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Strategies for Developing Effective Teams Within Small Businesses

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Jennifer Wolfson

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Strategies for Developing Effective Teams Within Small Businesses

by

Jennifer Wolfson

MBA, Stockton University, 2020

BA, Stockton University, 2019

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2023

Abstract

Due to the prominence of building larger teams, some small businesses lack strategies to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. Small business managers yearn to instill team development strategies because they could produce a team that will use their abilities to enhance organizational performance. Grounded in Tuckman's group development theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies small business managers use to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. The participants were three managers from three small businesses who created effective teams. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and reviewing manuals, protocols, and training materials. Through thematic analysis, three themes were identified: (a) organizational culture, (b) employee engagement, and (c) employee training. A key recommendation is for small business managers to empower employees and invest time in collaboration training for employees. The implications for positive social change include the potential for individuals to advance and enhance their practices and develop themselves personally, improving organizational performance and profitability, increasing competitiveness throughout the geographical area, and strengthening the surrounding community.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

With the world continuously evolving and rapidly changing, small businesses have recognized that the key to successfully achieving their goals and objectives is through the development of teams (Apoorva, 2019). Successful teams generate desired outcomes for a small business, making it critical for managers to create a collaborative atmosphere to create an effective team. Through the implementation of team development strategies, small business managers may be able to foster a synergistic culture that emphasizes teamwork and collaboration in enhancing productivity and organizational performance.

Background of the Problem

Collaboration is taking over the workforce, making many organizations look to expand individuals' outputs by forming a group that encompasses diverse abilities and talents, improving performance and productivity (Ozigbo et al., 2020). When creating a team, managers must ensure that the team includes members with different backgrounds, expertise, and working styles, bringing diverse perspectives and mindsets that enables them to use their skills to their advantage. An effective team allows these individuals to share responsibility for their collaborative performance and become accountable for completing their tasks and contributing to group work (Khairova & Khairov, 2020). Through having an effective team, organizations can enhance their performance, for employees can work together to accomplish their set goals and objectives.

Having teams is an important aspect in larger corporations and conglomerates with an emphasis on instilling team development strategies to enable a large number of

people to work together effectively and efficiently. Due to the prominence of building larger teams, small businesses need more tactics to develop a team (Lacerenza et al., 2018). The techniques used need to be revised to enable a small group of people to work collaboratively. Most research has pertained to larger corporations and conglomerates, leaving a gap in research on team development within small businesses. For this study, I focused on the role of team development within small businesses in creating effective teams for improving organizational performance.

Problem and Purpose

The specific business problem was that small business managers lack team development strategies to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore team development strategies that South New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams for improving organizational performance.

Population and Sampling

Data were collected from three purposefully sampled small business managers within the South New Jersey area. Utilizing purposive sampling allows the researcher to obtain diverse perspectives about the problem at hand, given the aims and objectives of the study (Campbell et al., 2020). The participant eligibility criteria for this study were (a) managers or owners who successfully used strategies of team development to create effective teams to improve organizational performance, (b) managers or owners who have experience successfully retaining and managing more than 10 employees, and (c) managers or owners who have managed or owned their organization for 4 or more years.

These participants were likely to be rich with data and insight, so they could provide more relevant and useful knowledge that could enhance the findings to support the claims of the research purpose (see Johnson et al., 2020).

The participants were interviewed using a semistructured interview process to obtain their experiences and perceptions for exploring team development strategies that create effective teams. I also reviewed internal documents that include protocols, manuals, and training materials to gain additional evidence to substantiate the claims of implementing successful team development strategies to create effective teams for improving the performance of the participant's organization. I gained access to the participants through a phone call to explain the intent of my study and obtain their interest in participating in the study.

Nature of the Study

Research methods are processes and techniques used to collect and analyze data, categorized into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (Asenahabi, 2019). For my study, I selected the qualitative method to conduct interviews and gather data through observations and synthesizing data, identifying what approaches were beneficial to implement within an organization. Qualitative researchers seek to discover data from involvement in actual experiences, which leads to exploring and providing an in-depth understanding of a problem (Asenahabi, 2019). I explored and understood a problem by collecting and analyzing nonnumerical data through applying the qualitative method. Using the qualitative method, I identified and explored team development

strategies that South New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams for improving organizational performance.

Although a quantitative method allowed me to investigate a problem through a collection of quantifiable data in numerical form, it was not have been proper for this study. The study did not require me to use statistical data since it was based on the observations within the organization and the data were collected from interviews. A mixed-method approach gives a valuable account of the different ways to combine qualitative and quantitative methods (Asenahabi, 2019). Therefore, it was not the most plausible choice for this study.

For my study, I considered three research designs that could be potentially appropriate for qualitative research on implementing team development strategies: narrative research, phenomenology, and case study. Narrative research focuses on the experience that caused a change in an individual, which is told through storytelling (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Because this study is not based on creating stories about the lives of individuals, narrative research would not have been a feasible method. Phenomenology is predicated on the lived experiences of individuals, focusing on understanding how they were involved and how they perceived it (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Since the research I conducted was not based on the lived experiences of individuals, phenomenology was not an appropriate design. Finally, a case study entails the examination of the complexity of a problem and understating the phenomenon's activities and circumstances (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). I chose to use a multiple case study design because it was the best fit for an in-depth examination of a problem within a

real-life setting, referring to a person, a group, or an organization. In a multiple case study, there are similarities among the cases, enabling the researcher to determine the specific differences that can be replicated by similar cases (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Through the multiple case study, I sought out information from three participants, who provided different and vital information that could support my findings.

Research Question

What team development strategies do South New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams to improve organizational performance?

Interview Questions

1. What team development strategies are you using to create effective teams for improving organizational performance?
2. How do these strategies empower your employees to create effective teams for improving organizational performance?
3. What challenges have you had in implementing these strategies for improving organizational performance?
4. What have you done to mitigate those challenges for improving your organizational performance effectively?
5. What are the benefits of implementing these strategies for improving organizational performance?
6. What additional information can you share regarding your strategies for improving organizational performance within your organization?

Conceptual Framework

To create an effective team, some approaches can be implemented to increase the quality of team performance within an organization. The eminence of team performance depends on the collaboration of the team members, resulting in Bruce Tuckman creating the theory of group development (Super, 2020). Created in 1965, this theory was predicated on group dynamics, where an organization must undergo four stages to create a team to work together efficiently and effectively. These stages include forming, storming, norming, and performing, all of which can result in the team accomplishing their work successfully while meeting and overcoming challenges (Tuckman, 1965). Utilizing these stages enables an organization to create a collaborative team of individuals that combine their expertise to achieve their goals and objectives.

Throughout the team development process, the organization forms a team properly within each stage while continually learning and improving productivity. With the implementation of the team development process, an organization can create an effective team that can improve the organization's performance. Focusing on team dynamics, the team development stages incorporate different situations that can help develop a team to work collaboratively towards common goals (Tuckman, 1965). Within the team development stages, teams get to know one another, generate conflict, rectify problems, and work in unison with a mature and collective mindset. Utilizing the group development theory allowed me to explore team development strategies that small business managers can use to create effective teams for improving organization performance.

Operational Definitions

Employee empowerment: Employee empowerment is the process by which employees set their work goals, make decisions, and solve problems that are related to their duties by giving trust and authority to foster responsibility (Riyadi & Auliya, 2021).

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is the state of emotional and intellectual involvement that employees have toward their organization (Ameen & Baharom, 2019).

Leadership: Leadership, for the purpose of this study, is the procedure to guide, direct, and influence the thoughts, behaviors, and actions of employees to achieve organizational goals (Dewi & Wibowo, 2020).

Organizational culture: Organizational culture is a set of values and beliefs that guide behavior and give meaning to the employees that become habits when performing tasks within an organization (Mubarok, 2019).

Teambuilding: Teambuilding is the manner to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the team by creating a supportive working environment with proper understanding, effective communication, cooperation, and trust among the team members (Alvi et al., 2020).

Team development: As defined by Tuckman (1965), team development involves four stages that an organization must undergo to create a team, which include forming, norming, storming, and performing.

Team training: Team training is a structured learning experience with set objectives that expand the abilities, talents, and knowledge of employees so that they can accumulate greater skills to operate beyond their optimal level (Nmadu et al., 2021).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

When conducting valuable research, there are assumptions that may be considered risks that are made to ensure that the data collected has no potential bias (Clark & Vealé, 2018), which include the following for this study. First, I assumed that the participants would answer the interview questions honestly by providing details that would further shape how small businesses incorporate team development strategies. With a lack of honesty, there is a chance for the information to be skewed or invalid, leading to a disruption in the data collection process. Second, I assumed that the study might provide worth to small businesses by proving valuable knowledge on how to create an effective team to improve the performance of the organization. Third, I assumed that the instruments used for data collection might produce viable and valid data without any researcher or participant bias that would alter the research process. Fourth, I assumed that the internal documents examined during the interview process were significant and reflected the participant's business practices. The documents I reviewed were protocols and training materials, all of which are sourced from evidence that may provide accurate information that changes the culture surrounding team development strategies.

Limitations

Within the research process, there are limitations that may hinder the way the study is further conducted by presenting potential issues and challenges of the study that are out of the control of the researcher (Akanle et al., 2020). Being that the study took place in South New Jersey, one limitation was that the study outcomes might not be applicable to every business within the state and other geographical locations. The second limitation was that the responses from the participants were possibly not being sincere or honest, leading to an invalid collection of data. The third limitation was that some participants chose to not participate and engage in the interview process, making it difficult to obtain proper information. The fourth limitation was that the interview process was time-consuming, making it costly to conduct the proper research.

Delimitations

While performing the data collection process, there were delimitations that specify the scope of the study and display the boundaries of the study. Delimitations emphasize the boundaries that the researcher chooses to set as the limits of their work to include or exclude information (Akanle et al., 2020). As the researcher, I focused on team development strategies that were used to create an effective team and improve organizational performance. Another delimitation was that I selected only small business managers within South New Jersey and excluded those in other geographical locations.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Implementing team development strategies can transform an organization to incorporate teamwork to increase the productivity and performance of small businesses.

Teamwork creates an honest and open environment to allow team members to engage with each other, be encouraged to try new things, create innovative ideas, and obtain more knowledge to enhance their capabilities and skills (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020).

Incorporating the concept of teamwork can increase team engagement and empowerment within the organization, leading to the creation of an effective team. Motivating team members allows them to build trust with one another, create relationships, and provide the foundation for creating an effective team (Khan & Wajidi, 2019). Working together in a collaborative and non-judgmental manner can drive the team to work efficiently and effectively toward the improvement of performance of the organization.

Implications for Social Change

By incorporating teamwork within small businesses, team members are provided an opportunity for both personal and professional development (Wanyeki et al., 2019).

Leaders who give employees the opportunity to enhance themselves can motivate employees to work consistently to develop themselves further, improving their ability to perform tasks and resolve conflicts and challenges. Promoting inclusivity within team development strategies drives team members to feel a sense of ownership and worth toward the organization (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020). Making employees feel that they play a

vital role in the success of the small business may lead to the creation of an effective team, which could improve the organization's performance.

The results from the study may contribute to a positive social change by allowing individuals to work together within a team to continuously learn and improve their practices, along with developing themselves personally, which could enhance the performance of an organization. The increase in performance could enhance profitability, enabling organizations to contribute to society by creating a culture founded on organizational performance, which extends beyond the walls of a given space as it attracts a customer base, heightens competitiveness around the area, and could typically enhance the surrounding community as a whole.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore team development strategies that South New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. Extensive research based on team development strategies might help researchers understand approaches New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams to enhance organizational performance. Knowledge exists on team development strategies (Super, 2020); however, scholars have reported a lack of literature on what team development strategies are successful in creating effective teams for improving organizational performance (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Acknowledging the importance of effective teams that serve as a competitive advantage for businesses, few researchers have focused on the strategies of

team development. The focus of this study was to address this gap in literature by exploring and identifying team development strategies.

The organization of this literature review includes the fundamental concept of team building and development, leadership, organizational culture, team training and development, motivation, employee empowerment, employee engagement, and teamwork. To find relevant literature, I used the Walden University online library and Google Scholar. The databases used included business and management databases such as Business Source Complete, Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, ABI/INFORM Collection, and ScienceDirect. In addition, I used a collection of peer-reviewed journal articles to strengthen the literature review. The key search words and phrases used when searching the databases included *team development*, *teamwork*, *team building*, and *effective teams*. The literature review contains 43 references consisting of all peer-reviewed journals, with 92% of these sources being published within 5 years of the expected completion date of my study, and just four references (8%) being published more than 5 years from my anticipated graduation date.

Tuckman Model

For an organization to operate at its most effective and efficient capacity, developing a team that works together toward the goals and objectives of the business is necessary. Team development involves changing the team processes to ensure that the team transforms over time to improve the organization's performance (Etareri, 2022). Teamwork is an essential aspect of the successful implementation of team development, ensuring that employees collaborate. To build an effective team, organizations implement

team building methods, such as the Tuckman team development theory, which can improve the efficiency and productivity of the organization. Tuckman created this model that enables an organization to go through specific stages to develop a team that can drive the organization toward success (Etareri, 2022). By implementing team-building strategies throughout these stages, organizations can make the necessary changes to grow, face challenges, and tackle problems while finding the right solutions.

