority, and decision-making, making decisions for others and expected all commands to be followed through and obeyed. There was no delegation of authority in autocratic leadership. Autocratic leadership was best used in situations where there was a limited time for taking the group's opinion and making a decision or where the leader was the most knowledgeable member of the group (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016).This leadership style was instruction-centric and a way of controlling followers. There was also a clear distinction between the leader and the followers. Autocratic leaders make decisions independently with very little or sometimes no input from the rest of the group. Bhargavi and Yaseen, study showed that each leadership style appealed to different people in different settings, and each was effective in its ways, depending on the

context. Sometimes a strong leader is needed to make decisions in a hierarchical culture; sometimes, when change is needed, a transformational leader may reduce resistance to change. Sometimes democratic leaders promote values that help foster teamwork (Lewin, 1939).

According to Agarwal (2020), autocratic leadership entailed extreme control, unilateral communication, centralized decision-making, and no regard for follower's opinions. Vroom and Jago (1995) posited that autocratic behaviors and situations were more prevalent in industries with solid hierarchies such as the military; in developing countries, where there is a shortage of workforce skills; and subordinate goals are not congruent with organizational goals.

Transformational Leadership and Inspirational Leadership

Transformational leadership and inspirational leadership are similar in that both aim to motivate workers to achieve something good. The difference was that transformational leadership was typically applied where there was an organizational need for change and workers had to be led to embrace that change. The transformational leader used inspirational messages to get workers to buy into the leader's vision. As Kren and Sellei (2021) indicated, leaders with strong EI, influence organizational performance when demonstrated by leaders who can understand both the needs of the business and the worker's needs. Simultaneously, the leader must also understand one's own emotions and harness them to achieve a synthesis of feeling, cognition, and understanding to direct the processes and performance of workers under his care. Inspirational leadership is no different, but it does align somewhat more with supportive leadership and servant

leadership. It is not focused on any specific change but focuses on helping workers become empowered, motivated, and driven to achieve their goals and objectives more effectively and efficiently. Fontaine and Nasir (2020) asserted that using divine speech to motivate Muslims culturally in the workplace that references workers' cultural values could be an excellent way to inspire them. Goleman (2021) believes that the leader has to show some form of understanding of the workers' culture and values, which is again why EI is rooted in empathy and why leadership is rooted in EI.

Transformational Leadership and Current Findings in EI

If EI is important in leadership, it is imperative in transformational leadership because the transformational leader is seeking to obtain buy-in from his followers to support the change that the leader is trying to implement in the business operations. Du Plessis et al. (2020) stressed that transformational leaders could leverage their EI to establish strong relationships with followers and achieve the desired change in their thinking and behavior. Gopinath (2020) pointed out that self-actualization was ultimately the driving force behind EI, which required the leader to be self-actualized through awareness, understanding, and managing his own emotions. From that point on, the leader was capable of responding to the needs of others and forming the necessary supportive relationship with others that facilitated the upward direction (Tirmizi & Tirmizi, 2020). When bringing people together to achieve a change within an organization, leaders may foster a sense of control and help others control themselves. Change is disruptive by nature and causes frustration and anxiety among those who fear

it. A leader cannot control these negative emotions if those who have them are not taught or empowered to control them independently.

Transition

Section 1 of this study consisted of an explanation of the problem and purpose statement, nature of the study, research and interview questions, and conceptual framework. In Section 1, I addressed the operational definitions, and the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study. Offered an explanation on the contribution to business practice, implications for social change, and professional and academic literature. Section 2 contained the purpose statement, a description of my role in the research, and the eligibility guidelines for the participants. The discussions led to the research method and design, populations, and sampling, and how the method of maintaining ethical standards of the study. In Section 3, the focus was on the findings and results of the research in application to professional practice. I reflected, made recommendations, and concluded with suggestions for future research.

Section 2: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore current strategies that leaders use to increase business performance in the IT industry. Semistructured online interviews were conducted with senior- and mid-level managers of an IT firm in Beirut, Lebanon who had used strategies to improve business performance. Section 2 includes details of the methodological elements of the study. I provide information regarding the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling technique, and data collection and analysis. Section 2 concludes with a discussion of instruments and processes as well as the study reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore effective leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. The target population consisted of senior- and mid-level managers of an IT firm in Beirut, Lebanon who had used strategies to improve business performance. The implications for positive social change include the potential for managers to improve leadership strategies to retain employees and improve job satisfaction. The successful retention of employees in any business environment could increase wealth creation and enhance the community's economic health.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the primary data collection instrument in this study was to understand the study's parameters, collect data, analyze data, and present findings (see Yin, 2017). Lincoln and Guba (1985), based on their research of a naturalistic paradigm,

recommended using the human instrument aspect above all others. I functioned as the human research instrument during the collection and analysis of data in the study. I used an interview protocol as a method of data collection, which Yin (2018) recommended in case study research.

A semistructured interview is the most effective tool to understand an individual's experiences and answer the research question (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As the primary data collection instrument, my duties were to (a) provide an analytical review of the main topic, (b) develop valid interview questions, (c) interview preselected participants, (d) carry out data collection and analysis, and (e) present the research findings together with a conclusion and recommendations.

I had a personal link with the research topic because most of my career has been in the IT field. My objective was to allow the interviewees to freely share their ideas without interruption and ensure that I did not influence their responses. I made sure that there was no personal relationship between the selected participants and the primary data collection instrument. The participants chosen did not come from my organization.

I followed the concepts outlined in the Belmont Report for dealing with participants. The concepts defined in the Belmont Report are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Belmont Report. (1979). Human subjects are protected when researchers enforce ethical principles (Grossoehme, 2014). To ensure that I did not cross ethical margins and I maintained participants' protection, I asked for prior consent from the participants before recording the interview sessions. When discussing the findings, I omitted names or organizations to maintain participants' privacy and confidentiality. I

shared the interview transcripts and summary of findings with the participants for added transparency.

To mitigate researcher bias and ensure reliable, accurate conclusions, the researcher needs to uphold objectivity and be conscious of any personal feelings and possible sources of bias that may influence study findings (Shaw & Satalkar, 2018). I used bracketing to avoid projecting my personal views during the interview process. Bracketing refers to the researcher setting aside their personal beliefs and experiences with the research phenomenon before and during the research process (Baksh, 2018). One method of mitigating bias includes all research findings at odds with the researcher's findings or beliefs (Yin, 2018). Bias sometimes occurs when the researcher relies on one data collection method (Turner, 2010). Using methodological triangulation reduces the chances for a researcher to introduce bias that can arise when one data source is used. The primary data source of the current study was participants who met the eligibility requirements necessary for answering the research question.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of the study, face-to-face meetings were not possible for the interview process. As the primary data collection instrument of this study, I conducted a series of semistructured interviews using open-ended questions via Microsoft Teams and Zoom with senior- and mid-level managerial participants (see Appendix C). I used an interview protocol when conducting the interviews. Using an interview protocol ensured that I collected the necessary data at the specified time by using the guidelines to control the conversation (see Yeong et al., 2018).

After the interview, I used member checking. According to Madill and Sullivan (2018), member checking is a process in which a researcher shares their interpretation of the interview with the participants to assess validity. Naidu and Prose (2018) stated that member checking helps to confirm the research results with the interview participants. Researchers who use member checking increase the rigor of data analysis by verifying the accurate transcription and data analysis (M.N.K.Saunders et al., 2015).

At the end of the interview, I shared my interpretation of the interview transcripts with the participants and allowed them to decide whether my analysis accurately captured the interview. The participants had the chance to identify any points not accurately captured or expand on points that the participants thought were not represented, allowing me to adjust the analysis accordingly.

Participants

In qualitative studies, the primary data collection instrument uses a set of criteria to select participants who will contribute to answering the research question (Yin, 2018). One of the most important tasks a qualitative researcher undertakes is the selection of participants (Yin,2016). For this study, the target population consisted of senior- and mid-level managers of an IT firm in Beirut, Lebanon. The main eligibility requirement for participants was IT managers with successful experience in strategies to improve business performance. Monahan and Fisher (2015) stated that gaining access to conduct research on participants is a challenging task, and some individuals may be sensitive to outside scrutiny. Creating strategies to gain access to organizations and participants, such as joining professional networking groups or social media platforms to recruit participants,

is vital (Pacheco-Vega & Parizeau, 2018). Social media platforms are one way a researcher can recruit participants because they offer a high degree of separation and privacy (Gelinas et al., 2017).

I informed each potential participant of the purpose of the study to ensure their willingness to share information related to leadership strategies to improve business performance. Participation in this study was voluntary, and I did not pressure participants to sign the consent form. Upon approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB # 03-17-22-0657239), potential participants were contacted via email and were provided with the option to schedule a telephone, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom virtual meeting that limited any personal contacts due to COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were given adequate information about the study options for conducting virtual interviews such as telephone interviews or video conferencing via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Giving participants options on how their interview is conducted can simplify access to busy participants (Heath et al., 2018). To build trust and establish reassurance with each participant, I used open communication and dialogue. Collins and Cooper (2014) posited that open communication and dialogue create trust and a meaningful relationship that is beneficial for research purposes. To shape the way interviewees respond to questions, researchers should use a proper tone, context, and manner of delivery during interviews (Arsel, 2017).

Research Method and Design

When a researcher is in the process of collecting and analyzing data within the context of a study, a research method is applicable (M. N. K. Saunders et al., 2019). The

three standard research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Almalki, 2016). As the primary data collection instrument in the current study, I used qualitative methodology. Qualitative research designs include case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and phenomenological research (Gephart, 2018). Based on the purpose of the current study, I chose a single case study design. Using a qualitative single case study design ensured a more profound and broader understanding of effective leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance.

