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Small Beauty Salon Business Strategies for Sustaining Operations Beyond 5 Years

Yolanda Davis
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Yolanda Davis

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Small Beauty Salon Business Strategies for Sustaining Operations Beyond 5 Years

by

Yolanda Davis

MS, Albany State University, 2014

BS, Troy University, 2011

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

February 2023

Abstract

Fifty percent of all small businesses fail within the first 5 years of operation, which includes some small salon business owners who lack effective strategies to sustain and maintain their businesses beyond 5 years. Using contingency theory, the purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the strategies some small salon business owners use to sustain and maintain their business beyond 5 years. Five small beauty salon business owners in Georgia were selected based on their strategies to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and public documents from participants' business websites and social media. Thematic data analysis resulted in three themes: (a) offering incentives to loyal consumers, (b) actively promoting the business, and (c) providing excellent service to keep existing clients. The key recommendation for small business salon owners is to work collaboratively to meet and exceed customer expectations to keep existing customers happy and satisfied with services. The implication for positive social change includes providing a better quality of life to the local community, increasing jobs, and improving citizens' welfare. Increased profits may also allow small business owners to offer discounts, incentives, and services to their community.

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Dedication

I dedicate my doctoral study to the heavenly Father, who has strengthened me in this journey. To my husband, Charlie Harp III, for his support, understanding, and unconditional love through this process. I dedicate this work to my three children, Marquantavious, Kentavious, and Kenaute; two step-sons, Hakeem and Jaden; granddaughter Brielle; Mom and my Dad (the pushers); brothers and sisters-in-law; aunties; and to all my friends who encouraged me to keep pressing forward. Finally, I offer a special dedication to my former instructors Dr. Theresa West, Dr. Sandra Washington, and Dr. Henry Washington for their encouraging words and for seeing my potential.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The foundation of the study is on the economic influence of small business enterprises in the United States. Small business enterprising is a source of employment among many youth and local communities in the United States. In 2020, small businesses accounted for over 31.7 million people employed, estimated at around 47.1% of the workforce (U.S. Small Business Administration [SBA], 2020). Small business is a crucial part of the nation's economy because they help in the creation of healthy communities, and they trigger innovation (Bailey & Thomas, 2017). The small business communities are generally diverse and contribute to development in employment creation. Beauty salons make up 39% of small business ventures.

Background of the Problem

Small business practice has been at the heart of U.S. financial practices, especially with capitalist mobilization. According to the U.S. SBA (2018), small business enterprises account for 99.9% of firms in the United States. But researchers have estimated that 50% of small businesses fail even before they reach 5 years (Turner & Endres, 2017). Because small beauty salons are among the most influential and attractive small business ventures throughout the United States, this qualitative study concentrated on creating insights and knowledge for small beauty salon owners on the strategies that can sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. Small businesses face unique challenges that are different from the challenges faced by large-scale business entities. Small business owners' core competencies and characteristics are barriers to small business operations, but there is a general deficiency in research on these factors (Mayr et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

Small business startups fail at a rate of 50% within 5 years (National Business Capital & Services, 2020, p. 3). The SBA (2020) in their frequency ask questions indicated 898,000 small business owners in the United States failed in 2017 and had to close their businesses. The general business problem is that small business owners frequently fail within the first 5 years of establishing their business. The specific business problem is that some small beauty business owners lack strategies needed to maintain their businesses beyond 5 years of beginning operations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the strategies small beauty salon business owners use to maintain their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations. The target population consists of approximately five small business owners located in Georgia who have been in successful operation for more than 5 years. Results of this study may influence positive social change by refining small business capability and sustainability for individuals to improve the success rate of small businesses within Georgia. The findings can also contribute to social change by contributing to other small businesses' sustainability with increased employment of new workers, enabling their businesses to pay higher wages, and offer better benefits to their employees. As a result of new businesses, people of the community can receive more support from small businesses.

Nature of the Study

There are three research methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed (Yin, 2018). Qualitative studies' focus on interpretive philosophy for gaining a deep understanding of the phenomenon (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). The qualitative method is a suitable approach to identify the different strategies of successful small beauty salon business owners in Georgia. Using an inductive approach, researchers use a smaller sample of participants' and organizations' data to develop rich data and thick descriptions to characterize phenomena and identify potential themes associated with phenomena (Aspers & Corte, 2019). In contrast, quantitative researchers use the deductive process, which is analytical and requires testing hypotheses about variables' characteristics or relationships (Bennett, 2016). Mixed methods research involves integrating qualitative and quantitative research elements. In quantitative and mixed methods studies, researchers use quantitative measures and inferential statistics to examine variables' characteristics or relationships among variables (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). In this research, I did not test hypotheses or examine relationship between variables; therefore, a quantitative or mixed methods approach was not appropriate for this study.

I considered four qualitative research designs: phenomenology, ethnography, narrative inquiry, and case study (Renjith et al., 2021). In a phenomenological design, participants provide the information orally based on their personal meaning of their lived experiences with a phenomenon (Nicholls, 2019). I did not use a phenomenological study because lived experience were not to be addressed in this study. An ethnographic design requires researchers to study groups' cultures to achieve an understanding of social life

phenomena (Abramson, 2021). The ethnographic method involves prolonged observation and interactions with the study's participants in their natural environment (Jorgensen, 2015), which was not aligned with my study's purpose. The narrative research method involves reliance primarily on written, spoken words or individual visual representations of participants' personal lives and on the individual life experience explored as a narrative or story (Martín-Alonso et al., 2021). A narrative inquiry was not an appropriate design because I was not collecting participants' life experiences or their stories. Using a case study design enables researchers to perform an in-depth inquiry into a topic to generate insights in a real-life context experience and involves seeking a deep understanding of a topic through multiple types of data describing a specific topic or event (Baidoun et al., 2018; Yin, 2018). Using multiple case study designs, researchers can collect and analyze data to gather and compare perspectives and identify patterns. I determined that a multiple-case design was more suitable than a single case design because I would be interviewing owners of salons in different locations.

Research Question

What strategies do small beauty salon business owners use to maintain their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies did you use to maintain in business beyond 5 years?
2. What marketing strategies did you use to survive beyond 5 years?
3. What business strategies did you use to manage the key processes and systems within your business?

4. How did you overcome the barriers to implement the strategies used to remain in business beyond 5 years?
5. What type of leadership styles did you used to manage employee productivity?
6. What other issues would you like to discuss about your strategies for sustaining your business within its first 5 years?

Conceptual Framework

I selected contingency theory as the conceptual framework. Contingency theory has been the conceptual framework used in other qualitative studies to provide a picture or visual display of how ideas in a study relate to one another (Luse et al., 2012). The contingency theory has been used to focus on the effectiveness of leadership styles on employee productivity. Company policies' effects on company profitability is dependent on the premise that employees are inspired to work effectively by rewards that fit their present situation (Fiedler, 1967). Business leaders use contingency theory to improve leaders' effectiveness with their leadership styles and use of rewards. Contingency theory is beneficial to organizations because of the potential for learning from specific situations and using these lessons to influence future management of similar situations. The application of contingency theory is to (a) increase the profitability for business owners by improving leadership style, (b) increase the use of management strategies for success, and (c) enhance the effectiveness of company policy (Denison, 1990). Contingency theory includes a focus on expanding business, developing successful programs for business owners, and increasing organizations' chances of survival and success (Vidal et al., 2017). Contingency theory provided the contextual foundation to enable me to

identify and understand the strategies small beauty salon business owners use to maintain their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations.

Operational Definitions

Business success: Business success is the ability to employ the right business strategies that enable it to stand or endure the economic pressures and make profits for more than 5 years (Fairlie & Fossen, 2018).

Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship is the ability to organize, manage, and assume the risks of the organization (Fairlie & Fossen, 2018). In this study it refers to those able to do so as regards to small beauty salon businesses.

Entrepreneurial intensity: Entrepreneurial intensity is an array of constructs that define the entrepreneurial characteristics and behaviors that differentiate the strategic business choices of a firm, and how they affect the overall performance (Sumiati, 2020).

Financial management: Financial management refers to the budgetary aspect in businesses. Economic value of income, expenses, profits, and losses. In this research, it refers to the ability of small beauty salons to manage their money well in order to achieve economic benefit (Bulturbayevich et al., 2020).

Leadership: Leadership in this study was used to imply the small beauty salon leadership styles that have enhanced the strategies for successful business in operation beyond 5 years. Leadership styles are a crucial part of any small business that aspires to prosper, especially in the 21st century (Olaizola et al., 2021).

Organizational ecology: Organizational ecology refers to a sociologically oriented research program on a specific set of business entities with the aim of establishing a

particular trend or investigating their relationship with a particular factor (Arthur et al., 2017).

Small businesses: Small businesses refer to a privately owned company in the legal form of a limited liability company, corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship (Hinton, 2021). Within this research, the term has regularly been used to mean a small beauty salon or shop.

Technology: Technology in this research refers to the aspects of technology applied in business salons as a means of making them manage sustainability (Fordham & Hamilton, 2019). For them to prosper, technology needs to be present since most of the appliances use technology.

Small business administration (SBA): The SBA is an independent agency of the federal government that helps, regulates, and protects small businesses' concerns (Dianu et al., 2021).

Small business failure: For this research, small business failure refers to a small beauty salon failing due to poor business strategies that cannot sustain their operation beyond 5 years (Fordham & Hamilton, 2019).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are elements used to analyze, illustrate, and develop a doctoral study (Kimmel, 2020). Assumptions are beliefs that may or may not happen (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). Limitations are potential weaknesses that can usually be controlled by the researcher and delimitation are limits that are set but cannot be controlled by the researcher (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019).

Assumptions

Assumptions include information that I would assume to be correct but cannot be verified (see Yin, 2018). To avoid expectation or belief, researchers must recognize and discourse possible assumptions (Zheng, et al., 2018). I assumed that a significant number of small business owners in Georgia who have been profitable for the last 5 years would be willing to engage in discussions about their success. I also anticipated that the participants may be somewhat biased in providing correct and legit answers. I also assumed that company documents were accurate, current, and complete. The final assumption related to the honesty of potential participants and the accuracy of supporting documentation to identify small business owners in the salon industry who have implemented successful strategies to sustain beyond 5 years.