Since teamwork promotes an effective and collaborative environment, teams can be developed through Tuckman's stages of group development. This theory emphasizes four steps that guide an organization to establish teams successfully (Super, 2020). These steps could enable an organization to effectively form a team where they can work in tandem with one another to achieve the necessary goals and objectives of the organization. Creating a healthy work environment and establishing a strong connection with the employees may lead to increased productivity. Effective team development is essential in supporting teams to persevere through trials and tribulations to achieve their fullest potential (Ozigbo et al., 2020). By implementing these team development stages, employees can get to know one another, overcome conflicts and challenges, and create valuable relationships that can ensure they collaborate to achieve organizational goals.

The first team development stage is *forming*, where employees get to know each other and create relationships. This stage enables employees to take an interest in the experience and background of other employees, leading them to get acquainted with one another to discuss expectations (Ozigbo et al., 2020). Because the employees are new to the concept, they depend on the leader, wanting to feel a sense of inclusion. With this, the

team leader needs to take on the mentor role, focusing on the team's composition (Super, 2020). By setting expectations and defining the mission and goals of the organization, employees can combine their skills to create a competitive advantage. From this, the team leaders emphasize the importance of interacting with each other, forming bonds that allow them to work on their roles without misunderstandings. This stage leads to the creation of harmony among team members or the failure to achieve the organization's desired goals (Jones, 2019). As the team members start to work together, they begin to work independently on combined responsibilities, which may lead to tension that negatively impacts team cohesion.

The second development stage is *storming*, where conflicts tend to increase due to employees not yet being accustomed to the different working types of others, causing tension within the work environment. Fixated on the imperfections of others, the employees start to clash due to different opinions and personalities, resulting in many disagreements. This team development stage causes team members to become hostile to one another to express their individuality and resist forming a group structure (Jones, 2019). Within this stage, team leaders should act as instructors, collectively bringing everyone together and resolving the ongoing issues before continuing. Allowing employees to come together and discuss their differences ensures that the employees recognize and rectify the problems. Furthermore, by developing a positive and social environment, the employees feel compelled to discuss issues and ideas without feeling uncomfortable or strained, resolving conflicts with employees (Super, 2020).

Incorporating a supportive atmosphere can lead employees to understand what is expected of them, leading to open communication where disagreements can diminish.

The third development stage is *norming*. In this stage, conflicts are solved, and the employees learn to respect one another, working with their differences to create harmony (Jones, 2019). By recognizing their skill set and working style, employees can encourage each other's strengths and bring out the best in each other. Providing positive feedback and being dependent on each other, the employees socialize more and feel committed to reaching the same goal, creating cohesion among everyone (Ozigbo et al., 2020). This comradery allows the team leader to act as a coach, building trust and structure within the workplace and collaborating toward achieving the organization's objectives. Having a collaborative environment allows the employees to perfect their teamwork and work cohesively toward success. Through mutual understanding, the employees can tackle more challenging goals and continue to grow personally and professionally (Super, 2020). Being encouraged by one another, the team can develop further and cooperate with a collaborative mindset to succeed.

The fourth development stage is *performing*, where employee relationships positively impact the organization's performance. Employees are motivated and empowered by each other, wanting to continually work toward the organization's goals and objectives, increasing productivity (Jones, 2019). The team leader acts as a facilitator, ensuring that the team continuously learns and improves their tasks, increasing their ability to perform and solve problems. Since the team is thoroughly developed, the employees can build on the fundamentals of task proficiency and team cohesion (Super,

2020). As a result, the team can adjust to unexpected changes and improve their abilities, engaging collaboratively to expand the business's productivity. The team members' focus is channeled toward achieving the ultimate desired goal, having everyone involved and participating for the organization's greater good (Jones, 2019). Through collaboration, team members can work alongside one another and incorporate their diverse abilities and skills to improve the performance and productivity of the organization.

Other Team Development Models

Like Tuckman's model of group development, some other theories and models have been prominent within research, for they provide different approaches to better understanding the process of creating a team. To ensure team effectiveness when developing a team, no model is superior to others, for each can produce an effective team through a series of stages or factors (Vaida & Serban, 2021). Two main authors, Wheelan and Tubbs, have had a pronounced impact on the field of group development, creating diverse methodologies that emphasize multiple stages for a team to be formed. This section provides a detailed overview of the models created by these renowned authors that support the conceptual framework of this study.

Wheelan's Model

Akin to Tuckman's theory, the integrated model, created by Susan Wheelan in 1996, suggested that groups mature through working together. This model showcased a significant relationship between the length of time a group has worked together and their behavioral patterns (Vaida & Serban, 2021). Wheelan proposed four stages that enable an organization to develop: dependency and inclusion, counter-dependency and conflict,

trust and structure, and work and productivity. By going through these stages, an organization can further develop employees through association with specific issues and communication patterns, where they obtain more knowledge through collaboration.

When the team begins to form, employees begin to interact with each other and look to their leader for advice, for they want to adjust to their unfamiliar environment without uneasiness. This begins the first stage and earliest period of group development, which emphasizes dependency and inclusion, where the employees start to interact with one another and are dependent on their leader, for they feel that this situation is new and uncomfortable (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). Since this is a different experience, employees are more concerned about their safety and inclusion, want to avoid conflict, and are reluctant to engage in work if incompatible with others. These employees tend to be polite and attentive, conforming to their roles and upholding their leader's tasks (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). The leader is expected to provide a sense of security and guidance to the new employees, making them be relied on to offer safety and facilitate conversations. Throughout this stage, employees start to collaborate, become more comfortable with their colleagues, and be willing to perform their tasks without conflict.

As the group progresses and a solid relationship is created, there are trials and tribulations among the employees, as they are individually tasked with roles that may present challenges for collaboration. This begins the second stage, which encompasses counter-dependency and conflict, which gives members more responsibilities and opportunities to make decisions regarding operational strategies and what roles employees can assume within the process (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). Feeling more

empowered, employees become more participative in their work and feel free to express their opinions, whether through disagreements or arising issues. This newfound independence can lead employees to fight amongst themselves about group goals and procedures and challenge the leader, resulting in a rise in conflict (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). The leader is expected to encourage independence, allowing employees more freedom in their decisions and opinions. Conflict is an unavoidable part of the group development process, for at this stage, employees are tasked to collaborate and create a unified set of procedures, which can provoke differences of opinions among them.

Although conflict may cause a strain amongst the employees, their persistence in collaborating allows them to diffuse all challenges and acknowledge their differences to take appropriate actions together. This begins the third stage, which accentuates trust and structure, where if employees manage to work through their conflicts and issues, they developed, solidified, and strengthened their relationship with one another (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). Through this bond, employees can build trust and be more willing to cooperate, making their communication patterns more open and task oriented. Employees begin to feel more comfortable in their relationships with others and be more mature in their negotiations about their goals, role, and procedures, which can lead to a higher commitment to their organization (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). The leader is expected to play a pivotal role in guiding employees by becoming their advisor and ensuring they are supportive and honest with each other. In this stage, employees find themselves within their team and understand their roles and responsibilities, creating a positive and effective connection.

When the group of employees have created a strong bond of reliance and dependency, they can accomplish every challenging feat to enhance their organization's growth and performance. This begins the fourth stage, which highlights work and productivity, which entails that a group has resolved many of its issues and conflicts, leading employees to collaborate and focus their aspirations on achieving their goals and accomplishing their tasks (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). The employees' energy is used to solve tasks and work productively instead, where they can openly exchange ideas and provide feedback to one another. This stage presents clearly defined goals, roles, and responsibilities for employees, having them assigned to those who fit them best, with collaboration as the focus (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). At this stage, the leader becomes a resource and a consultant for employees, displaying an improvement in delegating responsibilities by allowing employees to have the freedom to assert themselves and delegate their responsibilities.

Tubbs's System Model

Taking a different approach to group development are different models that can showcase the diverse ways of creating a team, which include a model created by Stewart Tubbs. Tubbs proposed a model in 1978 that treats this concept from a systemic perspective, treating it as a process that contains subprocesses than a linear developmental line, such as Wheelan's integrated model (Vaida & Serban, 2021). Tubbs (2012) suggested that three subprocesses form the inputs, outputs, and throughputs for a group, each causing a group to change and adapt to situations that occur. This process ensures that a group can learn from the multiple hurdles it may confront and incorporate

feedback into its course of action, allowing it to acquire valuable knowledge for proper collaboration (Vaida & Serban, 2021). Through studying the interactions within small groups, Tubbs created a four-phase model of group development, focusing on the communication patterns and interactions that allow the group to collaborate effectively.

When starting to create a team, group members begin to connect and converse with each other, allowing their discomfort to settle and lead to effective collaboration. Through this orientation phase, group members begin interacting with each other, acknowledging their expectations, and collaborating on tackling their tasks (Tubbs, 2012). Akin to the beginning stages of different models, group members start to form connections and relationships with others, elevating the initial uncomfortable encounters. This sense of inclusion and security allows them to assess the limitations and opportunities of the project, creating a collaborative and cooperative work environment (Tubbs, 2012). This phase becomes the start of group members coming into their own skills, responsibilities, and roles, leading to independence in their tasks.

With the group members enhancing their abilities and concentrating on their own undertakings, they are more inclined to work independently which may cause unwanted tension among them. As group members become more comfortable with their relationships, they focus more on their tasks than on creating strong bonds with others (Tubbs, 2012). Becoming more committed to the success of their work, group members reach a level of individuality which leads to hostility and conflict within the group, for there is a conception that all should go about their same responsibilities without room for growth. Tubbs (2012) suggested that conflict is an important interaction among people,

for it clarifies many aspects of how the group functions, allowing them to enhance their conformity and prioritize group thinking. Having disagreements is a prominent aspect when creating a team, employees can overcome these challenges, improving their resolution skills, and developing trust amongst one another. Generating a strong connection with each other allows employees to work effectively with one another, for they have learned to set their differences aside and collaborate to improve their performance.

As tensions begin to dissolve, group members can create a valuable work relationship where they use their diverse skills to improve their performance. With conflicts resolving, group members begin to understand their roles and responsibilities, compromising on the ideas and tasks set for them (Tubbs, 2012). Having less friction in the work environment, group members begin to value the input of each other and work together to obtain impactful solutions through collaborating on appropriate strategies. Feeling more comfortable in their interactions, group members start to view each other as a valuable part of the group, allowing them to listen and provide constructive feedback to enhance their productivity. Although they continually develop on a group level, group members can grow on an individual scale, obtaining more knowledge on how to improve their performance.

Through continuous collaboration and learning from one another, the group members can work together to complete their goals, for they feel comfortable working with those they created a connection with. Having effectively created a strong bond with one another, group members begin examining the efficiency of the procedures they have

undergone, understanding the direction of their decisions (Tubbs, 2012). Through this analysis, group members can reaffirm their support for the direction taken and the decisions made, for they feel that they have taken the most appropriate steps toward achieving their objectives. Having created a strong bond with one another, group members can continue to further develop their skills, roles, and responsibilities through learning from one another.

Overview of Models

Examining Wheelan's model and Tubbs's system model showcases a solid correlation to Tuckman's theory, for they emphasize that to create an effective team, a group must go through a series of stages and phases to learn to collaborate and cooperate properly. These models show that employees are timid at the start of the transition and begin interacting with one another, learning how to work together and form their independence (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). Once they feel more comfortable, the inevitable conflict arises, making employees create tension between others and their leader, for they do not want to depend on anyone for their roles and responsibilities. As they work through their friction, employees become more comfortable and create a strong bond, allowing them to rely on one another (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999). Understanding one another and collaborating effectively on their tasks, employees have learned to work productively and put all their combined efforts into achieving their desired goals. Wheelan's model and Tubbs's system model support my study, for they display the importance of incorporating the appropriate steps to create an effective team.

Team Building and Development

Creating a team is a vital part of an organization's function properly, for it allows group members to learn to work together successfully. Establishing and developing a team is enhanced through implementing team-building activities, allowing employees to collaborate to fulfill their motives and objectives. Team building involves enabling individuals with a shared understanding and common purpose to work together to achieve organizational goals (Ozigbo et al., 2020). This technique comprises four fundamental elements: goal setting, interpersonal relations, problem-solving, and role clarification, all of which enable an organization to incorporate activities to foster collaboration. Through goal setting, employees are encouraged to develop a shared understanding of the team's mission and goals, motivating, and providing them with various tools to achieve what is desired (Ozigbo et al., 2020). Incorporating team-building activities can create interpersonal relations, building valuable and positive relationships to enhance the skills of the individuals.