Research Method

Qualitative researchers strive to understand participants' perspectives and experiences using interviews and organizational contributions to explain behavior (Yin, 2018). The purpose of the current study was to explore effective leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. Researchers use qualitative methods to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of a phenomenon from descriptive accounts of participants' experiences and interpretations (Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative method is suitable when the researcher plans to use an exploratory process to address the what, why, and how of a phenomenon in its natural setting (Saxena, 2017). The use of a qualitative approach is beneficial to provide a data-rich and in-depth understanding of a topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Quantitative methodology was not appropriate for the current study. Quantitative research entails examining the relationship between variables of a phenomenon using statistical techniques (M. N. K. Saunders et al., 2019). Because my objective was to

understand the leadership strategies managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance, gathering numerical data was not appropriate for this study. Mixed-methods research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The mixed-methods approach was inappropriate in the current study because quantitative analysis was not necessary to serve the study's intended goal. The qualitative method was appropriate to understand this business phenomenon.

Research Design

The four qualitative research designs considered for this study were (a) case study, (b) ethnography, (c) narrative, and (d) phenomenology. A qualitative researcher selects an appropriate design to complete a robust investigation (Yin, 2016). The current study required a single case study design using semistructured interviews. As Yin (2018) stated, although case studies are usually narrow in scope, they are an efficient and effective research design often used when a researcher is interested in how or why a phenomenon occurs. I selected a case study design because of the intention to explore in-depth, effective leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. In a case study, the researcher explores a current phenomenon in-depth within the context of a real-world environment using interviews and archival data (Yin, 2017).

Conversely, an ethnographic study involves the exploration of people and their social environment, focusing on the social-political, cultural, and historical aspects of their lives (Harwati, 2019). An ethnographic design was not appropriate in the current study because the practices of individuals, groups, and communities in their natural

environment were not the focal point of this study (see Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The

narrative design was another consideration. In a narrative study, researchers collect data

on an individual's experience and discuss the meaning of the experience (Hossain &

Scott-Villiers, 2019). The narrative design was not suitable for the current study because

exploring an individual's life experiences was not the purpose of the study.

Phenomenology is a qualitative design used to describe how human beings experience a

phenomenon (Heale & Twycross, 2017). Phenomenological research often involves

exploring and examining the everyday life experiences of people to understand how they

make sense of such experiences (Mohajan, 2018). A phenomenological design was

inappropriate in the current study because my intention was not to study emotional and

intense human experiences (see Babchuk, 2016).

Researchers use multiple data collection methods to collect data to ensure data

saturation (Yin, 2014). Data saturation occurs when there is no new development in data

collection or analysis (B. Saunders et al., 2018). One data collection method to aid in

achieving data saturation is interviewing. According to Anyan (2013), the interviewer can

ask participants open-ended interview questions to gather in-depth information regarding

the phenomenon. Achieving data saturation entails the participants' selection criteria

including a diverse representation across a field (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). To ensure

data saturation, a researcher should continue collecting data and interviewing until no

new information materializes (Hennink et al., 2017). In a qualitative case study, the

primary data collection instrument interviews participants until no new data emerge (M.

N. K. Saunders et al., 2019). To enhance accuracy, reliability, and validity from data

collected, I used member checking (see Thomas, 2017). Member checking is the process in which a researcher shares their interpretation of the interview with the participants to assess validity. Naidu and Prose (2018) stated that member checking helps confirm the results of the research with participants. Researchers who use member checking increase the rigor of data analysis by verifying the accurate transcription and data analysis (M.N.K.Saunders et al., 2015). B. Saunders et al. (2018) affirmed that data saturation occurs when the interviews no longer contribute new details to answer the research questions.

Population and Sampling

The participant population included senior- and mid-level managers of an IT firm in Beirut, Lebanon who met the eligibility criteria and were willing to participate in the study to achieve data saturation. The individuals selected had the relevant experience to address the central research question (see Boddy, 2016). Thoroughly analyzing the experiences and perspectives provided by each participant helped me understand the leadership strategies used to improve business performance in the IT industry. Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that a researcher selects the sample size with the greatest probability of achieving data saturation.

Malterud et al. (2016) affirmed that one method to obtain data saturation is conducting semistructured interviews in which the researcher asks the same question to each participant. Data saturation occurs when no new themes become evident in the data (Yin, 2016). To reach data saturation, a qualitative researcher can interview a minimum of five participants asking each participant the same questions (Dworkin, 2012). When

the researcher finds no new information, data collection should halt (Elsawah et al., 2015).

In a case study design, the researcher collects data from several sources, including interviews, direct participant observations, and documents (Yin, 2018). To ensure participants met the eligibility criteria, I used purposeful sampling (Ames et al., 2019). The main objective of purposeful sampling was to interview participants who could provide in-depth insights into a specific phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). Individuals or groups are identified and selected that are incredibly knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell et al., 2011).

When using purposeful sampling, the researcher can obtain information-rich cases to understand the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). During the recruitment of participants, I used purposeful sampling by following a list of relative IT industry contacts to gain access to business leaders who manage IT firms in Beirut, Lebenon. The study used purposeful sampling to conduct VoIP semistructured interviews to gain in-depth insights into the phenomenon under study.

Virtual interviews were the preferred step to record participant responses to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and the cost of research by eliminating travel. Conducting a telephonic or virtual interview was convenient, safe, and protected the participant privacy (Drabble et al., 2016). Participants were free to select a suitable location free of distractions to ensure the confidentiality, safety, and welfare of participants. Leung (2015)

affirmed that digital technology generates a similar quality of data as face-to-face interviews while allowing for a suitable and comfortable setting for the participants.

Ethical Research

As the primary data collection instrument in this study, I adhered to Walden's ethical standards and followed the guidelines set by the IRB. Chiumento et al. (2017) affirmed that all research must be conducted ethically. To ensure that research is ethical, all researchers have an obligation to protect participants, society, and research (Lune & Berg, 2016). Participants have the right to be informed about the purpose of the study, the benefits of the research, and any risks associated with participating in the study before granting their consent (Rodrigues et al., 2013). Poor research practices can harm the integrity of the research outcome. As Waycott et al. (2016) posited, informed consent is a fundamental step in the ethical research process. Participant's consent is the willingness and intention to participate in the research study (Chiumento et al., 2016).

The Belmont Report (1979) stated the main objective of ethical research is to do no harm. When using a human subject for research, there were three ethical elements, respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. I obtained IRB approval before beginning data collection and the secure signed informed consent forms presented in (Appendix D). Each potential study participant received an informed consent form, detailing the purpose of the study, the researcher's responsibilities, the study expectation, confidentiality guidelines, the assessment criteria, data usability, revision, and storage.

The informed consent form included the research question, the seven interview questions, and the research study method. Information was provided to the study

participants about submitting their consent via email. Participants had the choice of not responding to all the interview questions and withdraw from the study at any time (Almalki, 2016).

According to Silverman (2016), participants were given a chance to review their responses to foster research credibility. The consent form was signed by both the participant and the researcher and stored in a secure location for a minimum of five years; after such time, they will be destroyed (Yin, 2016). Interviews were digitally recorded and uploaded in a hard drive, which would be deleted after five years. All information that would identify the participants was redacted.

Data Collection Instruments

As the researcher, I served as the primary data collection instrument for this study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument because the researcher listens, observe, and interprets the data (Denzin, 2017; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Wolcott, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) first introduced the concept of humans acting as research instruments to express the researcher's role throughout the data collection process and analysis.

In the research process, only human beings could provide the responsiveness, flexibility, and sensitivity essential for scientific inquiry. Using an interview protocol, a semistructured, qualitative interview was conducted. As the primary data collection instrument, the decision to conduct qualitative interviews came about from the need to attain participants personalised views into the lived perceptions about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). To enable the interviewee to offer in-depth responses, the researcher

uses interview questions that capture the participants' experiences and personal perspectives. The quantitative method was not suitable as the method relies primarily on collecting and analysing numerical data, of which there is none (Park & Park, 2016).

The interview had 7 open-ended questions designed to provide rich, meaningful data related to the overarching research question (see Appendix E). The interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. According to Gibson et al. (2013), interviews should take more than 45 minutes. The primary collection method to gather data for this study was virtual interviews conducted using Zoom. I gave participants adequate information about the study options for conducting virtual interviews such as telephone interviews, or video conferencing via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. To support the data collection process, the study used two sources (a) semistructured interviews, and (b) company Public documentation. Semistructured interviews consisted of open-ended questions, follow-up questions and probing questions. (see Appendix C), Using a semistructured format was useful in collecting in-depth information on leadership strategies to improve business performance.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), semistructured interview was the most effective method for researchers to gain a broader understanding of participants experience and address the research question. I created an interview guide, that was the secondary instrument which all participants used throughout the process. The interview guide ensured reliability, consistency, and validity of the semistructured interviews. To ensure data validity, the study utilised a member checking protocol. Member checking can be characterised as a process where the primary data collection instrument provides

selected agents with the chance to review the interpretation of the participant's responses that will support the completion of data and provide accurate interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Interview participants had the opportunity to member check data interpretation to ensure that the information they shared during the interview is up-to-date and correct.

For participants to contribute new or additional viewpoints on the issue under study, the researchers must integrate member checking opportunities which will establish dependability in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Utilising methodological triangulation assist in developing data themes. Methodological triangulation according to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) was defined as the grouping of information sources such as individuals or data types, used as evidence for analysing data as a premise that enhances internal validity. The data collected was an indication of themes across multiple data sources that ensured assessment, interpretation, and accurate conclusions.

Data Collection Technique

The primary data collection technique used was semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is the most effective method for researchers to gain a broader understanding of participants experience and to address the research question (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Flexibility and structure at the same time are some characteristics of a semi-structured interview. The interviewer has an interview guide that is filled with questions and probes aimed at encouraging the interviewee to be creative and discuss the research topic to obtain the kind of data that will answer the research questions (Tracy, 2013; Willig, 2013).