Limitations

Limitations restrict the research methodology, study design, and weaknesses of the researcher's control in the study (Dallasega et al., 2021; Yin, 2018). Limitations of this study include a small sample size and the potential of biases and prejudices by participants in responding to research questions. Data collected was dependent on the knowledge and statements of small business salon owners in five businesses to reflect views of the broader populations of the salon industry. The study's final findings might not transfer to other geographic regions or business cases because of the restricted scope of this study. The study may also be limited to make some personal observations due the Covid-19 pandemic.

Delimitations

Delimitations include the limitations the researchers encounter regarding the study's scope and purpose of their study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019; Yin, 2018). During this study, the state of Georgia was a delimitation. Because the study focused on five small salon business owners operating their businesses for 5 or more years, the participant inclusion criteria to maintain in business longer than 5 years was also a delimitation for this study.

Significance of the Study

The study's findings are expected to provide insights into successful strategies that small owners can use to sustain their business beyond 5 years of operation. Small businesses create the largest share of jobs in the United States (Ayandibu, & Houghton, 2017). Identification and application of business strategies may help small business owners to nurture their business performance and increase success rates (Kerr et al., 2018). Social change is beneficial if the owners are meeting their employees' needs and a more social environment. Customers are more concerned about the safety, cleanliness, and sanitation of small beauty shops in the current setting of dealing with the Covid-19 crisis in the state of Georgia. Increasing public tax revenues from the shops could develop more jobs and support investments back into the community.

Contribution to Business Practice

This study includes five small business owners who have long-term sustainability over 5 years by implementing business development, profitability, and leadership skills as participants for this study. Small business owners need to understand how the policies,

strategies, and procedures they implement in their businesses can affect their business success (Fairlie & Fossen, 2018). Leadership styles are also a crucial part of any small business that aspires to prosper, especially in the 21st century (Olaizola et al., 2021). The study's findings helped identify strategies that small business beauty salon owners used for improving their key business processes that enabled them to sustain their business in a profitable fashion.

Implications for Social Change

The implication for positive social change includes providing a better quality of life to the local community, increasing jobs, and improving citizens' welfare. Small business owners who remain competitive and productive to their local communities create employment opportunities and increase economic development (Ludmila, et al., 2017). Business success is the ability to employ the right business strategies both inside the company and in the local community that enables it to stand or endure the economic pressures and make profits for more than 5 years (Fairlie & Fossen, 2018). Small business owners can sponsor fundraising events and help support other community activities like sports programs for little league baseball, soccer, hockey, football, and basketball games improving the community's ability to provide a better quality of life for all its citizens while making a profit for itself.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The literature review must focus on topics relative to the study topic (Paul & Criado, 2020). There are numerous studies around the research about small business operational strategies, theoretical and empirical approaches, especially as they relate to

small beauty salons and shops. Nevertheless, most small business startups continue to fail when they are still premature. This section includes a literature review on the barriers of success to small business startups in the United States. In this literature review, I aimed to analyze the existing study findings on the possible small business startup strategies used to sustain them in operation for more than 5 years.

The literature review consisted of documents, journals, books, and published dissertations. Prior studies on small businesses success and failures helped identify the themes and strategies that other researchers have used. The databases used for this study included ProQuest, Business Source Complete, Sage Journals, Science Direct, and EBSCO. The following search terms were used: *small business success and failures*, *beauty salons*, *leadership*, *ingredients for success*, and *contingency theory*. A plethora of peer-reviewed journal articles provided information on business success and failure. I filtered the search results to include peer-reviewed sources published after 2018 to meet the doctoral study's literature review timeline requirements. If a listed resource's website did not access the full content article, I searched Google Scholar for the full article. I used a total of 105 total references for the review of the professional and academic literature section (see Table 1). Based on the Walden University Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program requirements, 96% of the peer-reviewed articles were dated within 5 years.

Table 1*Sources of Professional and Academic Literature*

Sources	Review of the Literature before 2018	Review of the Literature in or after 2018	Percentage (%) Literature	Total References
Peer-reviewed	4	97	96%	101
Non Peer-reviewed	0	1	1%	1
Books	0	3	3%	3
Total	4	101	100%	105

Note. Frequency and percentage of resources within the literature review and proposal.

The literature review was designed to cover particular internal and external business strategies that might make a small beauty salon business sustainable in operations for 5 years and beyond. Most small businesses achieve success from the organizational nature of their ability to deal with situations as they arise on their path of business operations (Mevo, 2019). Dealing with emergency issues is also associated with business success for an extended period (Turner & Endres, 2017). Small beauty salons are businesses that need an emergency strategic plan that effectively deals with all emergencies related to employees, resources, leadership, and their customers if these emergencies should take place. Small business should have strategies that make them well prepared to deal with emergencies that otherwise, if not dealt with, may fail to sustain operations beyond 5 years (Turner & Endres, 2017).

Conceptual Framework

Contingency theory provides a picture or visual display of how ideas in a study relate to one another (Uslu, 2019). In contingency theory, there is no particular way to manage a business; it all depends on the situation with a specific company. Contingency

theory can be relied on in determining the performance of different situations in the business consisting of a situational analysis (Mevo, 2019). A key strategy that can offer a business insight on assessing the performance of other resources such as human resources to return profits (Shala et al., 2021). Human resources can cover the high staff turnover rate with low income earning jobs within the beauty industry, but this would not strengthen their business operations. An important aspect regarding small beauty salons is that their success depends much on their human resources and the way they handle their employees. The company policies and effects on company profitability depend on the premise that employees are inspired to work effectively by rewards that fit their present situation (Mevo, 2019). Business leaders use contingency theory to improve leaders' effectiveness and ability to deal with employees and adapt tools in the workplace (Hetland et al., 2018).

Contingency theory has been used to discuss expanding business, developing successful business leaders, and increasing organizational chances of survival and success. Most successful business salons managers have a way to deal with each employee (Perry et al., 2018). Due to the varied nature of characters and personalities, small business managers can apply the theory to ensure that there is a harmonious and peaceful co-existence between employees (Mevo, 2019). The quality of the service the employees offer to the customers, the higher the willingness and the probability that the customers will buy more and come back more often; therefore, the more likely a business will sustain its operations beyond 5 years.

The contingency theory helped to evaluate the core strategies used by small beauty shops to see their businesses sustained for 5 years and beyond. Contingency theory has been related to the decisions of internal operations and creative ability within changing business environments to match customer demands (Bashir & Verma, 2019). Small business enterprises and small business beauty salons owners need to have strategic intelligence. Strategic intelligence refers to gathering, classifying, analyzing, and disseminating critical data and information that can aid the management in formulating sound decisions for their businesses (Ingalagi et al., 2021). Contingency theory offers significant insights into how small beauty salons need to position their business for success strategically.

Opportunity Entrepreneurship

Individuals who choose to become business owners are known as entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are risk-takers who keep a careful eye on the market's supply and demand while seizing opportunities (Bullock, 2021). Entrepreneurs have an intrinsic drive to start a business and use resources, labor, markets, and communities (Riley, 2021). Entrepreneurs use their ideas, passion, and beliefs as guides in their business planning to establish a foundation in making business decisions. Entrepreneurship entails the use of imagination and resourcefulness to generate business possibilities (Riley, 2021). Some people become entrepreneurs because they can reuse resources or take risks in developing new commodities, processes, strategies, services, technology, and organizational design (Nunley, 2021). Entrepreneurs, therefore, are owners who are looking for new market and product development possibilities.

Entrepreneurship and innovation are also terms used to describe how to improve a company's performance and gain a competitive edge. Some researchers have advised local business owners to develop effective plans to stay competitive in the future and plan for contingencies if situations change (Bullock, 2021). Entrepreneurs should concentrate their efforts on maximizing their potential for future growth because local businesses have consistently produced new positions and job growth (Mevo, 2019). Connecting schooling and training has been beneficial in helping companies to stay competitive and to experience future growth in planned and organized fashion. When businesspeople have the requisite training and skills in a specific field of business, they are more likely to maximize their potential and expand their skills to other company sectors (Mas-Tur et al., 2020). Developing effective plans to stay competitive in the future and planning for emergencies and contingencies if situations change cannot be minimized or forgotten by company managers (Bullock, 2021). This is one of the features of contingency theory since it offers the potential for learning from specific situations and using these lessons to influence future management of the same or similar situations.

Necessity Entrepreneurship

A necessity entrepreneur is someone who has turned to entrepreneurship because they cannot find a job, or they need another method to create income. Researchers have found that plans and policies that fulfill today's society's requirements without jeopardizing future generations' needs are vital to business success (Foster, 2016). Sustainability is a significant problem in both the corporate and governmental sectors of the global economy (Nikolaev et al., 2017). There are nearly 1 billion necessity

entrepreneurs who have been pushed into entrepreneurship due to a lack of long-term employment options globally.

Large- or small-scale business sustainability for an owner is not just a problem but also a necessity. For example, during 2005 to 2010, the food sector and the Heinz food firm underwent significant sustainability reforms to address packaging, emissions, waste, and energy usage (Fairlie & Fossen, 2018; Jarriett, 2020). The Heinz Company CEO established short-range and long-range goals for his company with input from all levels of employees. During 2022 to 2032, the Heinz Company will be striving to achieve their sustainable targets by (a) lowering packaging by 15%, (b) reducing GHG emissions by 20%, converting waste into potable water for watering their grass, plants, and shrubbery, and (d) reducing energy usage by 20% (Jarriett, 2020). Although Heinz is best known for their ketchup, the business produces thousands of different items for customers in over 200 countries (Bullock, 2021). Overall, Heinz has been more sustainable from 1990 to 2020 over the past 30 years because of its entrepreneurial sustainability.