Having team-building activities at the forefront of every organization's practice allows employees to learn from one another and motivate them to continuously enhance their abilities and responsibilities. These activities are designed to enable employees to overcome barriers to effective communication and provide them opportunities to build support, trust, and confidence, among others (Ozigbo et al., 2020). Through these affirmative interactions, employees become involved in the decision-making process to solve problems, enabling them to identify challenges and evaluate the predicted solutions. By making all employees' input an essential aspect of their practices, organizations can

set clear expectations that are to be understood by employees, for they are given the autonomy to work to achieve their desired goals (Ozigbo et al., 2020). These aspects are considered the drivers for an organization to implement team building as a development tool, for these activities improve the communication and interactions of the employees, allowing them to enhance their working abilities.

Although these elements allow organizations to incorporate team-building activities effectively, there are challenges that can arise that hinder the organization's ability to create a team. It is important to acknowledge the trials and tribulations that can come about, making it essential for organizations to create diverse strategies to solve them (Masanja & Chambi, 2020). Even though a team encompasses a variety of diverse individuals, there may be a lack of diverse skills and interests that hinders how they achieve their goals, making it important to have a team with a range of different abilities. Poor communication may arise where there is a lack of interaction between employees and leaders, making it vital for meetings to provide feedback and guidance (Masanja & Chambi, 2020). By incorporating an honest and open way of communication, leaders can connect with employees which could allow for the formation of a valuable work relationship, enhancing the creation of a team.

When building a team, there may be a lack of effective leadership, making it important to have a strong leader with a sense of purpose and direction to motivate and hold employees accountable. Although leaders are prevalent within teams, team conflict is a frequent problem, making it vital to have interactive skills to effectively work together to resolve disagreements (Masanja & Chambi, 2020). These challenges arise

when there is confusion about roles, where employees lack an understanding of their responsibilities, making it important to ensure that employees adhere to their assigned roles. By overcoming these barriers to implementing team building, a team can learn to collaborate efficiently and effectively toward accomplishing their goals.

Team building is an essential group phenomenon used by organizations to harness the energies of all employees, which allows them to combine their abilities and efforts to create a competitive advantage. Through developing team building activities, it allows employees to define their strengths and maximize their productivity, enhancing organizational growth and performance (Obiekwe et al., 2021). These team-building activities enhance the employees' motivation and empower them to increase the organization's productivity. By building a healthy and formidable team, the employees feel ownership and belonging, leading them to work collaboratively toward shared objectives (Obiekwe et al., 2021). With these activities, employees can formulate a sense of teamwork that improves problem-solving skills, builds trust, and enhances communication. Although teams develop at various times in diverse ways, they become more productive with a healthier environment and more satisfied employees (Obiekwe et al., 2021). By utilizing team-building activities, an organization can develop an effective team that can continually evolve to improve the performance of the business.

Through adequately developing teams, it can bring out the best in the employees, allowing them to improve their performance and ensure the organization's success continually. A significant factor in the success of effective teams is the team's quality and level of performance, which depends on these team-building activities (Obiekwe et al.,

2021). Through the team development theory by Bruce Tuckman, an organization can cultivate a team through multiple stages that enhance how employees interact and engage. For an organization to create an effective team, factors need to be considered, such as leadership, organizational culture, team training and development, motivation, and employee empowerment and engagement, for they influence individuals into working together toward accomplishing organizational goals.

Leadership

Organizations need a strong and communicative leader willing to give their all to lead employees to collaborate to achieve organizational goals and objectives to create an effective team. Leadership is how an individual leads a group of employees by influencing their behavior to work together and productively perform to achieve organizational goals (Dewi & Wibowo, 2020). The role of these individuals is to be innovative and create a shared vision aligned with their core values, where they encourage, manage, and support their employees to work creatively and confidently toward accomplishing their desired objectives. As a leader, the individual takes on many roles, such as a mentor, instructor, coach, and facilitator, for they seek to motivate their team of employees through challenging times and profitable opportunities that may arise (Super, 2020). Taking on these roles allows a leader to promote collaboration, ensuring that when creating a team, they can build on the foundations of proficiency and develop team cohesion.

Through being a mentor, a leader aids employees in adapting to new people and decreasing the timidity of the team and their role in it, focusing on establishing team

composition and expectations and defining the mission, strategy, and goals. Although the team encompasses diverse individuals, a leader can lead employees to identify with the team and interact with one another, managing the team boundaries to ensure they understand their roles (Super, 2020). Through intermingling with one another, the leader intervenes and provides feedback and assistance when needed, promoting a positive social atmosphere to increase creativity and innovation. Being viewed as an instructor, a leader can encourage employees to ask questions and seek help when they face challenges, helping them understand what is happening with open communication (Super, 2020). Providing helping behavior toward employees promotes team cohesion and coordination, for they are willing to push them to improve their proficiencies through difficulties and conflicts.

It is imperative for the leader to promote a positive peer environment for employees, for there may be conflicts and tensions that arise, which could cause disagreements, disrupting team cohesion. Through social development, employees begin to realize their responsibilities and become committed to team success, creating a supportive social environment where collaboration is created (Super, 2020). As conflicts and tensions resolve, a leader is viewed as a coach and expert assistant, encouraging self-development and the learning necessary to support creative thinking. By stimulating intellectual growth through asking challenging questions, producing innovative solutions, and inspiring alternative viewpoints, the leader can further create team cohesion, for they can facilitate collective reflections on their overall performance (Super, 2020). Having provided feedback on team coordination, strategy selection, and goal revisions, the

leadership role diffuses into being viewed as a facilitator since employees are assuming greater responsibilities. The role of a facilitator focuses on promoting team progress to management and developing long-term plans, building upon the foundations of expertise and team cohesion (Super, 2020). Since leadership is now shared amongst employees, the team is now self-regulated and self-managed, able to determine their actions and corrective strategies for continuous improvement. Through taking on these roles, a leader becomes aware of what is needed of them when creating an effective team, whether it be mindset or skills.

To be a good leader, an individual must learn and cultivate the appropriate skills and qualities to ensure that employees work effectively together. A leader must be accessible and approachable to their employees, enabling them to create open and honest communication channels to share a clear message and make the more difficult and complex situations easier to understand (Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2019). By having proper interactions, leaders can delegate roles and responsibilities to employees, for they acknowledge the strengths and capabilities of the employees to ensure that they meet the requirements to achieve their goals. Through creating valuable relationships utilizing conversation, leaders need to show a level of commitment and empathy for their team members, which can lead these employees to become loyal to an individual that is attentive to their growth (Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2019). By being creative and intuitive, a leader generates innovative ideas and inspire employees to become more innovative, making them more optimistic about working toward accomplishing their aspirations.

When tasked with creating an innovative competitive advantage, a leader must be courageous and dependable when in challenging situations. Having trials and tribulations that arise, employees need someone they can count on to provide problem-solving decisions (Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2019). When making these difficult choices, leaders must have strategic and critical thinking and decision-making skills to ensure that they are formulating the most appropriate decisions that leads the organization toward achieving its goals. Through handling these problematic situations, leaders must show accountability for their actions and be willing to take the blame when mishaps happen, leading employees to develop trust (Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2019). Having a trustworthy leader improves the quality of relationships between them and employees, for they view the leader as a competent and reliable individual willing to go the extra mile for their employees. A leader must motivate employees to work to the best of their ability by showing the right direction by providing support and recognition for their efforts, whether through compensation, rewards, or incentives (Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2019). By having an empowering leader, employees can master their own skills and capabilities, boosting their confidence and inspiring them to work harder to enhance their performance and productivity. Having obtained the skills and qualities it takes to be a good leader, they need to delineate the behavior and style to which they can lead their team of employees to maximize their productivity, growth, and cooperation (Irwan et al., 2020). Determining their style allows leaders to instill their values, beliefs, personality, and experience to create and implement strategies and plans to motivate and direct employees to achieve their goals and objectives. Leadership style is a comprehensive pattern of a

combination of distinctive characteristics, traits, and behaviors used by the leader when interacting with employees (Dewi & Wibowo, 2020). Leaders can improve communication and collaboration, increase employee engagement, and strengthen team effectiveness by acknowledging their appropriate leadership style. By understanding their own leadership style, leaders take ownership, control, and responsibility for the actions of their team and inspire them to enhance their capabilities while improving organizational performance.

The transformational leadership style has been linked to the improvement of employees when working toward enhancing organizational productivity. Founded by James Burns (1978), transformational leadership was defined as the process where leaders and employees engage in a mutual relationship of enhancing one another to a greater degree of morality and motivation. Transformational leadership creates a strong and positive relationship with employees, encouraging them to go out of their comfort zone and achieve more than their perceived capabilities. Known as visionary, transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees, being proactive and aiding them in achieving more than expected by developing an image that can lead to their success (Lasiny et al., 2021). These leaders make employees aware of the importance of their roles and performance to the organization, encouraging them to look beyond their self-interest and further develop themselves.

Transformational leaders are individuals who inspire employees to transcend their interests for the good of the organization, aligning their values with that of the business. These leaders involve employees in the decision-making process, share power, and

knowledge, and foster autonomy, which can help the organization's transformation (Gaviria-Rivera & Lopez-Zapata, 2019). By showing consideration toward the developmental needs of employees, these leaders allowed them to explore new opportunities, acknowledge organizational challenges and create innovative solutions, all of which inspire the employees to work harder. Leaders using this type of leadership are concerned with strong self-identification, giving employees individual and intellectual stimulation considerations, which motivates them to work to the best of their ability (Gaviria-Rivera & Lopez-Zapata, 2019). Allowing employees to develop themselves further enables leaders to create a favorable and collaborative environment that inspires them to become charismatic in their work to their maximum potential.

Transformational leadership is conceptualized into four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions are considered attributes of leaders in becoming transformational within their organization, focusing on encouraging employees to enhance their work performance. Idealized influence refers to the leaders creating high morale and being a role models to employees, encouraging and inspiring them so that they emotionally identify with the mission and vision portrayed by the leader (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020). Inspirational motivation entails leaders providing employees with challenges and meaning in their work, elaborating on the goals that need to be accomplished in a motivating way, which positively energizes them. Intellectual stimulation refers to leaders focusing on challenging employees to think critically, question the leader, and seek new and innovative ways to address arising issues (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020).

Individualized consideration encompasses how a leader is courteous and supportive, paying close attention to the employee's needs, developments, and expectations, which make them feel valued for their efforts. Having an individual who incorporates these dimensions into their employee approach can portray a trustworthy and charismatic leader committed to their growth and that of the organization.

Incorporating the transformational leadership style in their practices allows leaders to increase the performance of employees, for they are ambitious and inspired to work harder since their developmental needs are met. By identifying and articulating a positive vision, fostering acceptance of group goals, providing individualized support, and ensuring intellectual stimulation, employees are encouraged to enhance their creativity (Gaviria-Rivera & Lopez-Zapata, 2019). Charismatic behavior toward providing employees with these opportunities enables these leaders to develop trust and loyalty, for they have a mission of bringing them together to work toward a shared vision that enhances the organization's performance. By motivating employees to work harder and further develop their abilities, transformational leaders can create a culture based on shared beliefs and values to ensure that they work together to improve organizational performance.

Organizational Culture

Having a leader that creates a strong and supportive organizational culture is key to ensuring that employees effectively work together, for it is important to have an environment that is motivating and informative. Organizational culture is a system of values and norms shared by employees, guiding their behavior to be in line with that of

the organization, which can increase the effectiveness in reaching the desired mission, vision, and goals (Wahjoedi, 2021). These underlying assumptions and beliefs are held by employees and developed to overcome external adaptation and internal integration problems, becoming habits that enable employees to work at their optimal level.

Having an influential system that reflects the personality and characteristics that distinguish organizations from one another gives employees a feeling of unity and purpose. Incorporating an organizational culture can make employees feel that their work is more meaningful, allowing them to reflect on their ideas, behavior, and performance to enhance organizational growth (Mubarok, 2019). Feeling a sense of worth from their productivity, employees become comfortable with their work and develop a committed mindset that is motivated to work harder to achieve organizational success. As employees develop a sense of ownership and focus on their responsibilities, they become encouraged to improve their knowledge and capabilities, making them loyal and engaged with the organization's practices (Pathirana, 2019). Feeling as if they are an important aspect of how the organization functions can enable employees to put forth their best efforts into enhancing organizational performance.

An organizational culture performs several meaningful functions that can increase competence, promote encouragement, and foster a competitive value that effectively impacts organizational performance. These functions include providing organizational identity to employees, creating collective commitment, promoting social stability and cohesion, and developing driving sources and behavioral patterns, all which shape how employees perform their responsibilities and roles (Mubarok, 2019). Through

acknowledging that an organizational culture provides these benefits, it is important to acknowledge the key features that allow organizations to capture their values and essence through this environment. These characteristics include innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, and stability (Mubarok, 2019). Every organization has a distinct value for each of these characteristics and, when combined, creates a unique culture that is one of a kind.

Placing a high value on innovation and attention to detail allows organizations to empower employees to work at their best capacity, emphasizing the enhancement in their skills and capabilities. Through empowering employees, they are likely to become more inventive, take risks, and perform their work effectively and accurately (Olayiwola & Akeke, 2022). Ensuring that the organizational culture of an organization presents these characteristics determines if it can be fruitful in aligning employees or differentiating their viewpoints. Centering their tasks around teams allows employees to become competitive toward accomplishing their organizational goals, showcasing aggressive behavior toward continuing to be rule-oriented and predictable with their efforts (Olayiwola & Akeke, 2022). Focusing on the organization's outcomes and how their decisions can impact the employees enables leaders to concentrate on enhancing their performance.