Researchers use probing questions to get accurate and in-depth information (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). When study participants did not address the interview question presented to them, I introduced probing questions that stimulated additional responses. As the primary data collection instrument in this study, utilization of a semi-structured interview to explore how leadership strategies can improve business performance was vital. To gain access to participants, the study used pre-existing company contacts to gain access to participants. The initial contact method to study participants was through email. The email included procedures about my informed consent document and study procedures, which was reviewed by all participants and agreed upon before the commencement of the interview. I sent participants study consent in advance via an email before the meeting. Before commencement of the interviews, the participants roles and study processes and consent were reviewed.

Upon completion of the interviews, audio files transcription was initiated, after transcript and note interpretation. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, member checking procedures were scheduled with the study participants. I informed all the interviewees that if a participant had corrections or edits to the member checking portion of the process, i would correct. Member checking commenced by providing each participant with a summary of my understanding of their answers to the interview questions. While conducting member checking, P2 mentioned that the interpretation of the interview needed to be adjusted. P2 stated that the words were accurate, but the meaning was different. Each participant was able to respond via email on the accuracy of

the provided data interpretation. Case study researchers often opt to review existing documentation related to the research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016).

Requesting copies of the company's literature was beneficial for the primary data instrument by bringing together multiple forms of sources to be included into the data collection process. Incorporating more than one data source helped to guarantee the findings, as different elements of data where be combined to support a wider range of the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Ensuring the collection of accurate data combined with semistructured interviews and company documentation led to a greater understanding of the case (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). According to Turner (2010), qualitative research, interview protocols serve as the most preferred instrument. Using an interview protocol served as a secondary instrument while interviewing the participants. To arrive at data saturation, there should be no new data that adds findings or themes to the research (Marshall & Rossman,2016).

Additional interviews were not required because the primary data instrument achieved data saturation. Performing member checking interviews allowed the primary data collection instrument to gain more in-depth information and reach data saturation. Based upon the quality and content of the participant's information provided, determined the length of the interview.

Data Organization Technique

As the primary data collection instrument of this study, I was responsible for the organization and storage of data throughout the collection process. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument in the data collection process (Clark & Veale,

2018). The use of data organization methods enhances the readers understanding of how the researcher will conclude the study findings. The study used a semistructured interview protocol to conduct the data collection process. Yates and Leggett (2016) indicated that as the data collection instrument, the researcher collects information using semistructured, structured, or unstructured interviews.

I collected information using semistructured, interviews. Semistructured interviews allow the researcher to collect in-depth information from participants as related to the explored phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2018). Using an interview protocol increases the reliability of a case study by ensuring all participants respond to the same line of inquiry (Birt et al., 2016). Moustakas (1994) recommended, the use of an interview protocol to ensures consistency throughout the data collection process.

The participants were provided a step-by-step detailed instruction on how the study was conducted, recorded interviews, and the participants review of the transcripts for accuracy. The recording devices used during the interview process are a digital recorder and a mobile phone to ensure data capture accurately. Participants' approval to audio-record the interviews was vital. Drabble et al. (2016) affirmed that the use of audio recording devices during interviews allows researchers to listen to responses, clarify meanings, and prevent bias.

Data organization process was another important step after the data collection process. Yin, (2014) affirmed that coding and organizing the data mined from interviews by using keywords or abbreviations may lead to opportunities for additional probing. After the interview, I listened carefully to the audio recordings of the interviewees.

Listening to audio recordings prior to transcription enables researchers to decrypt the interviewees' responses (Harrison et al., 2017).

The study used NVivo 12 software for organizing the data codes and developing themes. Gibson et al. (2013) stated that, to keep the data organized while maintaining the information confidential, alphanumeric codes that identify participants (e.g., P1, P2, and P3, P4, P5, P6) are imperative. Archibald, (2016) affirmed that the primary research instrument, develops an organized system of cataloging and labeling when storing and accessing data. Transcribed interview responses and any company documentation was imported into NVivo 12 for identification of similarities and differences as well as themes associated with the study (Oliveira et al., 2016).

According to Yin (2018), member checking of the data was essential to ensure that the summaries and initial interpretations were accurate and complete representations of the participants' stated experiences and perceptions. Participants had access to a copy of the analyzed data for them to review the results (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). Transcripts of the recorded interviews will remain in a locked safe, as required by Walden University, until their destruction 5 years after study approval.

Data Analysis

Yin (2018) affirmed that there are five approaches to data analysis. These included compiling data, disassembling data, reassembling data, interpreting the meaning of data, and concluding the data. To conduct an effective data research analysis of the study, I ensured all interview data was organized; accordingly, data collected reversed, developed codes for the study data with unique identifiers, and identified the appropriate

themes. For accuracy and data validity, study participants had the option to review the

collected data (Almalki, 2016). As the primary data collection instrument in this study,

methodological triangulation was beneficial for the researcher because it allowed

multiple methods of collecting data, such as interviews and any form of documentation.

Using a methodical approach of analyzing large data sets of various evidence sources is

vital during the qualitative process (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019). Using multiple data sources

increases the accuracy and validity of the research (Chiumento et al., 2017).

In this study, I used semistructured interviews, data from the company's' public

website and member checking to demonstrate methodological triangulation. The

triangulation method improves the rigor of a study because researchers can increase the

richness and thickness of the data collected (Fusch et al., 2018). Methodological

triangulation was suitable for reinforcing data verification, validity, and achieving

conformability (Yin, 2017). Converging evidence in research enhances the construct

validity of a case study (Yin, 2018). The study followed Yin's (2017) approach, of (a)

compilation; (b) disassembling; (c) reassembling; (d) interpretation of the meanings; (e)

conclusion. The data analysis process commenced when I reviewed the interview

transcripts, correlated key themes with available literature and the conceptual framework

and focused on key themes.

The theoretical lens through which I answered the research question was

Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory conceptual framework. The final analysis stage

involved linking the codes and themes to the conceptual framework and reviewing

academic and professional literature. According to Weigl et al. (2017), contextual

alignment and text in research studies are essential and help promote the study's reliability. I reviewed newly published studies to support the findings and linked the research results to the study's conceptual framework. Consequently, conducting a critical analysis of the research findings and connecting the emerging themes and patterns.

After each interview session, I immediately transcribed the data. According to Yin (2018), transcribing interviews, while the interview data is fresh in one's mind, comparing the transcribed data to the interview notes for complete data accuracy, and conducting a transcript review with each participant enhances correctness. Creating a centralized database where all the information is stored using NVivo 12 software enabled the primary data collection instrument to code, organize and interpret the data. Woods et al. (2016) affirmed that researchers use NVivo software to achieve data analysis through coding and eliminate systematically collated data from interviews. The interviewer can store, code data, and preserve participant's confidentiality using the NVivo software.

NVivo software applied in cases where there are rich sources of information. Comparing phrases and words gives the interviewer the capability to categorize, subcategories, and create sub-themes to identify the key themes. To determine and develop existing patterns of the data and perform further data analyses, the NVivo 12 coding system was vital. The correlation of key themes and designs formed the basis of my response to the various research questions. The literature review and conceptual framework were two significant assets as I started interpreting the data and concluded.

Data analysis commenced by coding the transcripts with detailed, descriptive codes. According to Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019), qualitative data coding refers to

organizing and categorizing data into similar groupings, which may assist the researcher in quickly identifying data groups for further analysis. The next step involved making sense of the data by reading the created codes and their content. The aim was to reduce the number of codes and ensure that these codes accurately described the data to develop themes that could help answer the research questions. The existing descriptive codes were first organized into a 'parent-child' relationship, a term used in NVivo to refer to the hierarchical organization of codes in a group. These groups were based on the judgment as to what topics the various codes represent. At this stage, the organization of codes did not mean trying to create themes but instead trying to make sense of the data further by introducing different ways to group a large number of codes to make them easier to understand and evaluate. Subsequently, codes in each of the created groups were scrutinized to ensure that no duplicates or codes covered the same content that were worded differently (which is a common occurrence when doing line-by-line coding, resulting from the significant number of codes that are difficult to remember). If duplicates are found, they were eliminated by *merging* two or more codes into one. At this stage, making some of the codes more inclusive. In the next stage, codes were scrutinized again, and their content carefully read with the research questions in mind. Cross-case comparisons (comparisons between the different participants) and within-case comparisons (a careful analysis of the content of each interview) was applied to gain an in-depth understanding of the coded data and develop the final set of themes that would reflect the content of the interviews and answer the research questions.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

To determine whether a study is trustworthy, the researcher assesses the reliability and validity of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Assessment of the integrity of the research, the application and the suitability of the method, and the accuracy of the conclusion lead to the establishment of the reliability of the study's findings (Stewart et al., 2017). The reliability of a study can be supported by the soundness of a study (Noble & Smith, 2015). Consistency in the research method and obtaining stable and reliable results is commonly referred to as the reliability of the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

According to Noble and Smith (2015), a researcher uses measurable, orderly, and repetitive practices to obtain consistent findings to establish dependability. The reliability approach enables the researcher to evaluate trustworthiness, to lower the possibility of research outcome biases (Assarroudi et al., 2018). To ensure the interpretation of the data is accurate, I ensured that member checking was utilized. For reliability and dependability, Member checking was essential as it allowed participants to verify that their responses were correct, preventing researcher bias from guiding the interpretation (Clark & Vealé, 2018). During data collection and analysis, to remain unbiased, the study utilized member checking.