Entrepreneurial Sustainability

Entrepreneurship sustainability refers to solving social and environmental problems, particularly in emerging and developing countries. Sustainability concerns an entrepreneur's growth, environmental preservation, life support, and a company owner's desire to create new products and services for profit (Gerber, 2018). Improving entrepreneurial sustainability is more critical for business startups to consider entrepreneurs' creativity and business management competencies rather than pursue

business security or have a technology-oriented attitude (Lee & Kim, 2019).

Entrepreneurial sustainability is rooted in a small business owner's values, beliefs, vision, resolution to solve problems, and desire to achieve goals and profit while doing what they enjoy and love to do.

Sustainability highlights the importance of balancing three primary goals for humankind's future growth: economics, ecology and society, and ethics. People, profit, and planets are the objectives because they fulfill the requirements of today's generation without jeopardizing the needs of future generations (Gerber, 2018). The business's activities must be sustainable not just for the sake of the company but also for the sake of everyone who lives on this planet (Robertson, 2021). Sustainability encompasses more than a company's environmental and climatic effect; it also includes its investors, stakeholders, and triple bottom line when the results of the business system provide more innovation and sustainability to the company.

Innovation

Entrepreneurship has been connected with innovation. Some case studies claim that entrepreneurship is not always a form of innovation (Ciasullo et al., 2019). Other researchers have found that the primary driver of sustainable business value is innovative ideas following proper implementation (Aminova & Marchi, 2021). Most studies have identified innovation as the primary source of starting up new businesses. Innovation has created opportunities for small businesses (Kim et al., 2018). Small businesses innovation often depends on more intangible factors, such as the quality of the local, regional

innovation system. Innovative system designs that are both needed and wanted by the consumer are the determiners of a sustainable business (Parrilli & Radicic, 2021).

The sustainability of small businesses relies on creativeness and expands opportunities to catch up with current trends. Training can generate innovative ideas to improve designs and creativity (Aminova & Marchi, 2021). Training equips business owners with the skills required to run their operations. Innovation is critical in training and helps develop sustainable business operations by exploring new ideas (Mas-Tur et al., 2020). Innovation escalates the chances of businesses reacting to changes in pursuit of new opportunities; therefore, the sustainability of small businesses relies on innovative ideas.

Environmental and Social Elements of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship with a sustainable mindset considers both the environmental and social elements of the firm or business. Proactiveness and innovativeness lead to business sustainability (Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018). Entrepreneurs seek opportunities for themselves but bring value opportunities to the social environments around them have also been linked with business sustainability (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). A goal-oriented entrepreneur is concerned about the company's, society's, and environment's long-term development and progress.

Entrepreneurial Leadership

Entrepreneurial changes comprise dramatic innovations that the future holds with entrepreneurial leadership opportunities. The attainment of the organization's achievements and excellence remains the center in the entrepreneurial arena of

competition (Utoyo et al., 2019). Essential elements for attaining excellence levels concentrated on the four main leadership tactics include attention via vision, attaining meaningful conclusions through communication, attaining confidence through respect, and testing through positioning (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018).

Successful entrepreneurship leadership in the small beauty salon entails interpersonal values that offer an interactive cues paradigm and the underpinning core for the strategies to be used to be fulfilled successfully. Strategic leadership in the small beauty salon must embrace innovation for the salon owner to have a competitive advantage. In the disruptive economic environment, the business must be first in innovation, agility, experimentation culture, and risk-taking for exploration opportunities (Fairlie & Fossen, 2018). Researchers have also evaluated the distinctive strategic entrepreneurship dimensions (Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018). Synthesizing and combining opportunities and advantage-seeking activities can create wealth and competitive advantage but being successful in these activities can be challenging for the small business owner since they require different organizational capabilities (Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018).

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership involves the mediation of trust in leaders and identification with leaders in businesses regardless of their size. Business owners recognize that leadership is connected to trust between themselves and their employees rather than just a position of power over people (Sharma et al., 2019). A follower's willingness to stay dependent on a leader because of the leader's intelligence, talent, compassion, and

honesty defines trust in a leader (Ko et al., 2018). Trust in leaders instills a vague sense of responsibility, which can boost self-efficacy and encourage good conduct on the part of a business owner. Ethical leaders may increase their followers' self-confidence to overcome ethical difficulties by mastering strategies for handling ethical dilemmas. Ethical leaders impact followers by modeling ethical behavior and emphasizing the necessity of ethical conduct (Sharma et al., 2019). Ethical leaders encourage and reward ethical behavior (Alshehhi et al., 2020). Followers loyal to their leader believe they are in a social exchange relationship with the business owner that is important to both them and the owner.

Sustainable Leadership

One of the essential elements of positive outcomes is long-term and sustainable leadership. Working together as a comprehensive system allows company leaders to achieve long-term corporate goals (Woo & Kang, 2020). Sustainable leaders must understand a company's complex system with human values protecting their workers from societal harm and boosting positive benefits (Hallinger & Suriyankietkaew, 2018). Stakeholders view company revenues and market performance as inextricable and related to the long-term leadership offered by the owner of the company.

Business strategies that encourage growth for firms, people, and the environment are developed by sustainable leaders. Leaders who want to be sustainable should create innovative and revenue-generating strategies (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021). To sustain long-term business success, executives must be able to think beyond the company's short-term goals and revenues (Bullock, 2021). Small businesses all over the globe employ

sustainable leaders that consider the demands and skills of customers to maintain a successful business.

Transformational Leadership

Business owners usually establish business strategies for 5 years and beyond for effective business operations. Leadership is one factor that affects business operations, and different leadership styles can lead to successful business operations (Riley, 2021). According to Afriyie et al. (2019), transformation leadership is one of the critical leadership styles firmly related to SMEs. Transformation leadership plays a significant role in marketing performance and innovation so therefore, many small business owners who apply the method are likely to get positive results.

Small business owners who are proponents of transformational leadership will assert that transformational leadership involves proper leadership communication. Communication is an important aspect when it comes to transformational leadership being used to solve business problems (Miftari, 2018). According to Adhikari (2019), transformational leaders should establish the most effective medium of communication that can reach employees within a short period to minimize delays in responses. The advancement in information technology plays a significant role in ensuring adequate communication between the employees and the managers irrespective of the distance since transformational leadership entails proper communication between the managers and the employees.

Transformational leadership inspires most employees to work past required expectations for achieving a shared vision. According to Adhikari (2019),

transformational leadership's primary elements are intellectual stimulation and individualization. These two elements are essential to equip leaders with basic skills for effective small business management (Turner & Endres, 2017). Transformational leadership inspires and teaches employees to work beyond expectations.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is essential in creating a rapport between the employees and the managers in small businesses. Okere and Olorunfemi (2018) claim that transactional leadership entails exchanging resources between two parties (employees and managers). According to Achmad and Fitriansyah (2021), they have found that the resources might not be monetary but a form of appreciation such as incentives. A transactional leader can motivate his employees to work and get a reward in return in case they achieve the organizational goals since transactional leadership comprises promising rewards as motivating factors to employees.

Transactional leadership also entails various factors that must be considered before rewarding or reprimanding employees. Transactional leadership and self-motivation are vital since every employee is given a set of long-term or short-term goals (Edelbroek et al., 2019). In transactional leadership, the employee's performance has a positive or a negative effect; hence it aims to achieve business goals and effective implementation. Achmad and Fitriansyah (2021) emphasized non-tangible reinforcers such as praise and recognition as opposed to financial rewards for employees who deserved this type of praise. Sometimes, there is nothing better than saying thank you to

an employee or letting them know in front of their peers how much their efforts or achievements is appreciated by the company.

Transactional leadership also plays an essential role in innovation. Okere and Olorunfemi (2018) found that the reward of employees is critical since it creates room for more creativity and innovation. When an employee is rewarded for splendid business performance, then, in the preceding year, other employees would work extra hard to ensure that they get rewarded (Achmad & Fitriansyah, 2021). Therefore, working hard makes these employees innovative in different business sectors and can lead to improvement in the success rate of small businesses.

Participative Leadership

Unlike transformational and transactional leadership, participative leadership is effective in some small business firms. According to Akonkwa et al. (2021), participative leadership can also be referred to as democratic leadership since it involves democratically involving both parties in advancing an organization or a business firm. In small businesses, participative leadership is essential since the business operation is within a small circle (Lythreatis et al., 2019). When everyone can express their views, the business is likely to advance since all the workers have the right to contribute to advances in business operations.

Participative leadership is a harmonious leadership that builds cohesive teamwork and increases business operation understanding. Lythreatis et al. (2019) stated that participative leadership involves slow decision-making and is also very essential in settling a business dispute. Participative leadership plays a significant role in CSR

(Corporate Social Responsibility) and accountability (Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski, 2018). Therefore, most small businesses are likely to thrive if they implement this type of leadership.

Participative leadership also entails collecting information from different employees in decision-making, but the final decision still relies on the managers or the board of directors. Moreover, there are other approaches involved in participative leadership and these factors include: consensus decision-making, democratic leadership, and autocratic leadership (Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski, 2018). Akonkwa et al. (2021) also found that participative leadership is significant for future business management strategies. These strategies become essential in solving business problems and leading to small business organizational development.

Small Business Organizational Development

Organizational development is vital for a business owner to implement and transfer behavioral science knowledge to their growth strategies, reinforce the structures and processes that contribute to an organization's success and welfare. Organizational development is a technologically created strategy centered on an employee's security and organizational performance (Egbuta & Gilbert, 2021). Sundram et al. (2020) found that the advantages of correctly applied knowledge management programs within the organizations in SMEs will positively impact small business success as their approach to knowledge management can vary. Knowledge management can flourish when behavior sciences knowledge is applied to a company's growth strategies.

Employees and small businesses gain from successful organizational growth. Business, communications, industrial and organizational psychology, human resources management, sociology, and other disciplines all help organizations flourish (Egbuta & Gilbert, 2021). Employee retention is a critical aspect of corporate growth and development (Schwatka et al., 2018). The retention of a company's best employees helps to create a nucleus of workers to maintain stability and dependability in addressing issues and problem areas that have previously been dealt with by an experienced workforce.