There is a distinction between a strong and weak organizational culture, for there are vast differences that can lead employees to work effectively with one another to create a team. In a weak organizational culture, employees have diverse values and

beliefs, working against the organization's priorities, making it difficult for them to collaborate and identify with the practices set by the business (Pathiranage, 2019). Within a weak organizational culture, employees behave in a way that is unpredictable with organizational priorities because there is a lack of transparent and consistent communication, along with direction from leadership. Employees have difficulties defining and aligning with organizational values, along with challenges in determining the best way to perform their responsibilities.

On the contrary, in a strong organizational culture, employees have similar views and values, where they feel comfortable working with those that share their perspectives on how to effectively work together. Within this organizational culture, employees share the same ideals and goals, and behave consistently with the organizational values (Pathiranage, 2019). Leaders exhibit a strong organizational culture to influence employees' work attitudes and productivity to create a positive culture that engages and motivates employees. By establishing standards and creating an open and honest communication channel, a leader encourages collaboration and teamwork, where employees are inspired to enhance their productivity and develop loyalty to the organization. These employees are encouraged to align their beliefs and morals with an organization's current and future direction, developing a sense of ownership and responsibility, which increases their commitment to the organization (Pathiranage, 2019). Within a strong organizational culture, employees and leaders provide quality efforts that contribute to improving organizational performance.

Team Training and Development

Being that an effective team encompasses talented individuals, organizations need to continue to develop their abilities and proficiencies, for it allows them to work to the best of their ability. Creating a competitive advantage depends on the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities, for their combined talents can boost an organization's reputation (Karim et al., 2019). Through training and development, team members can further their expertise and capabilities to ensure they use their competencies to the best of their ability. These factors are of growing importance to organizations, especially small businesses, for they are beneficial tools for building a more committed, collaborative, and productive workforce (Karim et al., 2019). Training and development are necessary to ensure that employees work collaboratively to enhance their productivity and improve their performance, bridging the gap between their current and expected future performance. Having well-trained and developed employees enables them to perform their responsibilities and carry out their duties effectively and efficiently.

Having employees be a vital asset to the success of an organization, it is significant to instill proper training to allow them to heighten their capabilities in achieving the organization's objectives. Training is an activity focused on increasing and broadening employees' abilities, allowing them to improve their technical and conceptual skills to possess the necessary proficiencies to handle complicated situations and better execute their work (Nmadu et al., 2021). Not only does training develop the capabilities of employees, but it also sharpens their thinking and creativity to make better decisions more productively and efficiently. This valuable tool is imperative to create and enhance

the quality of the employees, for it enables them to expand their productivity and be inspired by providing them with all the information to carry out their roles and responsibilities (Karim et al., 2019). Incorporating training allows employees to gain more skills and improve their abilities, leading them to work effectively and efficiently with each other.

By gaining more experience through training, employees can change their attitudes and behavior to quickly acclimate to diverse scenarios and collaborate to perform their tasks effectively. Receiving ample training enhances the morale and motivation of employees, enabling them to adjust and adapt to new situations and challenges that arise within the organization (Al-Khaled & Chung, 2021). Through obtaining more knowledge and enhancing their expertise, employees are encouraged to continue developing themselves, allowing them to maintain and improve their performance further. Development is a long-term process utilizing methodical and organized procedures by which employees learn conceptual and theoretical knowledge to help them prepare for the future (Sinaga & Riyanto, 2021). Utilizing this tool enables employees to build their knowledge and capabilities to be better prepared to take on challenges and risks in their future jobs. Development is an ongoing and versatile set of activities to bring employees to another performance threshold to develop their personal and professional skills (Karim et al., 2019). This tool allows employees to grow and learn to enhance themselves in the future, allowing them to grow personally and professionally, increasing motivation and empowerment to perform their duties optimally.

Inspiring employees allows them to boost their overall productivity and heightens their satisfaction with their work, improving the overall quality of their job. Multiple training and development techniques enable employees to acquire new information and capabilities, which are classified into behavioral and cognitive methods (Karim et al., 2019). Known as on-the-job training, the behavioral tactics include orientations, job instruction, job rotation, and coaching, all of which provide employees with opportunities to learn through visual and hands-on experiences. On the other hand, known as off-the-job training, the cognitive methods include lectures, technology-based learning, and simulations, all of which enable employees to work at their own pace without much distraction and gain knowledge on actual work situations that may arise (Karim et al., 2019). The kind of training implemented depends on an organization's strategies, objectives, and needs, allowing it to use a proper and effective method to bring out the best employee performance. Through these training and development processes, employees can gather valuable information that allowed them to work together to achieve and acquire the highest level of skills and competencies to enhance their performance (Al-Khaled & Chung, 2021). Having these procedures allows employees to heighten their abilities, motivating them to work to the best of their ability and improve their productivity.

Motivation

Motivation is crucial for a team to carry out their duties effectively, for it encourages and inspires them to work at their optimal performance when accomplishing organizational goals. Motivation represents the psychological influence compelling

employees to take on an action or challenge in the form of an attitude or behavior that enables them to achieve their desired goals (Mubarok, 2019). Through this encouragement, employees reflect a sense of responsibility and become passionate about their work, increasing their desire to perform well and fulfill their desired goals. Work motivation is the establishment of driving power that alters the conduct of employees, which creates excitement in their work so that they can collaborate and integrate their efforts to achieve satisfaction (Pallawagau, 2021). If a manager wants to succeed in guiding employees to achieve the organization's set goals, it is essential to understand this psychological process. Three key elements result from this procedure: direction, intensity, and persistence, all of which play a vital role in allowing employees to work toward higher productivity (Mubarok, 2019). The direction of an employee is the goal that spurs them into their action, allowing them to determine their course of action to keep moving forward. Intensity is the strength of the response in the chosen direction, becoming the motivational force that enhances the employees' efforts (Irwan et al., 2020). Persistence is the duration with which an employee expels all their efforts toward the direction or goals they set out to achieve.

Adopting the psychological process of the three elements of direction, intensity, and persistence allows the leader to further understand how to appropriately motivate employees to work to the best of their ability. These factors are influenced by extrinsic and intrinsic aspects, which are influential categories of motivation that psychologists have deemed to be characteristics of individuals (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). With these categories of motivation, employees are influenced to achieve their goals and complete

their tasks more productively and effectively. Extrinsic motivation is a type of behavior driven by external factors that come from outside the employee's self, referring to participating in actions to receive reinforcement or avoid punishment (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Through extrinsic motivation, employees become motivated because they expect to obtain compensation and prevent something unpleasant, which stimulates them to work to the best of their ability. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation is a type of behavior that involves performing tasks and activities for the inherent satisfaction with oneself in achieving their goals (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). With intrinsic motivation, employees are motivated to act at their optimal level for the reward of the challenge and enjoyment of executing their responsibilities, along with feeling satisfied by seeing it through. Through these internal and external motivational factors, employees become committed to performing at the best of their ability and satisfied with their work, which enhances their productivity and efficiency. Understanding these influential aspects allows an organization to build motivation in employees who work hard to achieve their goals and effectively collaborate to achieve organizational goals.

Employee Empowerment

For a team to work effectively together, there needs to be a sense of empowerment, allowing them to develop themselves further and motivating them to work at their optimum level. Employee empowerment refers to the delegation of power and responsibility from leaders to employees, especially regarding the power to make decisions that impact organizational performance (Baird et al., 2020). Through empowering employees, they feel more confident in their ability to perform their jobs and

be encouraged to participate in the decision-making process. Empowered employees have a positive sense of purpose in their tasks and are self-motivated to continually improve and enhance their workplace abilities (Vu, 2020). They are encouraged and allowed to take personal responsibility for improving how they carry out their duties and contribute to accomplishing organizational goals. Feeling inspired through independence and receiving feedback within an organization can make the empowerment process successful, for employees were provided with what is needed to perform to the best of their ability (Vu, 2020). Empowerment of employees is considered an intrinsic reward for their performance, making them proud of their work and allowing them to pursue creativity, flexibility, and autonomy at work.

To effectively empower employees, it is important to understand how the two perspectives, structural and psychological, impact how they are encouraged and motivated to work to improve their performance and productivity. Structural empowerment focuses on the operational practices employed to empower employees, facilitating access to opportunities, information, support, and resources (Amor et al., 2021). The opportunities for learning and development include challenging work, new skills, and knowledge that allow professional growth, giving them access to valuable information regarding organizational aims, values, and decisions to enhance productivity. Through having support by receiving feedback and help from colleagues and leaders, employees can use their resources to help achieve organizational objectives when needed (Amor et al., 2021). Structural empowerment creates a collaborative workplace that

influences employee work attitudes and behaviors to achieve organizational goals in meaningful ways.

Psychological empowerment focuses on the individual's feeling of empowerment, representing the motivational state of the employees. This type of empowerment involves four dimensions: meaning, impact, competence, and self-determination, all of which have played a role in empowering employees (Odero et al., 2020). Meaning signifies the degree to which employees perceive their work is significant, feeling as if their job is valuable and makes a difference, while the impact is the employee's perceived belief and influence of their work on the organization. Competence indicates an employee's ability, skills, and capabilities to accomplish their work, while self-determination refers to the autonomy and freedom an employee has when carrying out their duties and making decisions (Amor et al., 2021). This type of empowerment refers to employees' positive experiences that derive from the tasks and responsibilities, resulting in higher energy, dedication, and absorption in their work. Through understanding the two perspectives of empowerment, an organization can create and sustain an engaged workforce that is motivated and encouraged to work to the best of their ability.

To ensure that employees are empowered successfully, there are multiple factors that an organization can implement to allow employees to become motivated in their work. These factors include job enrichment, participative management, teamwork formation, and participation in goal setting, all of which provide leaders with the ability to empower employees to work at their optimum level (Vu, 2020). Through job enrichment, employees are tasked with more challenging and less repetitive activities,

encompassing higher conceptual thinking and more involved responsibilities. Having this inspiration and motivation through handling more roles can enable organizations to instill participative management, offering employees the opportunity to contribute to the organization's decision-making process (Odero et al., 2020). By becoming involved in this practice, employees can acquire maximum knowledge, skills, and abilities through effective teamwork formation, allowing them to share ideas and experiences that leads to their participation in the operations of the organization. By participating in operating and improving business processes and operations, employees use their expertise and capabilities to become valuable assets to organizational leaders, empowering them to enhance their performance. By adopting empowerment approaches, employees feel valued and competent, viewing that they are doing a meaningful and impactful job when carrying out their responsibilities to achieve organizational goals (Vu, 2020). Empowerment is a key element to ensure that employees are working to the best of their abilities to accomplish their set goals and objectives.

Employee Engagement

For employees to effectively work in a team, they need to be fully engaged to ensure that they are putting all their efforts into improving their performance and working toward achieving organizational goals. Employee engagement is the level of commitment and involvement of an employee towards their organization and its values, devoting their work to enhance the overall organizational performance (Ameen & Baharom, 2019). Employees that are engaged alter their behaviors, emotions, and cognitions to ensure that they are attentive to their obligations to carry out their duties, promoting a work-related

state of mind to perform at their optimum level. By having a positive attitude toward their work, employees display vigor, dedication, and absorption characteristics, making them more present at work, which minimizes mistakes and errors (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020). Vigor is depicted by the employee's willingness to perform their work, focusing their energy and resilience on investing their time in their work and being persistent when handling challenges that arise. Dedication refers to the involvement of employees at work, where they are enthusiastic, motivated, and challenged in their work (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020). Absorption is portrayed as an employee becoming immersed and entirely concentrated in their work, focusing solely on their roles and responsibilities within the organization. With these positive emotions, employees become happier within their work, for they feel a sense of connection and purpose, driving them to increase their productivity since they believe that their efforts make a difference.

Employees who are happy and recognized for their contribution work better and work more because they feel that they play a vital role in how the organization functions. By feeling a sense of ownership for the organization they work for makes them go further and beyond to perform their duties and collaborate with other employees (Rodrigues da Costa & Loureiro, 2019). This involvement in their work can be heightened through multiple factors that makes them determined to be more engaged in their organization's goals and objectives. By promoting a motivating organizational culture that focuses on open communication, employees feel more accepted and valued for their efforts (Ameen & Baharom, 2019). Feeling a sense of belonging enables employees to enhance their abilities, allowing them to progress through accomplishing training and development that

boosts their well-being within the organization. Allowing themselves to advance, employees can put all their efforts into improving their productivity and performance, leading to them being acknowledged and compensated for their contributions. When employees are provided recognition, rewards, and incentives for their work, their involvement within the organization is more substantial, for they see that their efforts are making an influential impact (Nevianto et al., 2021). Viewing themselves as a vital part of an organization, these engaged employees are more motivated and creative, becoming intellectually and emotionally bound to see the organization's progression and succession. These employees are more aware of the organizational context in which they work, making them more willing to work effectively within a team to improve their performance (Sungmala & Verawat, 2021). Through emphasizing employee engagement within an organization, employees are more driven and satisfied with their work, leading them to work together to increase their productivity and organizational performance.