To gain participant's feedback, I shared the data collected to allow the participant to prove-check the interpretation (Yin, 2017). Reviewing, transcribing, and interpreting the interviews feedback with each participant, ensured accuracy and validation of the processed document. After interviewing each participant, the primary data collection

instrument transcribes the audio recording to increase the accuracy of all views provided by the participants (Neal et al., 2015). In the interview protocol, the study included the outline of the data collection process in Appendix B to achieve the reliability of gathered data in this study.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research is referred to as the accuracy and truthfulness of the study's findings (Cypress, 2017). Credibility refers to the accurate and meaningful account of reality at the moment in time (Roller & Lavrakas, 2017). The study's credibility implies whether findings represent the information that the participants communicated to the researcher (Saunders et al., 2015). The research design and method represent an accurate reflection of the data (Nowell et al., 2017). To achieve a study's credibility and validity, the researcher needs to collect data, interpret data, and provide accurate findings of the participant's study view (Yin, 2017).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the researcher's confidence and truthfulness of the study findings lead to credibility. I used the member checking technique and methodological triangulation to enhance the credibility of the study. Methodological triangulation that involves using different sources of information to validate the data ensured research validity (Kern, 2016). In a qualitative study, researchers need to achieve data saturation (Hancock et al., 2016). Data saturation that entails the consistency of participants' responses, is another technique that researchers use to achieve validity in qualitative research (Birt et al., 2016). The reoccurrence of the same theme, with no new ideas appearing, ensured data saturation (Lowe et al., 2018). As

the interviews progressed, I continued to interview the participants until no new themes

emerged.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined transferability as the extent to which researchers

can apply the study finding in other situations. The researcher generalizes the results in a

broader setting or population (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I presented a thorough

description of the study's research questions design, context, and findings (Yin, 2014).

Saunders et al. (2015) affirmed that providing this information allows the reader to assess

the transferability of the research study to another setting or population. To document all

observations and the phases used through during the interview, I used reflective

journaling.

Confirmability

Carminati (2018) affirmed that to ensure that the study is free from researcher

bias, qualitative researchers use a criterion called confirmability. Confirmability is the

degree of neutrality in which the research study is grounded on the participants' responses

and not the researchers' bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the primary data collection

instrument in the study, I established confirmability by using member checking,

triangulation, which was a clear description of each step taken from the commencement

of the study to its development and the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Saturation

Data saturation occurs when the process of data collection does not lead to any

new information related to the subject of the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To reach data

saturation, I ensured that enough information is gathered to guarantee the validity of the research (Levitt et al., 2018). When no new codes or themes emerge within the data, the researcher has reached a level of saturation (Saunders et al., 2018). Reaching this point means the researcher has found the information available on the subject. As the primary data collection instrument, one way of achieving data saturation was to ask each participant the same interview questions (Levitt et al., 2018). Methodological triangulation was another approach to reaching data saturation, where the findings for the interviews were compared and contrasted concerning the existing literature review of the study.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2 includes the purpose statement, role of the researcher, data collection, and validity of this study. The methodology used in this study and a review of the purpose of this research was justified in Section 2. I used a qualitative research approach and a single case study design to explore effective leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. I ensured that the central research question and purpose statement were aligned, as well as criteria for collecting data, managing, and storing data, and interviewing.

Data collection instruments, data organizing techniques, and data analysis were detailed in section 2. A self-developed interview protocol, archival document review, were part of the interview process. Section 2 also included the requirements for participants, ethical research, and population sampling methods. The target population consisted of a range of 5-10 or more senior and mid-level managers of an IT firm in

Beirut, Lebanon. In conclusion of section 2, I discussed the reliability and validity and ensured the doctoral study meets the appropriate standards.

A discussion and presentation of the application of the results and findings to professional practice and implications for social change were discussed in section 3. Section 3 also included recommendations for action-based results and future research studies in areas of effective leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry may use to improve business performance.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The research question for this single case study was the following: What leadership strategies do managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance? To answer the research question, I conducted six interviews with six leaders at two different IT firms. Participants were eligible to participate in the study if they met the following criteria: They have been leaders within their organization for at least 5 years and had experience in implementing leadership strategies to improve business performance in the IT industry. Microsoft Word and Otter.ai were used to assist in transcription, and NVivo 12 was used to assist in data analysis. The member-checking process was applied to the participants to ensure accuracy. To protect the identities of the participants, each participant was assigned an alphanumeric code from P1 to P6. To protect the identities of the organizations, each organization was assigned an alphanumeric code from C1 to C2. Table 1 provides information on the participants' eligibility to participate in this study.

Table 1

Eligibility for Participation

Participant	Participated in at least one leadership position for 5 years	Number of years employed with firm
P1	Yes	> 10
P2	Yes	> 15
P3	Yes	> 20
P4	Yes	> 5
P5	Yes	> 15
P6	Yes	> 10

Applying methodological triangulation and data analysis, I identified four themes: (a) emotional intelligence, (b) facilitators to implement successful leadership strategies, (c) measuring the effectiveness of leadership practices, and (d) barriers and challenges.

Theme 1: Emotional Intelligence

As shown in Table 2, several themes were identified, and the themes and subthemes are discussed in the following sections. The first theme, emotional intelligence was discussed below. Motivating and inspiring themselves and others was the most discussed effective leadership strategy by participants and was believed to contribute to EI. According to Shikalepo (2020), motivation was defined as the incentives and disincentives that influence employees' initial and sustained engagement in their work. The main idea of functioning as a motivated individual was manipulating one's behaviors to achieve goals (De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018). Two subthemes emerged from the analysis of the semistructured interviews and methodological triangulation: recognition of achievements and conflict resolution.

Each participant referenced EI. EI is a set of skills that contribute to the expression of emotion in oneself and others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life (Pertegal-Felices et al., 2017). Using NVivo 12, I performed a simple word search for frequency, eliminating irrelevant and repetitive words. The words and variants related to EI and effective leadership strategies. Combined, the frequency of terms referring to EI constituted 5.50% of all participant responses. The final thematic framework is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes and References to Leadership Strategies to Improve Business Performance in the

IT Industry

Theme	Number of files	Number of references
Emotional intelligence	6	8
Facilitators to implementing successful leadership strategies	6	11
Measuring the effectiveness of leadership strategies	5	21
Barriers and challenges	5	23

P1 mentioned "even when people are passionate about a job, it can be easy to get

stuck in everyday life and lose motivation, which is why motivation strategies are so

important." Motivation strategies do not only mean "to motivate and inspire the team to

achieve good results" (P1) but rather involve "learning how to motivate yourself and

others" (P6), and it is important for the leaders to both motivate their team and maintain

their motivation. Managers are challenged with the dilemma of which motivational

strategies can be used to motivate their employees (Sperling, 2021). P2 explained that

"emotionally intelligent people are self-motivated, and their attitude motivates others."

P4 also mentioned that motivation "refers to your ability to inspire yourself and others to

action" and noted that "the more positive you are, the more confident your team will

feel." The power to inspire others is an essential leadership talent because motivation

impacts the course, duration, and intensity of work-related behaviors, which converts

employees' skills, abilities, and competencies into effort and performance (Bartsch et al.,

2020). According to Schoofs et al. (2022), the desire for employees to reach their full

potential and capabilities through hard work, diligence, and growth development relates to self-actualization and motivates individuals in the workplace. Another practice of effective leaders, namely setting an example, was noted by several participants who agreed that "you need to make sure that leader's model appropriate behaviors" (P1). In addition, P3 pointed out that leaders who model appropriate behavior have a connection with EI because "if you want your team to become more emotionally intelligent, you must first work on building your own personal EI."

Another leadership strategy that was directly linked to EI involved practicing self-awareness and self-regulation. Effective leaders "teach their employees to manage [emotions] excellently" (P6), and "the first step to building these skills was to become more aware of your emotions" (P6). Leaders should work on their self-awareness and self-regulation and teach their employees how to do so. P2 reflected on why EI was so important. Goleman (1995) also noted that emotionally intelligent people are self-aware and intuitive. Emotionally competent leaders understand their emotions, feelings, and body language and use that information to enhance their communication skills with their followers (Goleman 1966). Another discussed leadership strategy by the participants and a way to increase EI in both the leaders and the employees was practicing empathy. Empathy is "about recognizing and responding to the feelings of others and thinking about how it feels to be in their shoes" (P3), and it is "crucial not just for the leaders but for any members of a team" (P3). Other related skills involving EI were developing social skills and social awareness and learning and teaching employees to listen while involving employees in decision making. Regarding the latter, it was important to "allow

team members to have a voice" (P3) and to "involve as many employees as possible in decision making and making sure they have control over what they do" (P2). In contrast to that, P4 mentioned that leaders first need to work on their employees: "First, you need to make sure that leader's model appropriate behaviors." "As a team leader, I must ensure that team's model appropriate behaviors" (P2).

Modeling appropriate behavior also has to do with the discussed passion and motivation because "the more employees feel valued in their jobs and organization, the more enthusiastic they will be and the more effective the organization will become" (P2). When employees recognize their value in the work environment, they may seek to demonstrate their work as meaningful to the organization (Zhenjing et al., 2022). "Effective leaders are also good communicators. Organizations and leaders play an essential role in communication with their employees" said (P2). Communication is a critical training management issue that may help maintain and enhance organizational competitiveness and performance (Ismail et al., 2018).

In addition to the role of motivating others, which involved communication skills, it was crucial to establish "effective communication within our organization" (P1). P1 further explained that "communication is not a one-way street [and] you should ensure that employees are in constant communication with each other." "Frequent communications ultimately affect job performance outcomes" (P2). Effective communication enables leaders to lead effectively (Kwiotkowska et al., 2022). Encouraging teamwork and collaboration was also important. P1 explained that "promoting teamwork could increase productivity because employees feel strongly

connected with their teammates and the company." Participants also pointed out the importance of encouraging and promoting shared vision, goals, and mission. According to Jambawo (2018), when organizational leaders and employees commit to a shared vision, positive changes in workplace culture are introduced and move employees beyond their self-interests and toward the organization's success. P1 explained why it is vital that employees are aware of the objectives and goals, as well as the overall vision within the company. The results support the idea that the best kind of company is one in which everyone works together, and employees feel integrated into the company and its processes. This motivates the team to achieve better results and integrates them into the company and the operations. Companies should consistently monitor and measure employee morale and use feedback to make positive changes. Meeting with employees individually and in teams to collect feedback and collaborate on improvements is also essential.