The purpose of business executives in terms of organizational development is to enhance the organization's capabilities and efficacy in accomplishing strategic goals and objectives. Business owners must successfully respond to the disruptions of organizational change by seizing the possibilities that have arisen (Schwatka et al., 2018). Most business owners struggle to design and implement change, and most change attempts fail (Fontalvo et al., 2021). When change attempts fail, organizational decline can also happen simultaneously with widespread consequences.

A sizeable loss in an organization's resource base during a specific period is the definition of organizational decline. Business descent converges on two conflicting viewpoints, hampers innovation and it can encourage innovation (Fontalvo et al., 2021). Managers should focus on proficiency programs, constrained budgets, cost-saving, and improved accountability (Schwatka et al., 2018). Business leaders should be aware of the contrasts between organizational decline and organizational crisis.

Small Business Financing

Small business loans are the challenges of survival. Small company owners face a high rate of refusal of business loans and small business owners are at a disadvantage and find it difficult to obtain finance (Halunko & Savyuk, 2018). Banking products represent the most significant financing for small businesses, while the other instruments offered on the market, such as shares, debt securities and other financial instruments, are instead used in a residual manner (Mueller & Sensini, 2021). Small company owners have low faith in bank lending, as shown by a drop in the number of owners who use bank financing and look befuddled by anomalies that prevent banks from correctly assessing their profitability and viability, as well as building financial confidence.

Restrictions on the capital market are key factors to consider while launching a new business. According to Halunko and Savyuk (2018), most small business owners are reluctant to get their financial accounts audited, resulting in significant fixed expenses. According to Basker and Miranda (2018), capital market constraints may stymie entrepreneurs and the growth of small businesses. New venture funding seems to decrease the development of new firms and businesses and lowers the survival rates of emerging businesses.

Due to enormous debt obligations, banks charge higher interest rates on new businesses. Small firms default for a variety of reasons, including financial risk and a lack of having adequate revenues to make loan payments in a timely fashion (Ludmila et al., 2017). Johnson (2018) observed that bank borrowing is their sole external source of money for many small company owners, especially small businesses in the hair salon

industry. A poor capital structure and inadequate financing is a significant source of financial trouble for small businesses.

Hair Salon Industry

Failure of small businesses within their first year has been widely reported across the globe. In a multiple case study, the nature and type of small startup business have been well defined as a possible cause of business failure (Johnson, 2018). Turner and Endres (2017) supported the finding that 50% of startup businesses collapse within their first 5 years in business operation. Their results indicated that business growth strategies relied on solid customer relations, securing loans to finance businesses, and actively marketing their products and services that could run smoothly for 5 years without collapsing.

Maintaining a good customer relationship and engaging in active marketing promotes business development. For startup businesses, financing is a significant problem, and most business owners look for financing from outside sources such as banks, family members, and friends to establish their business (Lam & Yeung, 2018). According to Turner and Endres (2017), small businesses do not have good strategic plans. Therefore, financing the business should be part of the startup business plan adopting communication and marketing strategies as potential approaches to attracting more customers. Establishing a long-term relationship is needed for the sustained growth of small startup salon businesses.

Startup businesses need to adopt the best communication channels that facilitate the connection between the business and customers. According to Madichie et al. (2018),

a survey was used to examine the effects and sources of funding on small startup salon businesses to adopt the technology. The primary funding sources for these businesses come from Small Enterprise Development Agencies and National Youth Development Agencies (Johnson, 2018). Most small salon owners face challenges during their startup phase when their business fails to meet or overcome challenges and emergencies that they need help dealing with because quite often, they lacked effective strategic plans, which included financing and management.

As business owners expect, startup businesses are not predictable and developed based on taking risks. Poor performance of the small business in the early stages attracts heavy losses, affecting the ability of business owners to pay their loans, which eventually cuts off their funding source, leading to a business failure (Madichie et al., 2018). Ludmila et al. (2017) found that securing enough financial capital for any small business would have enabled them to survive for more than five years. Having sufficient financing is essential to appreciate and be valued by anyone going through the startup of a new business venture.

In an era of financial constraints, securing enough finance to start a business is not practical following the high-interest rates accompanying these loans. Mevo (2019) establishes a different cause of failure for small salon businesses. Riley (2021) found that elevated regulations of small startup businesses, like occupational licensing, affect 30% of firms in the United States. These authors found that various salon businesses in the United States fail to develop beyond five years of business operations because they fail to meet State certification requirements for education and training.

Internal Business Strengths for Sustainable Operation

This sub-section includes articles that deal with the internal factors that can be used to succeed in beauty and salon startup businesses. However, the studies reviewed in this section are not distinct in the US population. The authors highlight the frameworks and variables that identify with this research and use the qualitative methodological approach used in my study.

Capital Structure Decisions

Financing is a crucial issue in entrepreneurship, as identified by numerous researchers in existing studies. Proper financing strategies for small scale firms contribute significantly to a firm's success (D'Amato, 2020). In line with the financial needs of a business startup, Smith (2018) assessed the impacts of capital markets on the development and flourishing of newly established firms and their relationship with entrepreneur finance. The firms' increased reliance on external debt as they progress their operations resulted in approximately 55% debt within the third year of operation and increases the risk of bankruptcy.

Initiative and Self-Motivation

Having initiative and self-motivation are essential factors for small business owners to experience success in their new business ventures. According to Huoponen (2018), initiative and self-motivation is a significant indicator of whether the business will thrive or not. Turner and Endres (2017) recognized that despite most aspiring entrepreneurs who dream of running successful initiatives, they may still fail to create clear and realistic goals and objectives for their aspiring business. Having initiative and

self-motivation by itself, will not help small business owners to become as successful as they might want to be.

Education and Training

Education and training are another great strategy in the beauty salon business to ensure the business remains operational beyond 5 years. More customer turnout also directly translates into larger profits margins (Truong et al., 2020). To stay afloat in the beauty business, one needs to learn continuously to remain innovative and creative to keep customers satisfied and attract even more customers (Lukose, 2018). Online is a vital source of knowledge within the beauty industry; hence some business owners have come up with ways to remain connected with the latest technologies and to keep up with the latest trends as a way of enhancing their education and training.

Business owners also attribute education and training as a great way to educate themselves and their employees about the vast beauty industry trends. Attending beauty seminars and symposiums is one great way that salon business owners have been able to remain operational beyond five years (Felin et al., 2019). Through learning new ways in beauty fashion, the businesses can also exchange ideas with other stakeholders in the industry (Lukose, 2018). Education and training, therefore, play a key role in the beauty salon business, and getting the right education translates into business success

Lean methods have been promoted by some educators and trainers but have been found to inadvertently mis-specify entrepreneurial objectives, and they have rushed to promote products that can be easily tested with clients. Yang et al. (2019) conducted lean methods startup models comprising two main activities: learning and discovery searching

for new customers and markets while implementing their business plan. Yang et al. (2019) disputed Felin's et al., (2019) findings that execution and profit are positively related when training equips business owners with essential skills to adopt lean startup approaches vital for their business development. Education and training is a necessary process in startup business development because business owners with adequate training and skills will keep their businesses operational beyond 5 years.

Passion

Most of the salon owners in Georgia were raised in families where their mothers were either in the salon business or owners of beauty salons in the neighborhood. Getting to see what their mother did growing up caught up their interest and they slowly started to have the passion for the industry (Banu & Baral, 2021). Some small business owners have attributed their passion in the beauty business to other factors, including help from knowledgeable and experienced mentors and the readily available market they could take advantage of in increasing their sales (Lythreatis et al., 2019). Most of the entrepreneurs also grew up in neighborhoods that had so many beauty salons next door and hence the readily available literature and word of mouth exposure from their friends or neighbors influenced them to go into the salon business.

Having a passion for what one does brings the drive to work hard and achieve more daily. Most of the owners attribute their passion for the beauty salon business to be a factor that has seen them do well in the business for years (Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018). Having a realistic vision and mission was also attributed to the passion for being able to see their vision become a reality (Lythreatis et al., 2019). Therefore, setting a

good vision or mission strategy can grow one's passion for the business and help them steer the business in the right direction to be successful and remain operational beyond 5 years.

Motivation

Motivation as a business strategy helps to ensure all the parties involved in business are satisfied first, and hence can carry out their roles effectively to attain the business goals. The beauty salon business owners attributed their motivation to be a great drive for their thriving business and attributed it to three main factors: profits, employee's compensation, and positive customer feedback (Turner & Endres, 2017). The salon business owners listed profits to be among their top source of motivation for the business; hence their hard work to attract the right target audience and setting a good pricing strategy to ensure both the customer and owner is satisfied at the end of the day (Mevo, 2019). Being motivated to do their work is a great springboard to help them become successful and huge profit margins are a motivation for their business success.

Attitude

The second strategy that small and new business startups can employ for success is attitude. The attitude towards entrepreneurship of an aspiring entrepreneur defines the degree of attraction the aspirer must become an entrepreneur (Peterson, 2020).

Kalyanasundaram (2018) identified that the difference between success and failure lies in the type of decision making, the balance of emotional decision-making, and intuition decision-making. These factors highlights the importance of an entrepreneur's emotional attachment towards their business and the business's success. These researchers found

that a positive personality attitude is a critical strategy for success for most newly established businesses.

Organizational Structure and Organizational Performance

The purpose of the research was to explore the strategies that small business salon owners use to stay in business for at least 5 years or more. Lopes de Sousa Jabbour et al. (2020) found that a non-supportive organizational structure, lack of support by the top management, and unavailability of resources act as barriers to the success of a business. The assumptions of the study were the following: top management support has a positive effect on entrepreneurship, the supportive organizational structure may improve a firm's performance, and resource availability has a positive, though insignificant, impact on entrepreneurship (Truong et al., 2020). For this reason, it would be fair to conclude that the shortage or inexistence of these factors lead to the poor performance of organizations, particularly business startups as they act as barriers to the firms' success.