Teamwork

Within a business, teams are valuable assets that should be developed to achieve the goals set successfully. Developing a team is essential and beneficial when implemented, for it can bring a sense of collaboration, empowerment, and engagement. Through teamwork, employees can cooperate, enhance their skills, provide feedback, and reduce conflicts among each other (Apoorva, 2019). Working in a team brings people together to generate innovative ideas, solve problems, and find resolutions that impact the organization. Within every team, collaboration is necessary for the employees to work effectively together to achieve the organization's goals and tasks (Phuong & Huy, 2022).

Through this involvement of employees, opportunities are provided through open communication for employees to discuss and cooperate amongst themselves, increasing their motivation and creativity.

Teamwork has many benefits that drives an organization toward success, providing a chance for employees' personal and professional development and increasing employee encouragement and motivation. Even though these employees have different perspectives and experiences, they can work together to use their strengths to bring a competitive advantage to the team (Ozigbo et al., 2020). Utilizing teams within an organization can increase productivity, morale, job satisfaction, and decision-making quality (Stojadinović-Jovanović et al., 2021). Working together harmoniously toward the defined goals of an organization empowers employees to improve their performance and better understand one another continuously. Developing teams can increase the creativity and learning of employees, where they can create their ideas and collaborate to combine their thoughts through open discussion.

Having open communication is vital for employees to conversate and resolve disagreements, allowing them to create a relationship based on honesty and trust. Through open communication, employees can openly converse about their feelings, allowing them to work closely with one another, despite their differences in mindsets, opinions, and abilities (Oteshova et al., 2021). Having the opportunity to voice their opinions, trust is built between employees, allowing them to work together and solve problems effectively. With trust, their relationship is strengthened, and a bond is formed, making employees feel a sense of security and cohesion where they feel confident in their

decisions, enhancing their behavior and attitudes toward valuing each other (Ionut, 2020). Working together and building those relationships promotes a sense of ownership, creating a feeling of connection to the team for accomplishing objectives together.

The influence of teamwork on enhancing organizational performance involves both internal and external factors that lead employees to collaborate effectively. The internal factors encompass team norms, ground rules, and interpersonal and rational skills, enabling employees to work together by providing their expertise and knowledge (Garba, 2020). The external factors are the organizational culture and reward and educational structures that the team performs in, allowing for the appropriate teamwork methods to be implemented to ensure that roles and responsibilities are distributed evenly. These factors positively impact developing teams, providing opportunities for the employees to grow and prosper together (Garba, 2020). Giving employees the ability to enhance themselves can lead them to feel a sense of value and inclusion, making them strive to collaborate to improve their performance and productivity.

Conclusion

For an organization to effectively create a team, there are influential factors that should be taken into consideration, for they play a significant role in enabling employees to collaborate. Through having strong and supportive leadership, a leader can influence employees through expanding their knowledge and increase their creativity to create a competitive advantage. Incorporating a transformative leadership style enables a leader to create a strong and positive organizational culture, which aligns the beliefs and values of employees with that of the organizational priorities. Incorporating training and

development within the organization allows employees to further enhance their abilities and skills, leading to team cohesion and loyalty. Being that employees feel valued for their efforts, they develop a sense of ownership and commitment, motivating them to work to the best of their ability. Through feeling comfortable in their established roles and responsibilities, employees become empowered, developing their independence and autonomy within the decision-making processes within the organizational practices. Having engaged employees creates an open and honest communication channel, allowing them to receive feedback and recognition for their efforts, producing a supportive and collective atmosphere. Through providing encouragement and inspiration for employees, they are inclined to combine their diverse talents and efforts to create a team that improves the performance and productivity of the organization.

Transition

In this qualitative study, I identified and explored team development strategies that South New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. This study's focus included a variety of factors that small business managers can use in creating effective teams. The aspects presented in Section 1 highlighted the background of the problem, problem and purpose statement, nature of the study, research questions, interview questions, conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, and significance of the study. A crucial element of Section 1 is the review of the professional and academic literature, which introduced topics, such as team development models, team building and

development, leadership, organizational culture, team training and development, motivation, employee empowerment, employee engagement, and teamwork.

Within Section 2, the research process for my study is detailed, discussing the role of the researcher, knowledge of participants, and the research methodology and design, and ethical research of the study. This section also includes the data collection instruments and techniques, data organization techniques, and data analysis methods that I took to obtain my findings, along with the reliability and validity of my study. Section 3 encompasses the presentation of findings, application to professional practice, and the implications for social change, discussing the recommendations for action and further research.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I include detailed information on the purpose statement of the study, as well my role as the researcher, participants, research method and design, and ethical research. I also identify the data collection instruments and techniques, and data analysis methods when gathering and examining data, along with the reliability and validity of my study.

Purpose Statement

The specific business problem was that some small businesses managers lack team development strategies to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore team development strategies that South New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams for improving organizational performance.

Role of the Researcher

As the main data collection instrument, I took on many roles as the researcher, from collecting and sorting the data for themes to monitoring potential biases that can hinder my research. Through conducting the data collection process, I accessed the thoughts and feelings of my study participants by utilizing a semistructured interview process with open-ended questions. This type of interview provides researchers with the opportunity to gather rich data and new concepts from the experiences and opinions of the participants (Taherdoost, 2022). Following the appropriate interview processes, I gained more trust and made the participants more comfortable, allowing them to be more open with their responses. Whether face-to-face or remote, interviews can provide

opportunities for participants to share their perceptions of the phenomena they experience, leading to the gathering of substantial supportive data (Dunwoodie et al., 2022). By obtaining this information and analyzing my findings, I leveraged the proper data analysis techniques to ensure that there was no probable partiality that can influence how my research was carried out.

As the primary researcher in this study, I was familiar with the topic, for team development is a prevalent concept instilled within the organization I work for. Seeing how working as a team is an important element in improving organizational performance, I set out to view the strategies implemented by other small businesses to create effective teams. I found participants who have practices that mirror the importance of working as a team, for they could provide ample information that may change small business practices. My relationship with the participants was professional, because I frequent their establishments and have observed their collaboration as a team. Researchers are required to select the most suitable people as participants to be in their study, for it aids them in gathering the most informative answers that can effectively influence their findings (Taherdoost, 2022).

I complied with *The Belmont Report* requirements to ensure that my study adheres to the ethical parameters proposed by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Issued in 1979, *The Belmont Report* provides basic ethical guidelines that can assist in resolving the ethical problems surrounding research with human subjects (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). These principles encompass respect for persons,

beneficence, and justice, all of which play a valuable role in conducting research to comply with ethical standards.

Respect for persons is predicated on respecting the participants and treating them as autonomous individuals, allowing them to enter the research voluntarily and with sufficient knowledge (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). To ensure that I complied with the respect for person principle, I provided an informed consent form to the participants through email, allowing me to gain their permission before moving forward with the study after IRB approval. The participants were informed that their identity would remain confidential, and they could refuse to participate at any time in the study. The researcher should be aware of the participant's identity by undergoing the necessary process to protect their confidentiality and privacy, upholding the ethical standards set for them (Kang & Hwang, 2021). Practicing beneficence enables the researcher to treat the participants ethically by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm, securing their well-being to maximize the benefits of the research (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). By emphasizing justice, the researcher has an obligation to ensure that the participants are treated fairly and have an equitable distribution of research burdens and benefits. Complying with these basic principles enables the researcher to gather reliable and valid information from participants who feel comfortable and protected in discussing the topic of the study (Pritchard, 2021).

Although I have known the participants for a very long time, I made sure to mitigate bias and center my approach on focusing on the topic at hand. I maintained awareness of my perspective on team development strategies, allowing myself not to use my personal experiences to instill bias within the interview process with the participants. By remaining neutral and attentive, I was prepared to ensure the validity and integrity of the data collected, centering on the essence of the findings gathered. To ensure that interviews are conducted properly, it is essential to create interview protocols, for they are used as detailed guidelines for the researcher to follow in their interview (Taherdoost, 2022). Having an interview protocol allowed me to inform participants of the interview process and discuss the questions they were answering, making them more comfortable and understanding of their participation. Being that I used semistructured interviews, I asked all participants the same questions to avoid bias, which allowed me to gain more insight and knowledge on how the participants carried out their practices.

Participants

Participants for this study were owners of small businesses within the service-based industry in South New Jersey. These participants incorporated team development strategies within their daily operations, improving organizational productivity. The eligibility criteria for the participants in this study were as follows: (a) participants must be managers or owners who successfully use strategies of team development to create effective teams to improve organizational performance, (b) participants must have successful experience in retaining and managing more than 10 employees, and (c) participants must manage or own their organization for 4 or more years. These selected

participants assisted me in obtaining different perspectives on the topic and answering the interview questions that gave more insight into their practices. It is important to determine who would provide lived experiences and knowledge about the topic of interest, for these participants would give the best information (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

The participants were selected from South New Jersey, where they have relevant experiences and vital knowledge on the importance of small businesses developing effective teams, for I have visited their establishments before. Through getting to know them by frequenting their organizations, I planned to gain access and contact them to ask if they were interested in participating in my study. Describing why the research is being conducted and why their participation would be meaningful allows the researcher to build rapport with the participants, enabling them to be authentic and open to being recruited for the study (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Through displaying confidence in the study, I contacted the potential participants to see if they were interested in participating in the study and give their experiences and perspectives.

I gained access to the participants through a phone call to explain the intent of my study and obtain their interest in participating in the study. Informed consent comprises three elements: information, comprehension, and voluntariness, ensuring that participants clearly understand the research project and its risks (Pritchard, 2021). By emailing a consent form to the participants, I provided them with sufficient written information regarding the study, whether it be the risks or benefits of participating, to decide whether they would consent to be interviewed.

Each participant must be fully informed of the aim of the study, what is required of them, how confidentiality is ensured, and how their voluntariness may be revoked at any time without penalties (Dunwoodie et al., 2022). In the informed consent letter, the stipulations of the study were laid out, emphasizing that the identity of the participants was to remain confidential and only be used to gather vital information for the study. These selected participants responded with an email stating that they consent to participating in the study. To obtain permission to collect interview data and use their internal documents for additional support, I had them sign a partner organization agreement, establishing a trustworthy relationship of open communication and professionalism, where they are willing to provide more insight into their experiences within the interview. Through active correspondence, the participants and I determined the appropriate time and place for the interviews, creating a comfortable atmosphere where they could speak openly. By beginning the interview by establishing commonalities, a researcher can build rapport and trust, allowing the participants to open further with the responses (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Developing trust and honesty with all the participants allowed me to collect data effectively and substantiate my findings.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Three research methods were reviewed for this study: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Utilizing the qualitative research method enables the researcher to conduct an in-depth investigation and understanding of a social phenomenon, obtaining

valuable information rigorously (Asenahabi, 2019). By choosing the qualitative method, I obtained data from real-life experiences from the participants to identify and explore team development strategies to create effective teams. By utilizing this method, the researcher can establish a viewpoint of the phenomenon by looking at it through the many perspectives and meanings the participants give them (Mwansa et al., 2022). Through formulating questions and processes, I obtained valuable information from the participants' responses, allowing me to analyze the data to derive general themes that showcase their impact on their practices. Gathering nonnumerical data allowed me to analyze and transcribe the information spoken by the participants, giving further insight, and meaning into their opinions and capabilities (see Asenahabi, 2019).

Because my research was based on observations and responses from interviews, using the quantitative method would have been unfeasible. Quantitative methodology allows a researcher to study the phenomena in a systematic manner where the data collected is in numerical form (Mwansa et al., 2022). Using the quantitative research method allows a researcher to describe the relationship between variables, making predictions about their relationships through testing hypotheses, which is not what I did in my study. Through surveys and experiments, researchers can obtain numerical data that determines if the factors impact one another (see Asenahabi, 2019). This aspect of the quantitative method proved unfruitful for my study, for I conducted interviews and coded for themes to understand better their impact on how the participants conduct their practices.

Utilizing a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods, known as the mixed-methods approach, enables a researcher to take advantage of both methods' strengths when conducting research (Mwansa et al., 2022). Within this method, the qualitative data would further elaborate on the participants' responses, and the quantitative data would facilitate statistical analysis of their response patterns, allowing for additional insights from both methods. According to Mwansa et al. (2022), this methodology provides a more balanced foundation and methodological flexibility. However, this approach would have been unfeasible for my study, for I was centering my research on real-life experiences only instead of utilizing a culmination of both methods.