Subtheme 1: Recognizing Achievement

Overall, job satisfaction and a sense of belonging can be increased by another strategy that effective leaders implement: recognizing and appreciating achievements. Sinclair et al., (2021) explained that a leader can influence an organization's success by providing clear instructions regarding achieving performance objectives, offering rewards for employees for achieving these goals, and removing obstacles that may be stopping employees from achieving these goals. Employees need to feel valued, and "when employees are valued, they feel more connected" (P1). Several participants discussed this strategy and shared the view that one should "make employee recognition your ritual"

(P2) and that "an effective leader should recognize accomplishments of all sizes by expressing appreciation, celebrating achievement, and developing representation program recognition" (P5). According to Robbins (2019), recognition is about providing positive feedback based on performance or results. Being approachable and fostering good relationships within the company also contribute to employee engagement. It is important to "connect with team members" (P3), and "if you want to make the most of every team member, then that starts by getting to know them better" (P3).

Overall, participants commented that it is important to be friendly and approachable and provide employees with a sense of being listened to and valued. This approach also involved giving and asking for feedback. In addition to providing valuable employee feedback, leaders should also "ask for feedback on manager's leadership" (P3), contributing to the sense of belonging and the leaders being approachable.

Subtheme 2: Conflict Resolution

In the work environment, conflicts frequently arise because people are highly interdependent and often share incompatible values (Carton & Tewfik, 2016). Each type of conflict demands an appropriate approach to resolve. Whether the conflict is resolved or not depends on the approach and conflict resolution strategy. In this way, positive and constructive effects of conflicts are reached, while destructive and adverse effects are removed (Pavlović et al., 2022). P1, P2, P4, and P5 mentioned the importance of practicing and teaching proactive and creative conflict resolution, noting that it is important to "always look for common ground" (P2) and that it is crucial for "employees and leaders so that they can effectively handle conflict and offer a resolution" (P6).

Research showed that conflicts adversely affect employees' job satisfaction, and that

relationship conflict mediated the effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction

(Kammerhoff et al., 2019).

Terason (2018) suggested that conflicts can positively and negatively affect job

satisfaction. Effective leaders can also provide professional development opportunities,

set clear and measurable goals, and take responsibility for failures. Research showed

strong evidence that well-designed training and development programs significantly

benefit individuals, teams, organizations, and society (Noe, 2019). Leaders treat

challenges and criticism as a good thing, as effective leaders understand that "mistakes

are necessary for growth" (P4). Another strategy that all participants mentioned involved

teaching employees how to manage stress, and this strategy was believed to contribute to

developing EI. Finally, learning and teaching on how to identify strengths and

weaknesses is what influential leaders do, which involves the leaders "identifying team

members' strengths and weaknesses" (P3) and understanding their own strengths and

weaknesses. For leaders to implement these practices, facilitator, on a personal and

institutional level must be in place.

Links to the Literature

The role of leadership is essential in every organization. According to Manoppo

(2020), leadership is the ability to influence or direct a person's behaviors to achieve an

organization's goals. Teams need a leader, whether it consists of a few people working

together in a small group or an international corporation with multiple sites. Without a

strong leader to set a strategy and a future vision, mobilize the workforce, and make

difficult choices, businesses struggle and eventually fail (Ramazan et al., 2020).

Motivational factors are the necessary conditions every workplace needs to keep

employees engaged and happy (Alshmemri et al., 2017).

Lack of motivation is another reason an employee will leave a company (Kundu

& Lata, 2017) According to Thant and Chang (2021), leaders use motivational aspects for

employees to apply themselves even more and work harder to achieve objectives. The

adaptation of EI in the workplace has continued to increase, and it is now seen as one of

the essential qualities of a successful leader (Sun et al., 2019). According to Kowo and

Akinbola (2019), EI is the ability to recognize and control one's own and other people's

emotions, and it is built on four pillars: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c)

social awareness, and (d) relationship management (Goleman, 1995).. The findings

corroborated these expectations when P3 pointed out that leaders who model appropriate

behavior have a connection with EI. Leaders are expected to possess EI skills to motivate

followers and assist employees in navigating challenges that may prevent them from

achieving self-actualization and resilience (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2018). Having

emotionally intelligent leaders and teams is more critical than ever because workplaces

are becoming more diverse and global (Y. H. Lee, 2019). Emotionally intelligent leaders

support a cohesive workplace, resolve conflicts at work, foster effective communication,

and adjust to changing condition (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2018). The findings from the

current study verified the link between leadership strategies and EI as presented by

researchers such as Herzberg et al. (1959), Di Fabio and Saklofske (2018), Thant and

Chang (2021), and Baek et al. (2019).

Links to the Conceptual Framework

The two-factor theory by Herzberg et al. (1959) was viewed as a guide for managers to ensure the sufficiency of hygiene factors to avoid dissatisfaction, thereby focusing on the nature of work to ensure that it is motivating and rewarding enough for employees. Herzberg et al. (1959) noted that employee job satisfaction is an effort achieved through employees' motivation. Through the composite conceptual framework of Herzberg et al.'s two factor motivational theory, motivational factors cause employees to work harder if they are present. The data gathered on effective leadership strategies from P1 emphasized the need for employee motivation and overall job satisfaction in the workforce. Motivation strategies not only mean "to motivate and inspire the team to achieve good results" (P1) but also involve "learning how to motivate yourself and others" (P1). P6 added that it is crucial for leaders to motivate their team and maintain their motivation.

Herzberg (1959) described motivation as intrinsic to the job and hygiene factors as extrinsic to the job. The two-factor motivational theory holds that workplace incentives promote job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Bundtzen, 2021). Effective leadership strategies often indicate how successful an organization and its teams are. According to Razak and Muhamad (2022), effective leadership is a process in which a person acts as a leader that influences the behavior of their followers and the organization is led to accept their leadership in achieving certain goals. When leaders are authentic and genuine, open, and transparent, they are effective leaders who engage with employees, build trust, and help to create relationships in which everyone feels happy (Baek et al., 2019).

The concept of EI has been the focus of many researchers because of its considerable ability to illustrate employee performance in the workplace (Rexhepi & Berisha, 2017). The benefits of EI to any organization are that it facilitates and fosters communication, strengthens relationships, and improves employee morale. If EI runs high in an organization, employees are more likely to have a positive job satisfaction rating and develop resilience in the face of organizational challenges (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2018). Edelman and van Knippenberg (2018) asserted that there is a correlation between leadership effectiveness and EI. (Yung et al., 2016), confirmed in their study that emotionally intelligent leaders and employees who show a sense of satisfaction with their jobs, are committed to their organization, and have no intention of leaving the job.

Theme 2: Facilitators to Implementing Successful Leadership Strategies

One area of focus for the participants was the facilitators to implementing successful leadership strategies. As P1 stated, resilience and managing change well was important. (P1 emphasis added) "because implementation usually consists of the need for change, you need leaders who can handle change well," P2 added that it would help if you had leaders who could manage change well. Poor leadership would almost certainly doom execution efforts. According to Akinbode and Al Shuhumi (2018), to successfully manage change, there is a need for an organization to have efficient and influential leaders who are required to understand the change management process. But contradictory, P5 did not agree to that. P5 argued that, even with a leader knowing how to handle change well, training on leadership development is also important. Esteban-Lloret

et al. (2018) noted that employee training is critical for organizational success, and it impacts organizational legitimacy and organizational performance. They must also equip themselves with the appropriate leadership abilities and skills to successfully initiate and guide the change process (see Table 3).

Table 3

Reference to Facilitators to Implementing Successful Leadership Strategies

Theme	Number of files	Number of references
Facilitators to implementing successful leadership strategies	6	11
Internal and personal	3	4
Resilience and managing change well	3	3
Tailoring the managerial styles to the specific company	1	1
External and organizational	4	7
Having a strategy to identify and develop new leaders	4	4
An environment that fosters growth	2	2
Organizational structure and support	1	1

New skills and tools are required for organizations to remain viable in this new competitive business environment. As Lee et al. (2018) suggested, leaders use integrated approaches to implement change projects throughout the organization. Leaders could use various methodologies to identify and implement change initiatives, like Lean, and Six Sigma. Leaders who adopt these methodologies can identify opportunities for change initiatives by enhancing change quality (Hope, 2018). Lean business methodology optimizes resources to enhance customer value by eliminating waste in the production

process, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement, and demonstrating respect for people. Hence, teamwork and growth are natural outcomes in the workplace (Miao et al., 2019).

According to Muraliraj et al. (2018), lean methodology increased productivity and client satisfaction. The downside was that lean business methodology did not enhance quality. Fletcher (2018) suggested that leaders committed to continuous improvement frequently integrate Lean and Six Sigma into their quality management system. Six Sigma is a quality improvement management technique used to optimize process efficiencies. The benefits of this concept are that organizations of any size can increase the quality and efficiency of their operations. According to Phruksaphanrat (2019), business leaders used six Sigma to gather data to improve practices and processes and reduce product defects. Sreedharan and Sunder (2018) confirmed that there were five phases to the six Sigma process framework, which are to define, measure, analyze, improve, and control all new procedures. Imran et al., (2016) believed that organizational leaders could influence organizational culture by setting internal goals and examples to emphasize specific work habits and values. The culture of an organization builds its large part from its leadership, while the improvement of organizational Culture can also be affected by leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

One critical factor that influenced the firm's competitive strength was organizational culture (Jamali et al., 2022). A strong culture is instrumental to increasing the employees' performance in the organization; it will lead to goal accomplishment and improve overall organizational performance. An organization's Culture is the attitude of

persons inside or outside the organization that separates them from each other (Hofstede,1991). Cameron and Sine (1999) proposed a model of the Competing Values Framework (CVF), which defined four cultures – (a) adhocracy, (b) clan, (c) market, and (d) hierarchy. Leaders used the CVF model to assess organizational culture. Competing Values Framework (CVF) is a well-validated, reliable model (Botti & Vesci, 2018). On the external and institutional level, having a strategy to identify and develop new leaders was crucial, as well as having the proper organizational structure and support and an environment that fosters growth.