Entrepreneurship

Based on data to be collected from 5 salon owners in Georgia, their business startup involved taking up financial risks with the hope of making a profit. Most of the salon owners did not have the capital to set up their businesses and hence relied on loans to get started (Cho & Lee, 2018). According to Lopes de Sousa Jabbour et al. (2020), entrepreneurs have an innate ability to sense a need for future risks, change and identify, create, implement procedures, and resources. For the small business owners that have done well and survived, I am certain that they believe entrepreneurs can make rational profit-making decisions despite the associated risks.

To set up the business, the salon owners also required getting the right licensing and this would have been done after complying with all the Georgia laws regarding starting up a beauty salon business. To actualize their dreams, a business owner needs to develop a business plan which included the action plan of what was to be done and the expected outcome (Prohorovs et al., 2019). A good business plan strategy needs to include the running costs and projected expenditures (Mayr et al., 2021). Their business plan should also include their vision and mission and where they wanted to be in 5 years and beyond.

Sustainability and Entrepreneurship

The benefits of sustainable entrepreneurship are considered unique perspectives that connect environmental, social, and economic values with a further concentration on future wellbeing. According to Johnson (2018), sustainable-minded businesspeople are motivated by a set of fundamental beliefs. Entrepreneurs engage in constant development for the business's and society's benefit (Perry et al., 2018). The environment, community, and civilization have benefited from the ingenuity and riches that people in business have contributed to the community and economy.

A goal-oriented entrepreneur is concerned about the business, society, and the company's long-term growth and sustainability. Sustainable entrepreneurship entails the creation, discovery, and entrepreneurial opportunities exploration, thus contributing to the sustainable generation of environmental and social gains (Singh, 2020). Sustainable entrepreneurship can aspire in creating market solutions as well as acting as the agent for change that exploits and realizes sustainable development opportunities (Turner &

Endres, 2017). For the small beauty salon to attain the gains associated with entrepreneurial sustainability, they must provide a market-oriented solution since a salon's success will be related to providing solutions to the market problems, thus creating sustainability.

Entrepreneurial sustainability is also associated with different uncertainties. According to Lüdeke-Freund, (2019), the most notable uncertainty for sustainable entrepreneurship is whether the business can be created successfully through innovations, irrespective of the challenges that small beauty salons face. Based on the organizational, personal, and social, cultural values, the success of the small beauty salon can be defined by the financial returns and other nonfinancial impacts like positive societal impact or improved, innovative capabilities through social and ecological ills reductions (Mayr et al., 2021). Small beauty salon owners can support innovation for entrepreneurship sustainability by creating social, ecological, and ecological value for the stakeholders in the process of business development strategies to use in their operations.

Business Development Strategies

Not having successful business development strategies is a real problem for small beauty salon owners being in the category of small business enterprises who are also affected by this same problem. Having structured business development plans is one of the critical determinants of the success of startup businesses (Cantamessa et al., 2018). The researcher used a qualitative approach; whereby, the analyses on startup failures using the SHELL model consisting of its components: software, hardware, environment, Liveware People, and Liveware Environment as developed by Hawkins in 1975 and

supported by Cantamessa et al., (2018). The authors of this study offered excellent knowledge in identifying the strategies necessary for small business success as it unmasked the hidden story of why most businesses fail, which is significant in formulating the small beauty salon's success strategies.

The results then concluded that most startup businesses fail prematurely due to the absence or use of an incorrect business model, which attributed to 35% of failures, and inability to create a business development plan attributing to 28% of businesses failure of all occurrences (Cantamessa et al., 2018). Other researchers also argued that most entrepreneurs focus solely on the sales of their products and service enhancements, ignoring the importance of having a strategy of a dependable, quantifiable, and well-structured business development plan (Turner & Endres, 2017). Therefore, categorically and with great relevance to this research, most small beauty salons can operate successfully for 5 years and beyond based on the strength and adequacy of their respective business models or plans.

Implementing the Strategy

Organizational models and managerial strategies are a framework for successful management methods for organization owners in general system theory. The systems theory was developed to study an enterprise's many elements and processes utilizing multiple perspectives (Greene, 2017). The systems theory assesses and concentrates on the entire administrative system of a company (McMahon & Patton, 2018). Researchers that seem to be engaged in systems theory are focused on addressing real-world business difficulties.

Once a real company problem has been identified, the entrepreneur can investigate strategies to remove, reduce, or solve the problem. According to Greene (2017), a business comprises multiple systems that internalize distinct components within an enterprise. McMahon and Patton (2018) have argued that systems theory may be applied to small, medium, and large businesses. Critical to this idea is whether business owners can perceive and grasp feedback on the interdependent factors and variables and self-regulation thanks to systems theory, which prompted scholars to investigate the occurrence of the network overall.

When general systems theory is used, every component that functions collectively improves the business. Start-ups and small enterprises are accountable for more new employment generation than giant corporations (Greene, 2017). According to McMahon and Patton (2018), small firms account for a higher percentage of the economic activity in the US market. A variety of factors determines the sustainability of a local business during its initial, start-up phase.

Traditional economic measures, by themselves, are not always reliable measures of why businesses succeed or fail. These factors have been identified as appropriate funding, cash flow, location of the business, efficient processes and output, advertising and sales, excellent service, skilled workers, proper company management, leadership, and creativity were some of the most critical elements (McMahon & Patton, 2018). According to Greene (2017), traditional economic measures and techniques do not decide if a business develops or survives. Small businesses may succeed or fail based on their

own individual reasons that cannot be ignored or dismissed by the findings of other research work.

Human Resource Management

Human resources act as a crucial part of the success of business startups. Stewart and Brown (2019) found human resources as an essential factor in their study on the effect of how small business owners manage their employees. How business owners manage their employees has also been explored the reason why some businesses succeed while others fail (Fordham & Hamilton, 2019). Employing such rigidity in a business startup prevents the workforce practices from focusing on the steadiness and continuousness of knowledge, resulting in a minimal focus on customer needs, hence the business startups' failure during the early stages.

There is a massive significance in how a small business treats its employees. Stewart and Brown (2019) mention human resources' role in innovation and risk-taking activities accompanied by the reward systems of such entrepreneurial behavior. The authors of another study acknowledged that managers and business owners should incorporate processes that improve open-mindedness among their administration tools in a qualitative approach (Ayandibu, & Houghton, 2017). Small beauty salon owners should introduce in their practice the strategy of instilling open-mindedness to the employees since open-mindedness helps create good relationships between the owner/manager and the employees and employees and the customers.

External Business Barriers

Focusing on the social, economic, and technological issues contributing to the failure of business startups, specifically in the US., external business barriers need to be evaluated and addressed by the owners of small businesses. Gender issues, market-related challenges, tax structure, technology issues, and competitiveness of other small to medium sized businesses (SMEs) have all been identified in the literature as external barriers that can affect the sustainability of small businesses (Gender Issues- Hitka et al., (2018) and Tamunomiebi and John-Eke, (2020), Market-related Challenges- Giardino et al., (2015) and Rajagopal (2019); Tax Structure- Block (2021), Bulturbayevich et al., (2020), Darnihamedani et al., (2018), and Hakelberg and Rixen (2021); Technology Issues- Aziz et al., (2020), Kraus et al., (2019), Ritz et al., (2019), and Vassakis et al., (2018); Competitiveness of SMEs- Falciola et al., (2020) and Poufinas et al., (2018). These issues will be addressed in the appropriate sub-headers below external business barriers.

Gender Issues

Gender issues are a critical idea behind any beauty shop or venture. Inclusivity improves employee engagement, diversity in skills, and workers' morale (Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020). Gender issues are associated with employee motivation and confidence in the workplace (Hitka et al., 2018). Inclusivity in any workplace is critical in attaining any success in business places and some beauty salons employ one gender, women, in the workplace; therefore, they fail to achieve the sole purpose of some businesses than others.

Market-Related Challenges

Proper marketing strategies are crucial for any business that looks forward to making profits and staying successful for an extended period. Giardino et al. (2015) examined the main challenges affecting small business enterprises in the technology industry. Rajagopal (2019) noted that business startups also fail to deliver customer value as they do not explore and authenticate the requirements of their probable customers. The failure to develop a customer acquisition strategy at the initial production stages results in reduced sales, hence the new businesses' collapse.

Tax Structure

A macro-level panel was used to examine the influence of taxation and tax progressivity in businesses. Block (2021) found that tax progressivity at higher-than-average incomes has a highly adverse effect on emerging entrepreneurships. Using a theoretical model, the author of another research study found that startup costs discourage aspiring business owners and increase the population of people who opt for unemployment (Bulturbayevich et al., 2020). The study results are consistent with previous studies focusing on the US using micro-level data exploring the relationship between the tax variables in question and entrepreneurship.

The progressivity of tax rates implies that the effects of insurance in the US dominate around the average earnings in that new business owners view higher tax rates as not applying to them than it is for already successful entrepreneurs. Results also imply that negative tax progressivity at high-income levels discourages entry into entrepreneurship (Darnihamedani et al., 2018). Hakelberg and Rixen (2021) addressed

recent economic and financial crises and their threat to employment; whereby, governments alter the tax structure by introducing new taxes and increasing the marginal tax rates. While this move may help cut government spending, it presents a significant challenge for new businesses with an impact on the economy.

Technology Issues

Exposure to the internet and technological innovations acts as a catalyst to business startups in marketing their products and services. Small businesses find that customers are searching for crucial data from the internet to make their purchases in the contemporary world (Vassakis et al., 2018). Ritz et al., (2019) focused on using the internet during the initiation, the tax, and the licensing procedures of a business. The study shares similar characteristics with other articles under review in this paper in that it uses the qualitative approach and found that small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs prefer states with high technology use.

Similarly, autonomous individuals to the dogmatic scale and community college alumnae choose states with high internet startup scores and high internet tax scores. Kraus et al. (2019) found that efforts to use the internet in different areas would attract the overall entrepreneurial activity. The research by Aziz et al. (2020) stated that entrepreneurial activity through internet use can reduce poverty and improve business related regulations to motivate entrepreneurs. Therefore, internet use in a startup, taxing, lower poverty, and licensing process is a catalyst in establishing startups and a potential barrier to new business development if this does not happen.