Research Design

Three research designs were considered for this study: case study, narrative research, and phenomenology. Using a case study research design enables a researcher to investigate a phenomenon in depth and within a real-life context, obtaining perspectives and experiences to understand the situation at hand better (Yin, 2018). I chose a case study research design because it allowed me to use this common research tool to create an in-depth evaluation of why a certain phenomenon occurs. Utilizing a case study allows a researcher to determine the factors that impact the phenomenon and understand the relationships that led to the behavior being studied (Asenahabi, 2019). Through the multiple case study, I sought out insight from many participants from organizations, for they provided diverse and valuable information that supported my findings. In a multiple case study, there is a commonality among the cases, allowing the researcher to analyze

and find specific differences replicable to similar perspectives (Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

Unlike the case study, narrative and phenomenological research designs would not have been appropriate for my study, for they did not have given me the ability to understand the phenomenon properly for my study. Narrative research focuses on the meaning of an individual's attributes to an experience that promotes a change within an individual through storytelling, exposing the relationships between their responses and social reality (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Because this study was not centered on creating stories about the lives of individuals, narrative research was an insufficient method, for I would not be able to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomena through storytelling. Akin to narrative research, phenomenology is founded on the lived experiences of the individuals, centering on "what" the individuals experienced and "how" they experienced it (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Although the participants' lived experiences would have provided ample information to support my findings, phenomenology would not have been an appropriate design, for I was looking to gain better knowledge of the background of the phenomena at hand.

To ensure that my findings were continually cohesive, I emphasized the importance of data saturation, which indicated that through my interviews, I did not receive any new information that hindered my research. Saturation is an essential indicator that a sample is adequate for the phenomenon being studied, for the data collected captures the depth and diversity of the issues studied (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). By having an appropriate number of participants in my sample, I obtained valuable,

trustworthy data, where no new or additional facts affect the findings. Reaching saturation has become a critical component within qualitative research, for it helps make data collection more robust and valid, leading to the reliability of the study findings (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Population and Sampling

In qualitative studies, defining the population that was sampled is based on the scope of the study, for these participants must meet the criteria set forth to obtain the optimal information to support the claims of the study. For the study, I used purposive sampling because it allowed me to select participants most likely to yield appropriate and useful knowledge that produces the best data and research results. By adopting a purposive strategy, a researcher can find specific participants who may hold different and important perspectives about the ideas and problems at hand, given the aims and objectives of the study (Campbell et al., 2020). By sampling those rich in information about the phenomenon, I obtained beneficial and detailed information that enhanced the validity and trustworthiness of the study. When purposeful strategies are used, sampling is a central aspect, for the better, the participants are related to the phenomenon, the richer and more reliable the data was (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020).

Through this sampling method, I obtained the population for the study, consisting of three small business owners in South New Jersey willing to participate in my study. I explored the diverse perspectives of these participating managers in using team development strategies to create effective teams to enhance organizational performance. In qualitative studies, the sample size is essential to obtaining reliable data, for there is a

dependence on articulate and introspective participants to provide ample descriptions and portrayals of their experiences (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020). Having an adequate sample size in qualitative research is guided by data adequacy, focusing more on the ability of data to provide rich accounts of the phenomenon being studied (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Focusing on small businesses only, having three participants was sufficient, for their responses should give optimal perspectives that can lead to data saturation, where there is little to no relevant new themes gathered within the interview process. The study's participants showcased their views on creating effective teams, producing valuable information that may further shape their practices within their organizations.

The criteria to which these participants had to adhere to were that they (a) are managers or owners who successfully used strategies of team development to create effective teams to improve organizational performance, (b) have experience successfully retaining and managing more than 10 employees, and (c) have managed or owned their organization for 4 or more years. These participants were likely to be rich with data and insight, for they can provide more relevant and useful knowledge that can enhance the findings to support the claims of the research purpose (Johnson et al., 2020).

To ensure that the participants provided ample information to achieve data saturation, I conducted the interviews in a setting conducive to the comfort of the participants, whether in-person or over the phone. Through this comfort, I used member checking to ensure their accurate depiction of their responses, for it allowed me to verify the transcript's truthfulness and completeness. Member checking allows the researcher to

increase the integrity and confirmability of the study, for this verification ensures appropriate interpretations of the questions asked (Johnson et al., 2020).

It was important to schedule the interview at a convenient time and location for the participants, where they were free to speak privately without interruptions and quiet enough to be recorded (Johnson et al., 2020). Wanting to produce a detailed conversation-like interview, I made it my priority to allow the participant to choose the appropriate date and time because they had a specific schedule they upheld for their organizations. Being that they were willing to be a part of the study, I allowed them to determine the location for the interview, helping to establish a sense of trust and enhancing the working relationship created in the selection process. Making the participants feel comfortable within a suitable environment allows the researcher to open the conversation casually, encouraging them to share their viewpoints (Wood et al., 2019).

Ethical Research

To ensure that I adhered to the ethical standards set forth by Walden University's IRB, I obtained approval from the institution before conducting the research study. To gain this endorsement, it was important to follow all predetermined guidelines and principles to ensure that the data collected was from consenting participants willing to enhance the study's findings (see Yin, 2018). Abiding by the three principles within *The Belmont Report* allowed me to reduce and resolve any ethical issues that may arise if proper consent was not taken, for attaining formal consent is required for researchers. Yin (2018) established that the researcher is responsible for conducting their case study with

special care and understanding, ensuring that all participants feel comfortable and willing to participate without any causes of harm or defamation. Gaining informed consent was essential to start the data collection process, which occurred by emailing an invitation email to the qualified participants with the nature of the study. This consent process elaborated that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that their identity is to remain confidential, for it is essential to maintain confidentiality due to the risk of divulging proprietary details (Yin, 2018).

Within the informed consent procedure, an unambiguous statement is disclosed, empowering participants to withdraw at any given time without facing prejudice and to remain in good standing (Husband, 2020). Since the participants' involvement was not an obligation for them, they could withdraw from the study without facing any penalties by notifying me with their reason. To withdraw from the study, participants provided a notice of removal through email or over the phone, ensuring they do not face any loss or distress. When having willing participants, the researcher needs to identify if they would provide incentives for those participating, ensuring that they are compensated for their dedicated time in the study. Although these incentives increase the motivation of individuals to participate in the study, they may result in false information being provided or lying to meet inclusion criteria (Dunwoodie et al., 2022). I did not offer an incentive for participating in the study, but I informed the participants that I was acknowledging them within the study, although not by name, thanking them for their participation within the study.

Researchers can use various strategies to uphold ethical behavior to keep the participants anonymous and establish secure measures to keep their research confidential, including utilizing protected files and passwords, encrypting information while sending data, and storing it in locked cabinets and safes (Kang & Hwang, 2021). To ensure that their identity remains confidential, I used pseudonyms to protect their organizations and personal identities. Furthermore, I explained the thorough ethical procedures and guidelines to the participants, displaying confidence in storing the data obtained from them for 5 years to protect their confidentiality. The valuable information gathered was stored on a password-protected external hard drive that would be discreetly disclosed in a location only known to me, where after 5 years, it was destroyed. This information is shown in the consent form (Appendix A), showcasing the structure of how the participants viewed the material and willingly signed to participate voluntarily. I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB (approval no. 03-08-23-1069372) before gathering any data.

Data Collection Instruments

As the primary data collection instrument, I was tasked with conducting in-depth and semistructured interviews, along with analyzing data from the internal documents, such as protocols and training materials, given by the participants to obtain common themes. During this interview, six questions were asked, allowing the participants to elaborate further on their practices and showcase how their experiences have shaped their implementation of certain strategies. Although the nature of the interview was open-ended, the participant could expand further on the questions asked, providing more

supportive knowledge that can influence the findings of the study (see Yin, 2018). Utilizing an interview protocol allowed me to facilitate our meeting in a timely fashion and develop a consistent approach with all participants. The interview protocol (see Appendix) showcased the guidelines that were taken throughout the data collection process. Building rapport with the participants before the interview allowed them to build trust, leading them to provide rich and detailed accounts of their experiences. Before starting the interview, I began with a casual conversation to ensure that the participants were comfortable and inform them that their identity was confidential. It was important to open the interview with easy questions to make the participants more relaxed and familiarize them with the interview subject (McGrath et al., 2019).

To ensure that the data collected was reliable and valid, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, confirming that every detail was documented, which aided in ensuring data saturation. I used member checking to validate the accurate portrayal of the participants' responses, allowing them to confirm or deny the recorded interpretations. Member checking involves sending a draft of the answers to the participants, which can help corroborate the findings and evidence and allow them to produce new evidence that was not given in the initial interview (Wouddela, 2019). Enabling the participants to review and make changes to the interpretations of the data collected enhanced the validity and reliability of the data collection process.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers use semistructured interviews to collect new, exploratory data that is related to a research topic, enabling participants to delve deeper into their thoughts and

feelings regarding the phenomenon in question (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The primary data collection technique for this study was semistructured interviews in person in a location that was the most comfortable for the participants. These interviews encompassed open-ended and thought-provoking questions, which were aligned by the interview protocol (see Appendix), that were audio-recorded and transcribed to develop common themes amongst the data gathered. The interview protocols began the discussion with an overview of the study project and consent form, leading to the established questions to gather prominent and influential data. To record the participants' responses, researchers use many ways, including taking notes and recording to showcase emotions and feelings that took place, with the consent of the participants (Taherdoost, 2022). Throughout the interview, the answers of the participants were transcribed to allow for validation and correction, enabling the participants to alter their responses and provide more information if needed.

Associated with semistructured interviews, several advantages and disadvantages allow researchers to gain more evidence for their topic or hinder their ability to find viable information to support their claims. The advantages of these interviews were that they provided researchers with the ability to obtain an in-depth understanding of the participant's experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of the topic, along with providing self-acknowledgment and validation of the participants (Wood et al., 2019). By introducing probing questions in the interview, the participants extended their discussion to allow me to understand their responses better, leading me to a deeper exploration of innovative ideas and concepts that emerge regarding the topic at hand. The disadvantages

of semistructured interviews were that they are time-consuming and resource intensive, leading to difficulties in analyzing data and a lack of reliability within the collection process (Wood et al., 2019). Using semistructured interviews was the most feasible option to better understand the experiences and opinions of the participants within a location that was best for them.

Once the interviews have been completed, I followed up with each participant to validate the responses made through member checking, which allowed them to review the data transcribed gathered from the interviews in summary form and determine the accuracy of the responses recorded. Allowing them to review and confirm the summary of interview responses added to the study's credibility, for they are willing to determine if the interpretation of the data is concise and fair and if the themes gathered are accurate to include to support the findings of the study. Through member checking, it provided a way for the researcher to ensure the precise depiction of the participant's responses by allowing them the opportunity to confirm, deny, add, or change the interpretations of the data (Woulddela, 2019).

Data Organization Technique

Keeping track of data is an important aspect of qualitative researchers and being that the most used method for data analysis is a computer database, it is essential to meticulously organize the data to ensure strict security (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Researchers need to create a system to categorize the data collected, for many techniques can ensure the appropriate organization of the findings. Once the interview commenced, the data collected was transcribed, and the information was saved on a password-

protected file on my laptop and stored on an external hard drive. By keeping their research records secure by using encrypted files and passwords, researchers can uphold the ethical guidelines of protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the participants (Kang & Hwang, 2021). To obtain comments and capture feelings from the participants, I used reflective journaling, allowing the information gathered to depict their interview, supporting their responses accurately. Through notetaking, a researcher ensured that all interview questions are answered and guide the follow-up questions, along with serving as a backup if any lost information (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Being that confidentiality was an essential aspect of keeping the privacy of the participants, I coded them while assigning pseudonyms to protect their identity, ensuring that the data was clean. Creating a clean set of data does not contain any information that identifies participants, ensuring that there is no disclosure of information, and that anonymity was upheld (Kang & Hwang, 2021). Focusing on keeping their identity confidential, the data collected from the study will be stored in a password-protected external hard drive that only I have access to for 5 years and will then be deleted.

Data Analysis

To ensure that the qualitative study is valid and reliable, it is important to implement the most appropriate data analysis process to describe, draw conclusions from, and evaluate data to understand the underlying phenomena further. The most used research approach is triangulation, allowing researchers to corroborate by combing multiple sources and interpretations to ensure the truth and check the study's validity (Farquhar et al., 2020). I used methodological triangulation for the study, allowing me to

use documentation and the data collected from the interviews to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena. Methodological triangulation allows researchers to use multiple methods to collect and analyze data to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings from the study (Farquhar et al., 2020). Utilizing this type of triangulation allowed me to combine the information gained from the interviews and internal documents, such as protocols and training materials, to provide richer and more in-depth conclusions of the study.

When the type of triangulation was identified for the research design, the sequential process for data analysis began, which encompassed Yin's (2018) five-step procedure: (a) compile, (b) disassemble, (c) reassemble, (d) interpret, and (e) report the data. The first step for the data analysis process was gathering and compiling the data through interviews and other data sources, enabling me to obtain sufficient support through the collected data. In this step, the responses from the interviews and audio recordings were transcribed using appropriate pseudonyms for the participants and taking notes to ensure that the responses were exact. I used member checking to ensure accurate depictions of the participants, for I validated that the data collected aligns with their views and perceptions, enhancing the trustworthiness of the data collected.