Links to the Literature

Leadership development is characterized by its focus on organizational leaders and how they need to contribute and improve employees and organizational performance (Carroll, 2019). Leading employees requires self-awareness and self-leadership, which relates to leaders taking responsibility for employee and leadership development rather than leaving it to the organization (Zainol et al., 2021). Several participants discussed the notion that on the external and institutional level, having a strategy to identify and develop new leaders is crucial. Kjellstrom et al. (2020) findings suggest evidence of the internal and external developing factors in the broader field of leadership development. The participants' responses suggest that internal and personal factors and external and organization factors were facilitators to implementing successful leadership strategies in the IT industry. P2 and P5 suggested that tailoring the managerial styles to the specific company and having a strategy to identify and develop new leaders; was a way of facilitating successful leadership strategies.

According to Al Khajel (2018), leadership styles have a significant impact on organizational performance. The leadership style influences the organization's culture, which, in turn, influences organizational performance (Xenikou, 2022). The organizational culture and performance are related to the type of leadership style. A leader's job is to persuade, involve, and inspire followers to take action in support of a common cause.

Links to the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory. Leadership is usually a core component of organizational change (Klein et al.,2020). As P1 stated, resilience and managing change well is important. (P1 emphasis added) "because implementation usually consists of the need for change, you need leaders who can handle change well." P2 added that it would help if you had leaders who could manage change well. To facilitate the implementation of successful leadership strategies, employee motivation is vital. Employee motivation is a key driver of organizational performance and employee retention. Management must identify areas for performance improvements and plan improvement initiatives (Tyagi & Singh, 2019). Herzberg approached the topic from an organizational perspective as he concentrated on the job and work activities and their influence on an employee's motivation and performance (Steers et al., 2004). Kirk, (2019) noted that the managers develop and build the workforce to meet the organization's competitive needs and create career and employee development opportunities for their employees. To be a promoter of change, leaders must exhibit appropriate leadership styles (Yasmeen Bano, 2021). The

success or failure of any initiative depends on the leader's effectiveness. There is a connection between leadership style and leader effectiveness (Pishgooie et al., 2019). To successfully manage change, there is a need for the leaders to understand the change management process and exhibit appropriate leadership styles.

Theme 3: Measuring the Effectiveness of Leadership Strategies

As Table 4 reveals, exploring attitudes and confidence among employees was discussed to measure the effectiveness of leadership strategies. P1 explained" "most IT companies have strategic objectives, so leaders should count themselves on whether those goals are being met or not, "which is why measuring a leader's effectiveness is very important. P4 emphasized," Most IT companies have strategic objectives, so leaders should measure themselves on whether those goals are being met. If not, leaders should dive deeper to uncover the causes". P1, P3, P4, P5, and P6 precisely described the importance of measuring the workforce attitude, measuring the company's profitability, and evaluating strategic objectives while focusing on critical results. P1, P3, P4, P5, and P6 all agreed on measuring the company's performance and profitability as a vital step in measuring a leader's effectiveness. P1-P6 identified the most successful method of measuring a leader's effectiveness as using metrics to check leadership effectiveness.

Table 4

Reference to Measuring the Effectiveness of Leadership Strategies

Theme	Number of files	Number of references
Measuring the effectiveness of leadership strategies	5	19
Exploring attitudes and confidence among employees	5	9
Evaluating objectives	5	5
Measuring the company's performance and profitability	3	3
Using metrics for checking the effectiveness of leadership	2	2

The performance measurement of leaders and their organization appears under different terms: (a) metric, (b) performance indicator, (c) key performance indicator, or (d) key results indicator, to name a few (Star et al., 2016). Bourne et al. (2018) suggested that Key performance indicators are quantifiable measures that business leaders use to evaluate the organization's activities and which the organization may consider essential to their success in achieving its strategic objectives.

Key results indicators are measures business leaders can use to determine if the organization is doing well (Star et al., 2016). Smart goals implemented by the organization are measures that business leaders can use to determine if the organization and its leaders are doing well. SMART goals apply to the organization's selection of what criteria embody the critical performance indicators (McKernan et al., 2016). The organization can assess the achievability of the selected performance measure based on the cost versus benefit of obtaining and using the collected data; assess relevancy from

the contribution of the performance measure to effect changes in the outcome (Podgórski, 2015). Finally, the organization should develop its performance measures to obtain the value of the indicator promptly so that its business leaders can act accordingly to make informed decisions and evaluate their leadership effectiveness.

Rawhouser et al. (2017) believe that performance measurement of leaders and their organizations continues to pose challenges for practitioners and researchers alike in that while it offers valuable data, measuring performance has been shown, in some situations, to impact outcomes negatively. The dynamic nature of today's business cycles is such that changes in the business environment occur out of necessity. These changes may create a situation whereby the current performance measures no longer fit the strategic plans. Business leaders must ensure that new performance measures established align with the rewards or incentives (Selden & Sowa, 2015). The findings from the study verify the link between leadership strategies and how leadership effectiveness is measured.

Links to the Literature

Effective leadership is evident when a company's employees look forward to going to work and giving their all. Employee motivation and performance could be improved through effective leadership. The effectiveness of leadership can be evaluated in various ways. Evaluations, outside audits, and business outcomes are a few of them. The best approach is to gauge and comprehend workforce attitudes. All participants mentioned the importance of measuring a leader's effectiveness by using metrics to check the effectiveness of leadership and using a metric scale to measure leadership

effectiveness. According to the Fernández-Berrocal and Extremera's (2006) study review, three competing models of emotional intelligence could be used for leadership assessment: (a) The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence, which uses the Bar-On EQ-i as its assessment; (b) the Emotional Intelligence Ability Based Model, designed by Mayer and Salovey, which uses the MSCEIT; and (c) Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence which uses the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal™. As suggested by the researcher, assessment and measurement were the primary distinctions in determining EI. Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2016) suggested that the Emotional Intelligence Tests measure a leader's or employee's level of EI. P1, P4, P5, and P6 all agreed on measuring the company's performance and profitability as a vital step in measuring a leader's effectiveness.

The findings by Muslih (2021) support the idea that measuring the company's performance and profitability is a significant way of measuring organizational leadership effectiveness. Companies increase profitability by implementing good corporate governance. Profitability, on the other hand, is a benchmark used to measure a company's ability to make a profit. In addition to measuring the company's ability to make a profit, profitability can also show the company effectiveness in management while performing its operational activities. Leaders should gauge their success based on whether their organization's strategic goals are being attained. If not, leaders should delve further to find the root of the problem.

Links to the Conceptual Framework

Measuring the effectiveness of leadership strategies ties into Herzberg's 1959 theory, given that the state and nature of work environments may play a role in employee's and organizational productivity. All participants mentioned the importance of measuring a leader's effectiveness using metrics to check the effectiveness of leadership and using a metric scale to measure leadership effectiveness. According to leading researchers like Oleksa-Marewska and Tokar (2022), effective leadership has a strong impact on employees' well-being, engagement, and emotional states and consequently on the performance and effectiveness of the whole institution. The conceptualization of leader effectiveness is challenging. Leadership effectiveness is considered an outcome when leaders can convince their employees to perform their roles with positive organizational results (Dhar, 2001). There are arguments to determine leadership effectiveness and how it should be measured, leading to many theories and empirical research (Yukl. et al., 2013). The most common outcome of measuring leadership effectiveness is examining the consequence of a leader's action, group performance and success of team goals, According to Madanchian et al. (2017), the most used measure of leadership effectiveness is the assessment of team performance and the scope of which objectives of the team are fully met. Examples of objective team performance measures and goal achievement are increasing sales, cost, profit margins, return on investment, and productivity.

Theme 4: Barriers and Challenges

One area of focus for the participants was the barriers and challenges to effective

leadership. In the IT industry, effective leadership is a primary determinant of

employees', teams,' and organizations' capacity for creativity and innovation. Effective

leadership provides a variety of interconnected knowledge, skill, and behavioral sets that

apply to followers, managers, and leadership tasks (Till et al., 2020). P2 noted that "it is

almost impossible to imagine a situation where a leader does not have to cope with

external challenges," [and] "such issues as lack of funding and other resources" are a

common challenge (see Table 5).

Table 5

Reference to Barriers and Challenges

Theme	Number of files	Number of references
Barriers and challenges	5	5
Lack of skills	3	5
Lack of external resources and support	2	3
Lack of coordination and integration of objectives	2	2
Poor communication	2	2
Poor planning	2	2
Not paying enough attention to training new leaders	1	3
Lack of accountability	1	1
Lack of belief	1	1
Not considering organizational culture	1	1
Not using mistakes as a learning opportunity	1	1
Varying incentives	1	1
Workload and lack of time	1	1

Another area of focus for the participants was the barriers and challenges that led to a lack of skills, which were the most discussed barrier to effective leadership. As P3 notes, "Company leaders lack the skills necessary to develop new leaders," Similarly, P4 states, "if you are leading an active group, you must have the right expertise." To be effective and to develop new managers, leaders require organizational support. Furthermore, a lack of external resources and support can be a barrier.