Competitiveness of SMEs

The issue of SME competitiveness in adverse global environments affects the performance of business startups. The research by Poufinas et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between enterprise competitiveness metrics and the country's statistics as measured by the unemployment rate, the total employment growth, unit labor cost, the GDP growth, the GDP per capita in USD, and the competitiveness indicators in every market. The three main research variables include the same variables: capacity to compete, the ability to connect, and the power to change, all of which form the pillars of SME competitiveness (Falcicola et al., 2020). Although competition encourages the growth of SMEs, the nature of the global environment plays a role in local business performance as adverse conditions may increase the chances of the collapse of new market entries.

Successful Small Business

Some small business organizations have always been successful since their inception. Fuertes et al. (2020) stated some organizational owners had formulated business management strategies that were essential in a business environment, and some limiting factors can lead to the failure of small business enterprises. Some managerial or natural factors include poor management, poor leadership skills, poor communication and interaction between employees and management (Ali et al., 2021). Capital unavailability has also been an issue that has led to the decline of some small businesses; therefore, small businesses need to establish business strategies and plans before starting business operations.

Business owners have maintained their enterprises for quite an extended period. Some factors have influenced the outstanding performance of small businesses' strengths and weaknesses, including the implementation of solid marketing strategies advancement in different business sectors (Kuratko et al., 2021). Additionally, most entrepreneurs collect information from established small businesses that carry out the same business, and advances in technology have also made the advertisement of products and services relatively easy (Soegoto & Utomo, 2019). Before starting a business, most entrepreneurs should seek advice from different business experts to learn the strengths and weaknesses related to the business they are likely to establish.

Small Business Failure

From 2017 to 2021, there has been an increase in business failure rates (BLS, 2021). According to Yeboah (2021), the rate of small business failure has been an alarming issue such as poor management is one factor that contributes to small business failure. Gandolfi and Stone (2018) stated poor leadership is a management factor contributing to the decline of small business enterprises. For small businesses to thrive and operate effectively, the leadership quality should enhance cooperation between the managers and the workers.

Some small salon business managers lack adequate plans to maintain their enterprises past five years from the research. Bushe (2019) found that a poor marketing strategy can affect the operation of the business, and most small business enterprises face stiff competition from other well-structured business firms (Schlegelmilch, 2022).

Therefore, a business is likely to fail if it has a poor marketing strategy that cannot help it capture more clients to outshine its competitors.

Moreover, some small businesses are well established, and they satisfy all marketing needs, except for some emergency factors, which can affect the normal operations of these firms, leading to their failures. Amankwah-Amoah et al. (2021) found that the emergence of the corona pandemic greatly influenced the normal operations of almost all small businesses. The pandemic led to the closure of some small business enterprises since there was the restriction on movement, social distancing, wearing masks, and the need for more handwashing facilities (Ameji et al., 2020). When the government gave out some health directives, the enterprises could not continue with the business operations leading to their closure; therefore, the COVID- 19 pandemic greatly influenced and negatively affected small business operations.

Internal and External Barriers and Failure Factors

Behavioral Factors. The lack of behavioral factors such as leadership, ethics, job satisfaction, competitive intelligence, empathy, and intrinsic motivation considerably impact sustainable entrepreneurship. A study by Tur-Porcar et al. (2018) evaluated factors affecting business sustainability actions using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and found that the presence or absence of entrepreneurial motivations directly impacts the discovery and exploitation of opportunities through practical actions. Consistent with other research, behavioral factors accounted for up to 49.59% of the success of business startups (Portovaras et al., 2020). Coupled with the effects of environmental damage, the absence of competitive intelligence among entrepreneurs

often leads to their downfall as they cannot proactively transform competitive strengths and shape their actions to achieve goals in response to intrinsic motivations.

Environmental Factors. Although societal attitudes present an opportunity for entrepreneurial success, public spending negatively correlates with the phenomenon. Portovaras et al. (2020) arrived at this conclusion after examining the relationship between environmental factors and social entrepreneurship. From another study on this topic, the researchers ascertained that the average level of public spending is about 26% or higher and can hurt social entrepreneurial activities (Beland & Unel, 2019). As a result, lower levels of public spending may discourage aspiring business owners from engaging in social entrepreneurial activity hence lowering the US economy's entrepreneurial potential.

Transition

In summary, the first section of this doctoral study has described the foundation of this study. Therefore, section one contains the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the nature of the study, and the research and interview questions, which support the qualitative multiple case study purpose, nature of the study, and conceptual framework that guided the research process. In addition, the operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study are detailed in the first section. The literature review is the last portion of the first section that focuses on academic literature concerning decision making, strategies for smalls business success and small business failure, small business success and failure, sustainability, leadership, entrepreneurship, business barriers, and internal and external factors.

The second section includes the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis techniques, reliability and validity, transition, and summary. The third section entails presenting the findings, applications for professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and my reflections and conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

The second section includes my role as a researcher and my responsibility to conduct ethical research. Section Two also covers the strategies I used to collect, organize, and analyze data. I conclude the section by identifying how I protected the integrity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify the strategies small beauty salon business owners use to maintain their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations. The target population consists of approximately five small business owners located in Georgia who have been in successful operation for more than 5 years. Results of this study may influence positive social change by refining small business capability and sustainability for individuals to improve the success rate of small businesses within Georgia. The findings can also contribute to social change by contributing to other small businesses' sustainability with increased employment of new workers, enabling their businesses to pay higher wages, and offer better benefits to their employees. As a result of new businesses, people of the community can receive more support from small businesses.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was being a research instrument to search, document, analyze, interpret, and present findings from interviews and archived records to my academic institution and beyond (see Geddis-Regan et al., 2021; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). I do not have any personal relationship with any of the participants for this study

and have not been involved with any research on this topic in my professional career. However, participant and researcher rapport is important in conducting quality research (Hammersely, 2019). Following basic ethical principles and interviewing strategies, I ensured comfort, trust, confidence, fairness, protection of participants' well-being, and supported their feeling of respect (Saunders et al., 2018), which may have encouraged participants to disclose information, promoted trustworthiness, and reduced participant bias.

I conducted semistructured, open-ended interviews. I developed a research protocol that I followed with each of my participants (see Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The protocol identified my research question, my interview questions, and the actual procedures to be followed as I conducted my interviews (Divya, 2020), which ensured consistency, reliability, and validity in the findings. I also reviewed public documents and company records and identified themes and strategies through data analysis (see Yin, 2018). I relied on reliability and validity tools such as member checking, bracketing, triangulation, reflectivity, and transcript reviews to mitigate against bias (see Harper and Cole, 2012). Additionally, to ensure high-quality research, I followed three principles. First, I reviewed the literature to determine the significance of the study and how much of this topic has been explored (see Fusch & Ness, 2015). Second, I selected a research design that best answers research questions (Johnson et al., 2020). The third essential component includes the researcher's skills to collect data through different sources and analyze the data objectively to produce reliable, valid, and transferable findings. The

findings should be reported in a non-biased fashion to strengthen the overall confidence and reliability of the information gathered (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

I also had a role in safeguarding the interview data ensuring the participants sensitive information remained non-disclosed and confidential. Ethical research also requires the researcher to apply ethics to ensure that participant rights and safety always observe in the research process (Chiumento et al., 2017). I obtained approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), and I followed the *Belmont Report* principles of respect of persons, beneficence, and justice. Further, I obtained consent from the participants. Informed consent is a crucial part of the research process, and each participant has a statutory right to be informed of the research purpose (Divya, 2020). I informed all the participants of the study's intention and the confidentiality guidelines to protect any sensitive information (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). I received participant documents to obtain their consent and protect their privacy rights. I also used numbers and alphanumeric coding to mask the participants' identities. I have also safeguarded all data for this study and will destroy the data at the end of a 5-year period.

Participants

A purposeful sampling method allows a researcher to select participants who contribute to data saturation through their knowledge and experience (Cleary et al., 2014), which involves establishing eligibility criteria (Saunders et al., 2018). In this study, I used the following eligibility criteria: (a) the salon must be in Georgia, (b) study participants must be the owners of the small business, and (c) the small business must be sustaining operations beyond 5 years. Five small beauty salon owners were selected from

the Georgia Small Business Administration listing of companies. After I obtained approval from the Walden University IRB, I contacted potential participants for their consent via email and gave them the option to schedule a telephone or online meeting (see Arsel, 2017; Leedy & Omrod, 2015). Due to the coronavirus pandemic, I could not meet the participants in person. Communication was via video conference, email, Zoom, or GoogleMeet virtual meetings (see Kornbluh, 2015). During the initial contact with potential participants, I went over the study's purpose to ensure the participants were willing to share specific success strategies that helped them sustain their small business beyond 5 years. The participants were also informed that participation in this study was voluntary basis (see Kornbluh, 2015). Throughout the interview process, I ensured that the participants remained comfortable with the interview process. This was accomplished by being conscious of my delivery, tone, and interview context (Arsel, 2017).

Research Method and Design

Research Method

There are generally three methods that researchers rely on when doing research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Saunders et al., 2018). Qualitative research allows a researcher to use semistructured, open-ended interviews and data from other sources (Yin, 2018). Qualitative research involves linguistic codes and stories, spoken communication, and transcribed scripts to comprehend organizational practices (Gephart, 2018). A researcher uses a qualitative method to answer questions and highlight outcomes to rationalize how and why a conclusion was reached (Holtrop et al., 2018). The researcher can evaluate the participants' feelings and thoughts and define the

meaning of aspects from people's shared experiences. Qualitative research allowed me to ask questions about how small salon owners achieved success and what strategies were most effective in sustaining their business beyond 5 years of operation (see Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

The quantitative study includes an experimental examination of a phenomenon from a statistical and measurable approach by analyzing numerical information provided the primary relationships between observation and arithmetic illustration (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). The quantitative research method is used as a statistical analysis of numerical data and close-ended questions to study a phenomenon or to examine the relationships between variables (Sandelowski, 2000). A quantitative researcher retrieves numerical data with a homogenous questionnaire, controls variables, and the setting of the study (Rutberg & Bouikidis., 2018). I did not use a quantitative method for the study because I was not examining the relationship between variables or testing a hypothesis. I also did not want to provide distinctive insights into the decision-making processes that drive business owners' success (see Barnham, 2015).