In the second step, I disassembled the data by searching for promising patterns and themes through coding, allowing me to establish common occurrences to support the claims made for the study. Utilizing NVivo software to organize data, patterns, and codes that emerge allows for a deeper analysis of the data and provides more developed tools to visualize the data (Alam, 2020). I used this software to establish common themes from

the responses given by the participants, allowing me to find commonalities that can enhance the research results. Within this software, the data were organized and coded into common themes, categorizing the information to capture evolving patterns that serve as substantial evidence to support the claims of the phenomena being researched. By utilizing a categorizing system, such as thematic analysis, researchers assign labels to words or phrases that are important and recurring within the participants' responses, aiding in understanding the code's relationship with the phenomena being questioned (Lester et al., 2020). Using thematic analysis allowed me to create defined and critical themes that were evident within the data, leading to the identification of an overall pattern within the participants' responses.

In the third step, I manipulated and analyzed the data by reassembling the information into patterns, comparisons, or prevalent insights. Within this stage, the data was clustered into core themes, allowing for generating of main codes and categories from the transcribed data (see Alam, 2020). Researchers should examine the codes, documents, and observational notes to ensure that the data analysis process is carried out extensively (Alam, 2020). In the fourth step, I interpreted the meaning of the data by connecting all aspects and ensuring the credibility of the findings, correlating the data with the secondary data. Associating the data collected with the internal documents, which are training materials and protocols, allowed me to ensure that there were commonalities with the prevalent themes defined. Lastly, in the fifth step, I reported on the insights derived from the data analysis from the compiled information by correlating my findings with the extant literature and conceptual framework of the study. Through

this comparison, I presented substantial claims in accordance with the new studies published after my data collection efforts and Tuckman's team development theory.

Reliability and Validity

Within qualitative research, reliability and validity are important aspects for researchers to address to ensure that their study provides quality and rigorous findings to support the phenomena. Validity is when the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by incorporating specific procedures, while reliability suggests that the researcher's approach is consistent, showcasing how constant the findings are (Rose & Johnson, 2020). In the following section, the various techniques, and approaches to determine the reliability and validity of a study were discussed, showcasing that the study complied with the criteria of trustworthiness, which include dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

Reliability

For a researcher, it is important to ensure that there is an emphasis on the aspect of reliability, for it refers to the accuracy of the research in relation to the suitable methods chosen to maintain consistent and dependable findings (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Focusing on the consistency of the findings over time, reliability provides stability throughout the methods being used, enabling other researchers to replicate the processes to ensure dependability.

Dependability

Increasing reliability was accomplished through various strategies demonstrating a study's rigorous and systematized nature, enabling the researcher to achieve profound

and repeatable results, such as through member checking (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Member checking ensures that the participants can comment and provide feedback on their responses, allowing them to confirm or deny the truthfulness of the interpretations of data, making their claims dependable (Stahl & King, 2020). Utilizing member checking allowed me to verify the accuracy of the transcripts and interpretations with the participants and enhance their responses' dependability and reliability.

Validity

Researchers strive to produce validity within their studies, ensuring that their findings are accurate and that conclusions were drawn confidently, which enhances the trustworthiness of the research (Hayashi et al., 2019). Validity is crucial in qualitative research, for it requires researchers to follow rigorous procedures to ensure that their findings are truthful and accurately represent the phenomena in question.

Credibility

Utilizing rigorous techniques can provide a researcher with substantial and supportive data to support the phenomena at hand, enhancing the research's credibility (Rose & Johnson, 2020). I established credibility by utilizing methodological triangulation and member checking in the study, for these methods can enhance the findings' trustworthiness. Through this type of triangulation, researchers can use several sources of information to establish identifiable patterns, enhancing the credibility of the findings (Stahl & King, 2020). By sharing a write-up of the interpretations from the interview, I gained feedback and comments that augmented the accuracy of the data interpretations, increasing the credibility of their responses. Obtaining respondent

validation allowed me to enhance the quality and richness of the study and provide a more in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives, which can increase the credibility of the phenomena in question (see Rose & Johnson, 2020).

Transferability

Within qualitative research, it is important to emphasize transferability, the degree to which the findings were transferred from one context to another to expand the understanding of the phenomena (Stahl & King, 2020). I ensured transferability within my study by providing a thorough description of the phenomena being probed and detailed information on the overall research process and criteria. Transfer of information is possible when a thick description of contextual material about the phenomena provides a rich enough depiction of a situation for application to other researchers' positions (Stahl & King, 2020). To reach objective reality, qualitative researchers need to ensure that no biases exist and that there is a clear association between the data and the study's findings.

Confirmability

The confirmability of a study is influenced by reducing the researcher's influence on the findings from the study by reaching the standards of rigor, including member checking (Johnson et al., 2020). To attain confirmability, I used probing questions during the interviews and followed up with member checking their responses to ensure that the interpretations collected were accurate and true indications of their answers. Member checking allowed me to ensure that the findings are consistent and thoroughly validated by sharing their interpretations to gain authenticity and further clarification.

Data Saturation

Within the data collection process, researchers must interview the participants until they reach data saturation, which confirms that data redundancy exists and that no new themes have emerged (Hayashi et al., 2019). To ensure data saturation, I conducted member checking interviews with each participant and presented a summary of each interview response. I asked the participants if the summary represented their responses accurately or if they had any additional information they wanted to share. I continued the member-checking interviews until no new information emerged. Asking if the synthesis represented their answers or if there was additional information they can provide ensures that all knowledge was spoken for (Woulddela, 2019). Utilizing a member-checking follow-up interview allowed me to reach data saturation and gain more in-depth information and enhance the academic rigor of the study. Through sharing the interpretations with the participants for further justification, it ensured that the findings were valid and reliable to substantiate the phenomena in question.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify and explore team development strategies that South New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. In Section 2, I identified the researcher's role, participants of the study, the population and sampling technique used, ethical research, the data collection instruments and techniques, data organization techniques, and data analysis methods that I took to obtain my findings, along with the reliability and validity of my study. In Section 3, I present the findings of my study,

applications to professional practice, and the implications for social change, discussing the recommendations for action and further research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore team development strategies that South New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. The participants were selected based on their experience and success in creating an effective team. The findings of this research indicated that organizational culture, employee engagement, and employee training are team development strategies to create effective teams. The participants in this study agreed that implementing these team development strategies can create effective teams to improve organizational performance.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was: What team development strategies do New Jersey small business managers use to create effective teams to improve organizational performance? The three main themes that emerged from the data collection analysis regarding team development strategies to create effective team for improving organizational performance were (a) organizational culture, (b) employee engagement, and (c) employee training.

Theme 1: Organizational Culture

The first theme that emerged from data analysis was to build an organizational culture. Instilling an organizational culture allows employees to adopt the philosophy of the organization that encompasses shared beliefs and values that become the core characteristics of the business (Kenedi et al., 2022). Throughout the responses to the

interview questions, organizational culture was a recurring theme, showcasing how the participants found value in building a foundation for how to accomplish tasks within the organization. The three participants confirmed that small business managers construct an organizational culture to align the principles of their employees to create an effective team that is willing to collaborate with one another. Having employees who understand an organizational culture can change their attitude and behavior for the better at work, leading to the creation of a more effective team (Safitri et al., 2022). Both P1 and P2 discussed that defining a clear mission is important to obtain buy-in from employees to become dedicated to their work, emphasizing that employees are equal when performing their jobs. When interviewing these participants, they discussed that they view their position as more than a job, working alongside the employees and are willing to go the extra mile to treat them as family. Table 1 represents the subtheme of Theme 1, presenting aspects that participants found to be important when creating a culture for employees.

Table 1

Subthemes of Organizational Culture

Subthemes	No. of participants	Frequency
Bring everyone together	3	3
Build a culture	3	4
Clear mission	2	2
Communication is key	2	5
Dedicated employees	2	4
Everyone is equal	2	2
More than a job	3	5

During the interviews, all the participants indicated that it is essential to build a culture and supportive environment that brings everyone together toward the shared goals of their organizations. The collective values and beliefs can generate practices and policies that are adopted by each employee as an influence in their behavior, becoming entrenched in their mentality (Kenedi et al., 2022). This type of behavior is also based upon the communication channels within the organization, for managers need to be transparent when speaking with their employees. P3 emphasized the role that communication plays within the workplace, stating that “communication is the biggest key of success in life and business, so I like communication at all times.” P2 also expressed that communicating with employees solicits feedback that can make them more effective at their job, for they take ownership when given the opportunity to voice their opinions.

To substantiate the claims that building an organizational culture is important, I obtained supportive documents, such as employee manuals, from participants to strengthen the evidence gathered. Although not all participants had employee manuals, I read the employee manual that I received from P2, which described the company’s mission, values, and overall culture that is to be created. By using an employee manual, managers can display the culture they want to promote through explaining the mission, values, procedures, and code of conduct of the organization. P2 explained that having an employee manual allows the employees to understand what is expected of them and familiarize themselves with the business’s beliefs and environment. From reviewing the employee manual, it showcased the development of a culture, displaying the company

and team values, communication procedures and the common goals and mission that should be shared. Through presenting these aspects, the employee manual gave the business the opportunity to involve employees and motivate them to embody the values set forth by the organization, bringing everyone together to become dedicated to their job.

Alignment with the Literature

Theme 1, organizational culture, was consistent with Sharma and Sharma's (2022) findings in that creating a positive organizational culture allows employees to collaborate with one another. Creating a culture that is dynamic and encouraging allows employees to work as a team, where they can share ideas, take risks, and be innovative (Sharma & Sharma, 2022). When working together, employees want to be on the same page, sharing the same values and beliefs that allow them to capitalize on their abilities collaboratively.

Alignment With the Conceptual Framework

The theme organizational culture aligns with Tuckman's theory of group development (1965), in that building a culture is within the steps of forming, storming, and norming. Throughout these steps, the overall culture should be open and supportive, conducive to collaboration where everyone learns about one another, along with understanding their roles and that of others (Super, 2020). Within these steps, the business builds an organizational culture and continually engages with the employees, for they are perceived to be the lifeline of the organization.

Theme 2: Employee Engagement

The second theme to emerge from the data collection analysis was employee engagement. The participants conveyed that employee engagement was an important aspect to incorporate within the practices of creating an effective team. Employee engagement is a productive way that an employee responds to their work, leading to self-efficacy and the enjoyment of their work (Panda et al., 2022). During the interviews, all participants mentioned the term “empowerment” when enabling employees to work together, for they all would give their employees opportunities to make decisions. P2 stated,

Once people understand what the parameters are that, you know, where they are allowed to operate, then let them off leash, you’re hiring people to bring their head, let them use their brain. Let them run a bit, let them have some creativity, let them have some input, let them be a part of the process.

When employees are engaged at work, the outcomes are higher innovation and productivity, leading them to continually apply themselves (Panda et al., 2022). P3 stated, “So when I’m teaching and telling them and engaging with them, I think it builds up their confidence that they could try to come up with a solution before they have to approach me.” Table 2 represents subthemes of the theme employee engagement, showcasing the multitude of factors that the participants found to be essential when engaging employees.

Table 2*Subthemes of Employee Engagement*

Subthemes	No. of participants	Frequency
Be supportive and caring	2	6
Becomes very personal	3	3
Empower and engage	3	11
Invest your time	3	3
Proactive with people	3	8
Working as a team	3	5

Being proactive with the employees was an important aspect that the participants stressed, for they viewed that if they invested their time in their employees, they would feel inclined to work to the best of their ability. P1 stated, “You really have to be willing to put in the time in yourself to build a team and empower people.” All the participants explained that they try to lead by example and make the employees feel valued, for they view that the employees help build and maintain their brand. Both P1 and P2 stated that it is valuable to be supportive and caring to the employees, creating a supportive and comfortable atmosphere where the door is always open. Although it becomes very personal due to the creation of this environment, P1 explained that “I do try to keep an arm’s distance, because sometimes that familiarity, they forget it’s a job.” All the participants said that they have a pre-shift meeting every day to bring everyone together and get everyone on the same page. Through this gathering, the employees are more engaged, becoming more attentive and focused on their role performances, leading to more effective collaboration (Panda et al., 2022).

When discussing their experiences, participants were adamant about engaging with their employees, for they view that it makes them work as a team. This engagement is confirmed through the protocols given by P1, where the employees are continually up to date with the procedures and policies set in place. Having protocols within the practices of the business ensures that employees are motivated to work to the best of their ability while abiding by what is expected of them. P1 explained that putting protocols in place allows employees to learn the expectations, greetings and etiquette that is required of them when working. Akin to the employee manual, implementing protocols allows employees to acknowledge what is required of them when working, being consistently engaged in how they must act and what is needed of them.

Alignment With the Literature

Theme 2, employee engagement, was consistent with Nelson's (2022) findings in that engaged employees become more motivated and empowered to reach the organization's mission and goals. When employees are engaged, they have the willingness to work to their fullest potential and become dedicated to the organization, for they feel valued for their work (Nelson, 2022). Feeling a sense of involvement and enthusiasm in their work, employees can collaborate to achieve high productivity, for they all are committed to their business's values and objectives.