Lack of coordination and integration of objectives was another challenge (P6) explained, "because the strategic objective calls for organization-wide integrated efforts, the critical steps may only be skipped if you have coordination across functions. "As previously noted, "implementing often involves the need for change" (P1), and Leaders not willing to change can be a challenge. Additionally, according to P1, "communication is vital in leading the change" as poor communication is another barrier to effective leadership. A key component of becoming a good leader or manager is having clear and effective communication (Cripe et al., 2022). When leaders and employees cannot communicate, it can cause them to have not only adverse outcomes but also produce poor productivity rates. Leaders who want to engage their employees to improve their productivity, stay motivated, and maximize their efforts should use effective communication (Ballaro et al., 2020).

Training and developing new leaders are essential to effective leadership, and not paying enough attention to training new leaders could be challenging. Managers use training as a critical strategy for improving the motivation of employees (Ozkeser, 2019). P3 pointed out, "some leaders do not consider training others as part of their job,"

research shows that increased workload and lack of time are why leaders forgo training. To demonstrate this point, (P3) noted, "some critical barriers I faced in implementing leadership strategies were a lack of time to coach my team." Hussey and Campbell-Meier, (2021) defined coaching as the organizational skills-focused, goal-oriented training necessary to develop in one's position.

Lack of accountability among the leaders may also be a problem, as leaders "are not held accountable for their actions" (P3). According to Gathenya (2019), accountability is taking responsibility for one's actions and being ready to give a justification when required. Han and Hong (2019) suggested that promoting accountability is critical to the success and growth of an organization. Developing a positive and productive work environment that promotes mutual respect and accountability develops efficient leaders that can inspire a culture of accountability. Lack of belief in acknowledging when they do not achieve good results and not using mistakes as a learning opportunity. As previously noted, "mistakes are necessary for growth" (P4) and failing to understand this may affect good leadership (Moldoveanu & Narayandas, 2019). Another barrier to leadership that was frequently discussed was leadership not considering organizational culture.

Since "culture is a critical variable" (P6), "you may be trying to do the impossible if your leadership strategy does not consider the organizational culture." according to Biswas (2009), organizational culture equates to shared values, beliefs, and assumptions among members and facilitates mobility, trust, inter[1]dependence, and other facets of organizational communication. Finally, varying incentives were believed to be a

challenge by (P6), as explained in the following extract: Suppose one group is focused on volume, another on service, and yet another on profitability. In that case, these differing objectives will get in the way of coordination integration; thus, conflict can occur, affecting the organization.

Properly supervising individuals and teams and allocating necessary resources are required for a successful organization. Managing personnel involves obtaining the appropriate individuals, motivating them to perform, coordinating activities to ensure task completion, and monitoring their progress (Zaccaro et al., 2001). Leaders who develop effective leadership strategies understand the value of ensuring employee productivity, maintaining sustainability, keeping a competitive advantage, and remaining profitable (Romi et al., 2018).

Links to the Literature

A team's motivation is the leader's responsibility, but it can be challenging to encourage people to remain upbeat and enthusiastic in the face of obstacles (Griffiths et al., 2019). It takes more than motivation alone to inspire others; leaders should also have the capacity for empathy and connection. There are people in every organized group of workers, each with their areas of expertise, skill, and interest, resulting in occasional discord discordance (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). Conflicts are more likely to occur when a team lacks a single, distinct vision or goal, which can cause projects to fall through the cracks and other long-term harm to trust and morale. According to Caruso and Salovey's (2004) study, organizational employees were encouraged to rise above conflicts and stay focused on their career goals. Furthermore, leaders were encouraged to

act the way they wanted their employees to behave, consistent with an emotionally intelligent leadership style.

Vlaceskova and Mura (2017) suggested that managers must delegate responsibilities to employees and encourage subordinates to reach organizational objectives. Trusting in a manager's leadership to create a workplace environment that can foster growth is vital (Rakhra, 2018). The level of faith an employee has and willingness to act upon the claims, decisions, and choices refer to the trust of another (Seligman, 2021). Employees must trust their leaders to excel to their highest potential. Korner et al. (2015) determined that organizational culture is a prerequisite for teamwork in any organization. Two elements should be considered to understand the influence of corporate culture on teams: (a) how the organizational teams respond to change and (b), how the organization views its employees. Senior management must create a culture where collaboration becomes a custom for teams (Anderson et al., 2015).

To increase productivity, organizations should strive to develop best practices that employees can adapt to enhance team performance. Organizational team training effectiveness: leaders establishing relationships with managers and focus on trust-building among employees (Ford et al., 2017). Moreover, the organizations should provide the right technology for efficient and effective collaboration. P6 explained that varying incentives were believed to be a challenge. According to Halilbegovic et al (2018) a well-composed reward system is a practical approach to building employee work motivation. Employees are looking for recognition for their achievements and appreciation. Paris et al. (2018) suggested that leaders who understand the power of

culture, motivation, and discipline create effective learning environments, reward systems, and career development plans that keep employees motivated and performing at their best. Kinman (2019) believed that a reward system provides the opportunity to reward employees according to their value, helps attract and retain high-quality employees that the organization needs, and develops a performance-driven culture.

Links to the Conceptual Framework

Barriers and challenges to effective leadership strategies correlate with Herzberg's 1959 theory. Tan (2016) used the two-factor theory to determine that motivation is needed to engage employees to increase productivity. Herzberg et al. (1959) stated that recognition is a motivator that managers use to motivate their employees. A team's motivation is the leader's responsibility, but it can be challenging to encourage employees to remain enthusiastic in the face of obstacles (Griffiths et al., 2019). The basis of Herzberg's theory is that two sets of factors contribute to employees' behavior at work: hygiene factors and motivators (Dartey-Baah & Harlley, 2010). Barriers researchers commonly encounter is leaders being unsure of when or how to delegate; it can be tempting for a leader to try to handle too much or manage every little thing. This method is ineffective because it increases the risk of burnout and deprives a team of the chance to develop, learn and accept responsibility for their actions (Farokhzadian et al., 2018). P6 believes that strategy calls for organization-wide integrated efforts, critical steps which may only reach completion if you have coordination across functions. P1 states that implementation involved the need for change and leaders not willing to change can be a challenge. The significant relationship between barriers and challenges to effective

leadership is evident between the literature and the data provided by the study participants. The existing literature review corroborates the findings of the themes and subthemes under effective leadership strategies to improve business performance in the IT industry.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. The target population for this study included three senior managers and three mid-level managers from two firms in Lebanon that successfully developed and executed effective leadership strategies to improve business performance in the information technology (IT) industry. I used the purposive sampling technique to select the appropriate sample of participating IT firms to match the criteria. Both participating IT firms demonstrated successful leadership strategies for at least 5 years. The participants have been employed with their firms for a minimum of 5 years and executed successful leadership strategies with their employees.

The data collection process included semistructured interviews recorded on Zoom, transcribed via Otter.ai and coded with NVivo 12. The interview protocol (see Appendix B) and member checking were applied for this study's interview phase. NVivo 12 software was used to categorize, code, and identify key themes from the transcribed interviews. I applied methodological triangulation by analyzing various documents from the participating firms, including interview transcripts, reports, the company's public website, and business plans relevant to effective leadership strategies. Data saturation was reached after the 5th interview, were the information collected did not produce new

results. The two sampled firms' public information corroborated the data collected from the six interviews. Through the application of methodological triangulation, I identified four themes: (a) emotional Intelligence, (b) facilitators to implement successful leadership strategies, (c) measuring the effectiveness of leadership practices, and (d) barriers and challenges. In this section, included are the findings of the study as well as its application to professional practice and impact on social change. I will also discuss recommendations for action and further research, reflect on the doctoral study process, and provide a conclusion to support the research findings.

Implications for Social Change

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore effective leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business performance. The strategies can be applied to gain a new perspective on developing policies that could improve business performance, profitability, growth, and competitive advantage. The implications for positive social change include the potential for managers to improve leadership strategies to retain employees and improve job satisfaction. The successful retention of employees in any business environment could increase wealth creation and enhance the community's economic health. The idea that EI competencies are essential for leadership adaptation in various organizations has driven interest in EI and stirred several emotional and social learning platforms (Ingram, et al., 2019).

Research supported the idea that employees with a higher EI are more prone to adapt to changes in their day-to-day activities (Cherniss, 2010). The social impact of the study may drive the adoption of effective leadership strategies using EI competencies.

The social impact could also include minimizing community unemployment rates by improving employees' job satisfaction through effective leadership practices. The awareness created may contribute to solving the challenges associated with the lack of effective leadership strategies in the IT industry. Workplace environments could achieve better results when employees are more satisfied and engaged in their work (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020). The awareness created could positively impact community member's families by increasing wealth creation and enhancing the community's economic health. The research findings are essential for leaders who enroll in EI training to achieve organizational long-term business sustainability. Ghosh and Rajaram (2015) confirmed that EI drives 75% of company business success.

Recommendations for Action

The study's findings suggest some effective, innovative leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry can adopt to enhance and improve business performance. The recommendations derived from this study was based on the following themes: (a) emotional Intelligence; (b) facilitators to implementing successful leadership strategies; (c) measuring the effectiveness of leadership practices; and (d) barriers and challenges. I propose the following recommendations in line with the findings:

Some specific recommendations that might be useful for other Information Technology Firms include: (a) dedicate specific funds for trainings related to improving leaders emotional intelligence skills; (b) provide opportunities for growth, and support to employees working on their personal career development; (c) Recognize achievements and successes attained by employees; (d) Use evaluation metrics to measure leadership

effectiveness ; (e) empower employees and managers to share their opinions and suggestions; (f) provide opportunities for manager to develop their leadership skills; and (g) ensure IT industry management fosters an environment that supports a culture of effective leadership.

The conclusion of this study originating from an analysis of the data should be of interest to (a) senior and mid-level managers of IT firms, (b) mid-level and senior-level managers of nonprofit organizations, and (c) student researchers interested in exploring information related to the discipline. The results of this study could be disseminated to global IT firms to demonstrate the application of successful leadership strategies using emotional intelligence competencies. The study may provide organizational leaders with the knowledge to demonstrate the appropriate characteristics by incorporating EI skills to lead IT industry teams. In addition, the study findings could assist organizational leaders in classifying and recruiting the most suitable individual to lead IT virtual teams.