Furthermore, a mixed methodology to including qualitative, exploratory, interpretive, and quantitative methods to study phenomena using statistical assessment (Basias & Pollalis, 2018; Yin, 2018). Although the mixed method provides further understanding (Creswell & Hirose, 2019), I did not use the mixed method for this study. Mixed-methods research was not appropriate for my study because of the exclusion of a quantitative analysis. The suitable method to address the open-ended research interview questions is a qualitative study. The study required an understanding of the underlying

small beauty salon businesses' success aspects that have been used by other small business owners across the United States to sustain success beyond 5 years of operation.

Research Design

Three types of research designs that depend upon the type of data needed; phenomenological (collects lived experiences), an ethnographic study (collects data on cultural issues), and case studies (incorporates data from various sources to explore behavior; Renjith et al., 2021; Yin, 2018). A case study was suitable as it supports theory justification and helps the researcher identify new concepts and explore issues and situations. Case studies are appropriate when studying a specific phenomenon (Morgan et al., 2016). A case study also supported the use of semistructured interviews for data collection, allowing member checking to take place (Yin, 2018). A multiple case study research design was ideal for this research since I interviewed five independent participants from different salons to enable the collection of relevant data to assist me in addressing my research question.

Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of five owners of small business salons from Georgia small beauty salons that sustained their businesses beyond 5 years of operation. Population sampling, random sampling, and convenience sampling are three methods of choosing participants (Lu & Franklin, 2018). A sampling technique involves rigor to guarantee minor fault and bias and improve representation (Tyrer & Heyman, 2016). Population sampling as the “gold standard” with generalizability challenges essential to narrow the targeted population using purposive sampling (Lu & Franklin, 2018).

Population sampling encompasses (a) probabilistic sampling, which is identified as the subjective decision of the investigator and (b) non-probability sampling, which involves numerous categories: purposeful, convenience, snowballing, and quota (Berndt, 2020). Purposeful sampling is the appropriate strategy a researcher applies in choosing qualified participants to answer the research question (Elfil & Negida, 2017). I used purposive sampling to choose five owner-managers from five organizations in Georgia to answer the research questions. Snowball sampling involves using current respondents to identify familiar future participants with difficulties recruiting respondents (Etikan et al., 2016), which I did not need for this study. Additionally, quota sampling depends on selecting participants with common attributes of the population without having prior knowledge of an individual's demography (Lamm & Lamm, 2019), which was not adequate for this study.

Data saturation is when no new insight is contributed to the body of the research, indicating that the researcher has reached the maximum informational redundancy (Alam, 2020). Data saturation demonstrates adequate data retrieval to explain the study and a standard that meets a qualitative study's ontological and epistemological groundwork (Boddy, 2016). I reached saturation with a sample size of five participants. Member checking and triangulation of data using interviews, field notes, and the organization's archived records helped with data saturation for this study. Member checking is participants' commitment to informally checking the research data to improve the credibility of information (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Triangulation involves various

approaches to collecting manifold data through archival documents, publications by other researchers, and theories to reach data saturation (Candela, 2019; Moon, 2019).

Ethical Research

Researchers must adhere to ethical standards for the public to support and believe in the research. Ethics are involved in planning, designing, requesting access to organizations and participants, and data collection, analysis, management, and reporting findings (David-Chavez & Gavin, 2018). Ethical research requires the researcher to ensure that participant rights and safety are consistently observed in the research process (Chiumento et al., 2017; Sharma, 2021). Therefore, my obligation as the researcher was to help protect participants' human rights and dignity by following the guidelines from the *Belmont Report* (see Muñoz Terrón, 2021). I obtained approval from the Walden University IRB to allow the research to be conducted (approval no. 07-15-22-0676791). Researchers must also send consent information with (a) the aim and nature of the study, (b) duration, (c) declaration of voluntary participation, (d) how to ensure data storage and the length of data storage, and (e) privacy (Manti & Licari, 2018). I obtained consent from the participants (see Divya, 2020); I informed all the participants of the study's intention and the confidentiality guidelines to protect information. At the beginning of my interview with each participant, I informed the participants that participating in the study is strictly voluntary (see Fisher et al., 2018), and there was no offer of incentives. I also respected participants' autonomy by considering choices made during the interview about respect for the person (see Dankar et al., 2019). Finally, I used alphanumeric

numbers to mark the participant's identity (see Yin, 2018), and the documents are safeguarded and then destroyed at the end of 5 years as required by the Walden IRB.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection has numerous approaches, such as telephone, virtual, and face-to-face interviews (Young et al., 2018). A face-to-face interview allows a researcher to gain insight into the participant's physical body expression when addressing research questions (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The primary data collection was from the semistructured and open-ended questions with five participants. Semistructured interviews' enable a researcher to use many open-ended questions and probe answers, elaborate, or develop more answers (Saunders et al., 2018). The secondary data collection came from documentation from the business owners themselves (see Saunders et al., 2018).

The interviews were conducted in intervals of 20–30 minutes. I recorded the interview audio using my mobile phone to ensure that the responses were accurate (see Baldissone et al., 2019). Each participant's recorded transcription was noted in a secure notebook to ensure that the data was easy to analyze (see Saunders et al., 2018). Before any subsequent interviews, I confirmed any data collected in the previous interview by enquiring from the specific participant through member checking over the validity and clarity of the data recorded for accuracy and consistency.

To ensure the accuracy of the information the participant provided, I conducted a follow-up interview with the participant through member checking to make any relevant changes. To enhance reliability and validity, member checking encompasses a variety of

actions involving the validation of interview transcript through an uninterrupted read-through and approval by the participants to mitigate bias (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking is when a researcher presents data to the participant to review for correctness (Candela, 2019). A few days after conducting the interview, I returned the interview transcript summary to participants for verification of data interpretation to confirm the accuracy of information to enhance the credibility and validity of the data.

I used methodological triangulation, which involves using my field notes, organizational documents, and my reflective journal for an in-depth understanding of the topic to identify themes and strategies. Four categories of triangulation include data, investigator, theoretical, and methodological triangulation, which a researcher can implement to view research questions from various data sources and viewpoints (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999). Methodological triangulation uses numerous approaches, such as field notes, observation, and interviews, to collect comprehensive and relevant data (Abdalla et al., 2018; Fusch et al., 2018).

Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques are based on the interviews, including phone recordings, archived records, virtual recordings, text messages, and emails. The interview method used semistructured and open-ended interviews that allowed the collection of the most appropriate data (Yin, 2018). During the interviews, I used member checking by asking questions to ensure they understood my questions and their answers. I fully understood the strategies they used to stay in business beyond 5 years (Saunders et al.,

2018). I reviewed all data collected for accuracy and organized the data in my record-keeping system for audit and retrieval purposes.

The interview method is preferred in qualitative research because it provides semistructured, open-ended choices with first-hand information from the participants. According to Badu et al. (2019), semistructured interviews enable the participants to respond appropriately to the questions and allow the researcher to clarify any data defaults through member checking. Interviews are sometimes associated with emotional strain and bias, especially if the participant feels pressured or overwhelmed (Brenman & Milne, 2021). I professionally conducted the interviews following the steps outlined in my research protocol to reduce any emotional strain or bias during interviews.

I served each participant with an informed consent form containing the study's details to create trust and prepare them for the study. The participants were ready to answer the interview questions, and I confirmed with each participant via phone call and emailed the most suitable date and time for the interview (Yin, 2018). After clarifying the convenience factor, I created a schedule that I sent to each participant and received back from them with a time and place to conveniently hold the interviews (Saunders et al., 2018). The communication helped ensure that I created the necessary trust and comfort with all participants.

I conducted the virtual meetings in a confidential place that ensured trust and improved my relationship with the participants. All interviews took place on the computer through Microsoft +teams or GoogleMeet. The meetings took place in private settings with just the researcher and the participant present. The meetings were recorded

as they took place, and the document was printed in a word file for data analysis with Atlas ti software. Chiumento et al. (2017) noted that it is essential that the researcher conducts the interviews in places that the participants deem fit and secure when giving their personal, sensitive data. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), a sense of trust and comfort enables the participants to share their experiences fully without fear. Having a good relationship allowed the participants to gain trust and confidence in the researcher, which is crucial for a complete collection of data.

Triangulation was the tool used to ensure the validity of the data collected. Triangulation refers to using more than one data source to answer my research question (Saunders et al., 2018). My data sources included my interview data and company or organizational documents from my participants (Yin, 2018). Triangulation has always been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the converging of information from different sources.

I used an Evernote recording pen to take notes and capture interview audio for data coding, Atlas ti for transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. Van Wyk et al. (2020) found that the management of research data offers accessible admittance to data and involves (a) saving data, (b) adding metadata, (c) backing up data files, (d) securing data, and giving access to co-researchers. Effective data management and organization and their analysis are requirements for writing research reports and distribution of study (Maher et al., 2018). I used data storage management software, such as EndNote, Atlas ti, and Zotero, to save and manage data for easy access.

Data Organization Technique

Data organization is an essential stage of the research process. I collected and reviewed data through qualitative analysis to create my themes and strategies (Yin, 2018). The responses from the interviews were coded (in an alphanumeric fashion (P1, P2, etc.) and the coding process involved using themes to enable the conceptualization of my framework (Saunders et al., 2018). I also used the cloud to store all the audio recordings and messages under my username and password, protected for confidentiality. The process of coding and cloud computing in case studies works more manageable with the current technological advancements that allow people to store, share, and organize data effectively.