Alignment With the Conceptual Framework

The theme of employee engagement also aligns with the conceptual framework of the team development theory, for engaging employees is fluid throughout the four steps of Tuckman's group development theory. Throughout the four steps, it is important to be

continually engaged with employees, for the manager must take on many roles to be proactive with the employees when they begin to interact with one another to resolve conflicts that occur (Super, 2020). From engaging employees within these steps, they become more receptive to the training that allows them to enhance the performance of the organization.

Theme 3: Employee Training

The third theme that emerged from analyzing the data was to instill employee training. All participants expressed that learning and training were an essential part of enabling employees to work together, because they are taught to work in an appropriate and specific manner. Through providing training, organizations can help employees to correct flaws and difficulties at work, changing employee behavior for the better to support the values of the organization (Safitri et al., 2022). P2 stated,

I really truly believe that the opportunity to train new people exists in the first three days of them working. Yeah, the first day being the most important, everything you say to them that first day will really stick to their brain. The second and third day and after that, it kind of tails off, they think they have a pretty good understanding of the structure of the organization in those first couple of days so you're better be on your best game those first couple of days you better have a good trainer, you better have people that are doing it the right way.

Through proper employee training, employees can develop their skills and receive numerous opportunities, along with creating new interests that will benefit the business

(Salim et al., 2022). Table 3 represents subthemes of the theme employee training, displaying the elements the participants found to be influential when training employees.

Table 3

Subthemes of Employee Training

Subthemes	No. of participants	Frequency
Be open to learning	2	2
Learning and training	3	15
People are challenging	3	9
Rely on each other	3	3
Respect is important	3	3
Rid of toxic people	3	3
Work from the ground up	3	5

Although training encompasses their work, all participants stressed that people are challenging, and conflicting personalities can cause tension between all employees. P3 stated, “I think when you’re dealing with a lot of employees, you have employees that don’t want to get along and it’s unfortunate when you have personality clashes.” All participants emphasized that, through training, those who are toxic and not willing to work will be removed from the team, with P2 adopting the philosophy of “slow to hire, quick to fire.” All participants indicated that they prefer to work from the ground up, hiring people that have little to no experience, for they view it as an opportunity to teach them in a proper way and based on respect. P3 expressed that they start their employees off on what they consider ground zero, enabling them to start learning from the beginning and gradually get comfortable. P1 stated, “I don’t hire ever, they have to work their way up because the way we are, like it’s so much more than just knowing your piece of what

you do, it's like you have to understand how it all works." Through training, employees learn to rely on each other and become more open to learning, striving to collaborate to enhance the performance of the organization.

The review of the training materials from P3 confirm that the given documents allowed employees to familiarize themselves with what is expected of them when performing their work. The training materials contain the rules of behavior and the refining abilities, skills, and knowledge that can directly influence their work ethic, ensuring that they are doing their job properly (Safitri et al., 2022). By having these materials to hand, employees can learn and expand their knowledge on what to do in given situations, consistently broadening their abilities. P3 explained that although they have training materials, they value the use of communication when training their employees, for they view that it is best to lead by example instead of reading from a paper provided to them. Within my notes, whether it be by them or their more experienced employee, P3 focuses their efforts on consistently training their employees through experiences rather than using training materials.

Alignment With the Literature

Theme 3, employee training, is consistent with the findings of Arulmani et al. (2022) in that employee training is an essential aspect to ensure that employees enhance and grow their capabilities. Without training and growth opportunities, employees may not be able to complete their responsibilities at their fullest potential, making it important to invest time in employees (Arulmani et al., 2022). Through training, employees can

learn to rely on each other, creating a collaborative team that is willing to advance their abilities.

Alignment With the Conceptual Framework

The theme employee training aligns with the conceptual framework of the team development theory, for training employees is essential within the storming and norming stages (see Tuckman, 1965). Throughout these two stages, employees will learn their roles and become more familiar with their responsibilities, enhancing their skills to create a collective sense of identity and confidence (Super, 2020). Within these two stages, employees put their differences aside and learn to work with one another, becoming more receptive to their training.

Conclusion

In conclusion, having team development strategies, such as an organizational culture, employee engagement, and employee training, will allow small businesses to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. Managers can use the conceptual framework of the team development theory to create an effective team of employees that collaborate and are willing to go the extra mile, for they take ownership in their work. The findings examined coincide with the existing literature, for the three themes discussed presented ample information that is relevant in business practice today. It is important for an organization to build an organizational culture, engage with employees and properly train the employees, because it allows for a collaborative environment to be created, which enables a team to be formed.

Applications to Professional Practice

Small business managers face many difficulties pertaining to the creation of a team, for they lack strategies to incorporate teamwork within their business practices. Teamwork allows the organization to create an open and supportive culture that allows employees to interact with one another, become empowered to make their own decisions and advance their skills and knowledge, all while working as a team (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020). This study's findings are essential to small business managers because the findings showed that an organizational culture, employee engagement, and employee training are team development strategies to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. The lack of these elements within a small business could result in a decrease in productivity and encouragement within the work of employees, because they will not feel valued for their contributions.

Instilling an organizational culture allows a business to create a system of shared meaning that is adopted by employees, to work in tandem with those that share the same mentality. The beliefs and values from this organizational culture become the basic guideline for all employees in carrying out their performance, making it important to communicate the common goals and mission so that everyone is on the same page (Kenedi et al., 2022). Having a defined organizational culture allows employees to alter their attitudes and behaviors to ensure that they are working to the best of their ability, creating employees that are motivated and more engaged with the practices of the organization.

When an employee is engaged, they are aware of their roles and responsibilities, inspiring others alongside to attain a level of commitment and involvement within the organization. Employees find work meaningful and significant if their work offers them opportunities to learn and grow professionally, leading them to become more engaged with their work (Panda et al., 2022). Through being proactive with their employees, small business managers can empower and motivate employees to take ownership in their work and further enhance their skills and abilities.

Through proper training, it can greatly help employees to advance their knowledge and work on their weaknesses, allowing them to improve their behavior for the better of the organization. Employee training is an indicator to enhance knowledge, capabilities, and competences of the employees that results in the effective performance of the employees (Karim et al., 2019). Having small business managers use training as a strategy allows employees to use their enhanced work ethic to perform their responsibilities appropriately and carry out their duties more efficiently.

Implications for Social Change

The study's findings could contribute to positive social change by providing small business managers with strategies that allow individuals to work together within a team to continuously advance and enhance their practices, along with develop themselves personally. Through creating an organizational culture, businesses can bring their employees together, for they will develop shared beliefs and values, which will act as a guide for their behavior (Kenedi et al., 2022). Being involved with one another allows the employees to be more open to engagement and discipline, enabling small business

managers to be more proactive with them and empower them to take ownership within their job. By taking pride in their work, it leads employees to be more willing to develop their skills and abilities, which will improve work effectiveness and efficiency, allowing them to meet the business's mission and goals (Salim et al., 2022). Having an increase in their productivity leads to an escalation in their performance, which could enhance profitability, allowing for the creation of a culture based on organizational performance. This culture predicated on teamwork can extend beyond the walls of a given space as it attracts a customer base, heightens competitiveness around the area and could typically enhance the surrounding community as a whole.

Recommendations for Action

From discussing the three themes identified, I recommend that small business managers build an organizational culture, engage their employees, and train and develop their employees, for it allows them to create a collaborative environment. Through building this cooperative work atmosphere, employees will work more optimally, leading to the creation of a team of knowledgeable individuals with a diverse set of skills and abilities (Safitri et al., 2022). Acknowledging the importance of creating a team, I recommend that small business managers focus their efforts on building a team through showcasing the significance of teamwork, empowerment, motivation, and development to their employees. These aspects should be consistently communicated to their employees, for they will drive and influence them to work collaboratively in an optimal manner to create a competitive advantage for the organization. I recommend small business managers to constantly communicate with their employees, creating a supportive

organizational culture where everyone shares the same mission and vision of the organization. Employee performance is related to how well the organization's cultural values are incorporated by employees, making it essential that employees encompass the behaviors and attitudes that are set forth by the organization (Haryadi, 2022).

To ensure that employees understand what is expected of them and how to overcome challenges, it is essential for small business managers to engage their employees, for it will increase their commitment and pride in the organization. I recommend small business managers to regularly engage with their employees, investing their time in making sure that the employees are motivated to work to the best of their ability. Through engagement, employees will develop a positive feeling about their self-efficacy, viewing their job as meaningful and becoming motivated to apply their capabilities to their job constructively and productively (Panda et al., 2022). I recommend small business managers to empower employees through providing opportunities to make definitive decisions when it pertains to them. Feeling valued for their contributions, employees become more willing to invest more time and energy in their job, creating a sense of ownership and pride for the brand they have built.

By being consistently engaged, employees become more open to proper training for an organization, allowing them to further develop their skills and abilities, enhancing their productivity when working as a team. I recommend small business managers to instill employee training, teaching employees the correct way to tackle their roles and responsibilities, along with overcoming challenges that can arise. Through providing training, employees can enhance their abilities and increase their knowledge to execute

efficiently in the current environment and to operate in challenging situations (Karim et al., 2019). I recommend small business managers to lead by example, working alongside employees and building them from the ground up, promoting respect and reliance for each other, creating an effective team. Through properly developing teamwork, there is an enrichment in the proficiencies of the employees, increasing organizational productivity and motivating employees to improve their overall work performance (Obiekwe et al., 2021).

Overall, the results from this study will be submitted for publication through journal websites such as ProQuest and ResearchGate, along with disseminated through conferences where the aspects discussed will be further explained to organizational leaders. Small business managers may use these findings to enhance existing knowledge to implement diverse team development strategies to further solidify the creation of effective teams for improving organizational performance.

Recommendations for Further Research

For my qualitative multiple case study, I had a sample size of three small business managers within South New Jersey who have successfully used team development strategies to create effective teams for improving organizational performance. This study was limited to one geographical location, leading to the study's outcomes not being applicable to every business within the state. I recommend using more participants to obtain more sincere and honest responses, along with broadening the geographical locations of participants for further research. Whether it be in highly populated to seasonal businesses, it is important to understand the strategies of small business

managers who have high employee retention and successfully created a team. I recommend future researchers to gain data on the multitude of industries that are not as recognized, comparing how each one creates a team. Instead of limiting research by existing knowledge, future researchers could gain data through other strategies and advancements in relation to team development.

Reflections

From the start, I had known that the doctoral program was going to be tumultuous, and at times I did not think I would continue moving forward. Having support from my family and friends, I kept pushing through the challenging times to flourish as an academic scholar. Throughout my journey, I have gained critical thinking and research skills, along with improved writing skills, allowing me to apply what I learned professionally. My doctoral research has broadened my understanding of the importance of team development strategies when creating effective teams, for it impacts my workplace. When conducting my interviews, I remained neutral. I put aside my biases, allowing myself not to use my personal experiences to instill bias, for my focus was on the topic. My doctoral research has enabled me to gather data and present findings that small business managers may find influential in creating effective teams for improving organizational performance. I look forward to using the extensive knowledge gained from my experience within the DBA program to create a positive change to my community and the world.

Conclusion

Improving organizational performance by creating an effective team relies on the team development strategies implemented by small business managers. These managers must produce and incorporate team development strategies to enhance the motivation and empowerment of employees to work to the best of their ability, improving their productivity. The findings from this study indicated that small business managers that want to create effective teams should implement team development strategies of (a) organizational culture, (b) employee engagement, and (c) employee training. To improve the performance of employees, organizations must create a supportive organizational culture, continuously engage with their employees, and implement training that allows employees to maximize their abilities through gaining more knowledge. I concluded that by instilling these aspects within the practices of the organization, small business managers can create effective teams to improve organizational performance.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol	
What you would do	What you would say—script
Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over coffee	Thank you for participating in this interview. My name is Jennifer Wolfson, and I am conducting the study entitled “Exploring Team Development Strategies that Create Effective Teams within Small Businesses.”
Watch for non-verbal queues	1. What team development strategies are you using to create effective teams for improving organizational performance?
Paraphrase as needed	2. How do these strategies empower employees to create effective teams for improving organizational performance?
Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth information and knowledge	3. What challenges have you had in implementing these strategies?
Use reflective journaling to write down notes of expressions and thoughts	4. What have you done to mitigate those challenges effectively?
	5. What are the benefits of implementing these strategies?
	6. What additional information would you share regarding the effectiveness of team development strategies within your organization?
	7. What recommendations do you have regarding the strategies that would or should be implemented?
Wrap up interview thanking participant	Thank you for your time and willingness in participating in this interview. Is there anything else that you could add to help me further understand the strategies to create effective teams.
Schedule follow-up member checking interview	To enhance the accuracy of the data collected and seek clarification for the interpretations gathered, is there any way we could reconnect through phone call or email?

Follow-Up Member Checking Interview

Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage	Through the collection of data acquired from your interview, I need to confirm and clarify the responses given within the interview.
Share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question	Walk through each question, read the interpretation, and ask: Did I miss anything? Or what would you like to add?