Successful CEOs must identify, formulate, implement, and develop an action plan that must be efficiently driven to all their team members to achieve organizational goals. Emotionally intelligent managers are likely to successfully manage their projects and subordinates, both hand in hand. Riaz and Ali Shah, (2022) identified the relationship between the CEO's EI, the decision-making process, and the efficiency of the board of directors in governance mechanisms. Managers with high EI were found to channel the organization's vision successfully to their team members, promoting team effectiveness and emotional attachment with subordinates and team efficiency (Balamoha & Gomathi, 2015). To address the ineffectiveness of poor leadership, I recommend that organizational

leaders use the findings from the study and recommendations to support their IT firms in incorporating EI competencies in their yearly managerial performance evaluation plans. In essence, ineffective leadership negatively influences employees, preventing them from working towards their goals and undermining the interest of the organization or the interest of its employees (Patel et al., 2019).

Organizational leaders include responsibility for evaluating prospective IT leaders and their leadership strategies to ensure they have a higher chance of success in the workforce. Organizational leaders should provide training on EI competencies to IT managers who supervise employees, creating opportunities for them to succeed on organizational projects. Nelis et al. (2009) posited that EI training significantly improved emotion regulation, comprehension, and general emotional skills. EI also positively impacted psychological well-being, subjective perceptions of health, quality of social relations, and employability. Similarly, studies conducted within the workplace have shown that EI can be improved through training and have underscored its critical role in effective performance (Gilar-Corbi. et al., 2019).

Organizational leaders should use the findings from the study as a resource to select prospective IT leaders that will make a difference in the workforce. The intention is to share the study's findings with nonprofit organizations like the United Nations and International IT firms through workshops, international conferences, and seminars. Also, I plan to present the findings to academic and professional webinars, which could potentially encourage the expansion of the findings with additional research.

Recommendations for Further Research

The primary purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore effective

leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business

performance. Researching the strategies leaders use to improve business performance in

the IT industry led to the discovery of four themes that future researchers should explore

in more detail. Two companies in Lebanon were the focus of this study. I identified four

themes: (a) emotional Intelligence; (b) facilitators to implementing successful leadership

strategies; (c) measuring the effectiveness of leadership practices; and (d) barriers and

challenges. Two main challenges that resonated with most participants were leaders' and

organizations' lack of EI competencies and practices. Therefore, I recommend that future

researchers use the themes from this study to:

1. Expand the scope of the study to include effective leadership strategies that IT
   leaders in other industries use to increase productivity.

2. Research successful leadership strategies IT leaders use to develop employee
   EI competencies.

3. Research the impact of EI competencies on the performance of newly
   recruited employees.

4. Continue to explore and study specific strategies that could increase employee
   motivation and job satisfaction, explicitly focusing on emotional intelligence
   competencies to improve business performance in the IT industry.

5. Conduct a quantitative or mixed methods multiple case study on various
   factors that improve leadership strategies in the workplace.

The studies by Kozlowski et al. (2018), MacCann et al. (2020), and Sun et al. (2019) complemented one another in terms of identifying the positive outcomes of teaching and applying emotional intelligence in various fields. Underlying their studies was the idea that EI could be taught and was worth promoting in the training of employees and individuals who wanted to strengthen their ability to be resilient in the face of adversity. Providing on-the-job training helps motivate employees and reduces turnover (Ju & Li, 2019). As a result, EI should be examined in association with leadership styles and apply performance indicators to make the relationship between EI and performance more transparent (Krén & Séllei, 2021). Future researchers should also explore the effectiveness of new innovative approaches to boost employee performance as policies and guidance on EI become more available for companies to adapt.

Some limitations related to the study included individual bias, which resulted in less than objective responses during interviews and observation. The study was limited to six seniors to mid-level leaders and omitted other employees. Another limitation of this qualitative research design study was finding participants and companies that used EI competencies to train their employees. Therefore, future researchers should use a qualitative study to explore the strategies used by a larger sample of leaders with extensive experience in implementing effective leadership strategies. Furthermore, the research of EI techniques from varying companies supported the verification of the transferability of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Reflection

As a UN employee, I have spent more than 18 years on various peacekeeping missions around the world, where effective leadership of top managers has been a challenge to many organizations. The lack of effective leadership strategies has led to many employees leaving the workforce because of low motivation and dissatisfaction with their jobs and managers. What is even more alarming is the lack of outrage over this problem. I believe it is time to shine a light on this issue by empowering IT firms' and organization leaders to adopt EI competencies and practices. When it was time to choose a topic for my dissertation journey, I could think of no more significant cause to champion. Although a long and challenging journey, I have learned to be more patient and more effective with my time management while mastering the art of independent research. I have added IT firms to my network or mentoring groups and created alliances with organizations to help me become a more focused and strategic leader. Going through this process has taught me to be more committed to the end goal of improving the IT firm's leadership strategies. My knowledge and understanding of effective leadership strategies in the IT industry has significantly broadened. The data collection process was delayed due to the lack of finding partner organizations to serve as participants in my study, and I believe this was due to the pandemic. I later discovered that the resistance was due to the request for internal documentation and information. Understandably, many organizations and individuals did not want to shoulder the professional risk of sharing internal documentation or proprietary information. I will use what I have learned in this

study to create an awareness of effective leadership strategies to motivate leaders and

their employees to excel and boost their job satisfaction.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the effective

leadership strategies that managers in the IT industry use to improve business

performance. The study was conducted in Lebanon with two Information Technology

(IT) firms. I used NVivo 12 software to organize and analyze the data that I collected

from the six participants, which led to the following themes: (a) emotional intelligence;

(b) facilitators implementing successful leadership strategies; (c) measuring the

effectiveness of leadership practices; and (d) barriers and challenges. All four themes

were supported by responses to semistructured interviews and in-depth thematic analysis

using Yin's (2018) qualitative data analysis method.

The findings of this study were consistent with the current research concerning

effective leadership strategies to improve business performance. Overall, including

emotional intelligence (EI) as a competence for effective leadership added meaningful

value to the study outcome. The study concludes that EI is essential for determining the

best leadership strategy and plays an important role in shaping the interaction between

managers and employees in their work environment. For any successful and growing

information Technology (IT) firm or organization, understanding employee's EI is crucial

for company performance and growth, playing a vital role in effective leadership

strategies in today's competitive business environment.

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Appendix A: POC Email

Dear [POC],

My name is Edward TURAY, and I am a student at Walden University seeking a Doctor of Business Administration degree with a focus on Effective Leadership Strategies in the Information Technology Industry. As a requirement for completion of my doctoral degree, I am collecting research for a dissertation entitled "Leadership Strategies to Improve Business Performance in the Information Technology Industry". I am seeking five senior managers and five mid-level managers of an Information Technology (IT) firm that have experience in providing leadership strategies to improve business performance.

This study is voluntary. Each interview will take about an hour. The interview will consist of questions related to effective leadership strategies within your company. The participant must: be a manager or a supervisor and have experience implementing effective leadership strategies in their department or unit. All responses are confidential and for this study. Can you help me identify a study participant from your organization? Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Edward TURAY
Doctoral Candidate
Doctor of Business Administration Program
Walden University
edward.turay@waldenu.edu

Appendix B : Participant Email

Dear [Participant],

My name is Edward TURAY, and I am a student at Walden University seeking a

Doctor of Business Administration degree with a focus on Effective Leadership Strategies

in the Information Technology Industry. As a requirement for completion of my doctoral

degree, I am collecting research for a dissertation entitled "Leadership Strategies to

Improve Business Performance in the Information Technology Industry". I am seeking

five senior managers and five mid-level managers of an Information Technology (IT)

firm that have successful experience in providing leadership strategies to improve

business performance to complete the study and I would be grateful if you would

consider taking the time to do an interview via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

Effective leadership strategies allow IT companies to retain employees and

improve their job satisfaction, which can increase wealth creation and enhance the

community's economic health. Participation in this study will help highlight successful

leadership strategies managers in the IT industry might use to gain new perspectives on

developing strategies that could improve business performance, profitability, growth, and

competitive advantage. Researchers can use the findings in future publications.

This study is voluntary. Each interview will take about an hour. The interview will consist

of questions related to Effective Leadership Strategies in the Information Technology

Industry. And also, request for company documentation that your organization has made

public on leadership policies and strategic plans. All responses are confidential for this

study.

. Details that identify the participant will be protected in the reporting of results. By participating it is not anticipated that you will assume any risk. You are free to withdraw at any time, even after the interview is complete.

Participant identity, organization identity and location will not be in the reporting of results. Identities of participants and agencies will be suppressed by replacing names with codes or pseudonyms.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Edward TURAY edward.turay@waldenu.edu I will also contact you within the next 5 days to answer any questions that you may want to ask and to ask for your participation.

If you are willing to participate, please respond to this email with, "I agree to participate in the interview process."

Name   _____

Role/Title   _____

Name & Location of Company __

Participated in Leadership Strategies YES [] NO []

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Edward Turay
Doctoral Candidate
Doctor of Business Administration Program
Walden University
edward.turay@waldenu.edu

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Research Question

What leadership strategies do managers in the IT industry use to improve business

performance?

Interview Questions

1. What effective leadership strategies do you use to improve business

   performance?

2. How did you involve the employees in developing and implementing

   emotional intelligence strategies?

3. What strategy did you find worked best to increase EI in employees?

4. How do you measure the effectiveness of your leadership strategies to

   improve business performance?

5. What key barriers did you face implementing leadership strategies to

   improve business performance?

6. How did you overcome the key barriers?

7. What additional information would you like to share regarding your

   leadership strategies to improve business performance?

Follow-up questions will be used as necessary to probe for additional details.