Similarly, I scanned the hand-written copy of the data collected and saved it with interview data to dropbox cloud storage locations. The final copy of the interview questions and answers from the participants was made, saved on a Flash disk, backed up in a dropbox cloud storage location, and a storage area was organized to help keep data accessible to retrieve (Saunders et al., 2018). Triangulation was essential to ensure data validity reflected small-scale businesses' structures over the past years, providing that all the coded information and those stored in audio are arranged in the most accessible manner (Yin, 2018). All data was secured and protected in my home safe for 5 years. The data will be destroyed by shredding and permanently deleting all data files.

Data Analysis

After I collected primary data from participants through semistructured interviews, the data analysis follows to understand the information collected,

transcription data, and the interpretation of findings proceeds. Lester et al. (2020) described the thematic analysis as the presentation of codes, elaboration of groups, and finally, the construction of themes. Kiger and Varpio (2020) proposed six conventional frameworks for conducting a thematic analysis of data: acquainting self with the data, producing preliminary codes, seeking themes, revising themes, describing and identifying themes, and generating reports. In analyzing qualitative interview data, a researcher can use a computer-assisted instrument known as Atlas ti software, a data analysis program to analyze the recorded interview data. I also analyzed the primary interview data using Atlas ti to transcribe, form codes, and themes from the interview transcripts.

After gathering data, I reviewed and coded the data part of my data analysis. According to Yin (2018), the five steps comprise data compilation, disassembling data, interpreting the data meaning, and concluding the data. During coding, I repeatedly referred to the participant's questions to confirm data accuracy and to find any misinformation, which will help ensure data validity (Almalki, 2016). In qualitative research, validity was addressed to provide the "appropriateness" of the tools, processes, and data.

Triangulation is one of the crucial data analysis techniques I used to compare the data collected with the available literature and identify the strategies to keep small beauty salons sustained for beyond 5 years of operation. Saunders et al. (2018) posited that thematic analysis combines connected data drawn from various transcripts and notes and classifies key themes or patterns from multiple sources of data and documentation. During the coding process, which Williams and Moser (2019) determined plays a vital

role in classifying data to identify themes, they also indicated that the coding process must be defined, be rigorous, and constantly applied to corresponding validity and reliability concerns in qualitative research. I integrated my field notes, interview transcript data, archival data from the organization, conceptual framework, and literature about the phenomenon to identify my themes and strategies.

After coding, I identified several key themes related to my research questions and the conceptual framework and incorporated them to analyze study's findings. The research question is the focus of the study, and it impacts the selection of various elements of research, particularly data analysis and finding results (Saunders et al., 2018). As Almalki (2016) described, I used critical themes identified during the coding process relevant to the research question and the conceptual framework for my study's interpretation of findings.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Data is reliable if it is complete and accurate, free from bias and material errors related to misinterpretation, errors in records, and errors in reading the transcripts. Mohajan (2017) found that reliability indicates how study data can be reliable and how well data measurement tools prevent errors. According to Chiumento et al. (2017), a research procedure should be used for each interview to ensure data consistency, which is crucial when undertaking any study. I kept the accuracy and completeness measures across the whole process of the research since reliability represents faithfulness,

confirmability, consistency, verifiability, and understandability of the research and analyzed data.

Validity

Validity helps the researcher manage the significant variables related to research designs, instruments, and collection and refers to how accurately a method measures what it intends to measure. To achieve validity, a researcher evaluated the credibility, reliability, and efficacy of the tools used to conduct a study (Mohajan, 2017). Data validity occurred from triangulation, member checking, and data confirmation (Saunders et al., 2018). The participants were encouraged and allowed to check the validity of their transcript after data analysis, and I equally compared findings and results based on responses given by the participants.

Dependability

Dependability is essential to analytical data procedures and potentially establishes a consistent and reliable research technique for documenting the research findings.

Dependability is the essential characteristic of qualitative research because it demonstrates data stability or the possibility of replicated data (Saunders et al., 2018). The process of dependability makes it easy for me as a researcher to take and make the right decisions during data analysis (Tobi & Kampen, 2018). Additionally, to evaluate, interpret, and give proper recommendations for the small beauty salon businesses, I applied dependability in the analysis and verification of responses from participants.

Dependability allowed researchers to authenticate findings with the raw data gathered, proving whether the assessed data align with the findings from past studies

done by other scholars. Authenticating results ensures that all research contents are included during analytical data procedures and that nothing is missed (Hays, 2021). To ensure dependability, I followed the recommendations to conduct an audit trail to determine if these findings are in alignment with previous research (Houghton et al., 2013). This approach allowed me and others to repeat the study, so the results are appropriately compared with one another.

Credibility

Internal validity or credibility refers to the confidence of the data that the results are believable. Internal validity or credibility rests on the assumption that data saturation has occurred, resulting in accurate, complete, consistent, and rich data achieved through member checking and triangulation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Houghton et al., 2013).

Triangulation uses multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 2015). Triangulation has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources, which is why I used two sources of data (a review of company documents and my interview data) to achieve triangulation to establish the credibility of my study.

Transferability

The concept of transferability allowed the methods and steps followed in my research study to be used and applied in other studies. As a researcher, I achieved transferability by working on my research context in comparison with assumptions from different fields related to my research area (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The practice of

transferability during the research gave me room for making a general judgment on various sensible contexts of the research (Patton, 2015). Additionally, I applied triangulation to improve the transferability and validity of the research and the methods used in my research to assist other researchers in deciding if these methods should be used in their studies on a similar topic.

Understanding aspects of research entails examining the key variables involved in a research study. Among these are the sample population used in collecting data and the study's methods (Blaikie, 2018). I used the research methods approved for my study to gather information and compare the outcomes with the outcome of other research studies in the identifying of my themes and strategies as suggested by Saunders et al. (2018). Transferability or generalization is established by providing readers with evidence that the research study's findings applied to other contexts, situations, times, and populations (Hays & McKibben, 2021).

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which other individuals can confirm the research and the findings have been derived from the data. The concept of confirmability has been practiced mostly through reviewing the interview auditing trails and reflexivity techniques to conclude whether the recommendations made by the researcher are logical and make sense (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Also, the reflective technique equally assists the researcher when looking at the background and essence of his research (Houghton et al., 2013). I applied the reflective aspect of confirmability in choosing the research

methodology, analyzing the data, and presenting of the results through a triangular approach to determine the accuracy of the data and my findings from the study.

Data Saturation

Data saturation applies when no new qualitative information is forthcoming from the participants. During data saturation, most research studies produce initially confirmed data by other researchers (Guest et al., 2020). During the interviews, I revealed all essential information forthcoming from the participants through member checking until there was no new information on codes, themes, and forthcoming strategies (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Furthermore, I used triangulation to exhaust all the essential information in my case study before ensuring that I had achieved data saturation.

Transition and Summary

In this section, I explored the actual study process. Sim et al. (2018) figured how qualitative multiple case studies would be used to collect the desired data for the research by exploring various successful business strategies. The key elements include research methods, the research design, my role as researcher, data collection techniques, data analysis, reliability, and credibility are the multiple elements employed in qualitative research (Yin, 2018). Section three includes a review of the research findings of the case study, how practical are the conclusions and findings, my personal reflections on my study, identification of social change implications, possible action recommendations, and any recommendation for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the strategies small beauty salon business owners use to maintain their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations, which the research question directly addressed. The target population comprises approximately five small business owners in Georgia who have been in successful operation for more than 5 years. My data sources consisted of interviews and information from company websites that related to the strategies that they used to attract new customers and to keep existing customers. I assumed data saturation occurred when there was no longer any fresh or new information from the participants. Three themes emerged from my data analysis: (a) offering incentives to loyal consumers, (b) actively promoting the business, and (c) providing excellent service to keep existing clientele.

Presentation of the Findings

This section covers the findings related to the three themes: (a) offering incentives to loyal consumers, (b) actively promoting the business, and (c) providing excellent service to keep existing clientele. The findings are connected to the conceptual framework as well as the literature from the literature review.

Theme 1: Offering Incentives to Loyal Consumers

Strategy 1: Gifts and Discounts

The findings of this study indicated that business owners used a reward system by offering incentives to thank their loyal customers. One of the methods that helped businesses keep their clients for longer than 5 years was gifts and discounts to keep their

customers happy. It is important to keep existing customers coming back on a regular basis. Participant 1 encouraged offering clients discounts for their birthdays and other special occasions. Participant 2 recommended taking advantage of gifts and bonuses as an alternative to relying only on money:

If a customer is a repeat one, the best way to keep them from leaving is to thank them for their loyalty. Successfully maintaining a small beauty shop open for more than 5 years may be aided by giving out gift cards at random, advertising freebies like shampoo for referring new customers, and other similar tactics. A tiny beauty business might thrive by rewarding loyal clients with incentives.

Participant 3 advised having a lottery pull for first and second place winners. Those who were pulled will receive a discount on their service. Participant 4 stressed the importance of developing personal connections with each customer. They offered a punch card for discounts and incentives: “When the clients reach so many punches, the client will receive a discount on their service.”

Strategy 2: Incentives and Freebies

All participants used incentives or freebies to keep their clients returning as repeat customers. Incentives and freebies are different than gifts and discounts because they are usually connected with the services being offered by the small business salon owners offering additional value-added services that customers appreciate. Participant 1 mentioned giving clients free products to maintain their hair until their next appointment. Participant 2 stressed providing free service like a free shampoo given randomly to clients. Participant 3 offered free color or trims to regular clients if needed. Participant 4

gave free shampoo to regular clients if the client brought a new customer. Participant 5 stated their beauty salon's incentives and freebies are often announced on social media as well as other comparable channels, but that on every occasion, they throw in a few more. If a client came in for a wash and set, makeup, and brow waxing but also needed their lashes removed or replaced, this would be done at no extra charge.

Connecting Offering Incentives to the Conceptual Framework of Contingency Theory

Contingency theory has been used to discuss expanding business, developing successful business leaders, and increasing organizational chances of survival and success. Small business owners work to intentionally shape their behaviors to achieve their goals (Goldsby et al., 2021). These goals primarily focus on expanding their business, developing successful business leaders, and increasing their company's chances for survival and success (Manz, 1986). Due to the varied nature of characters and personalities, small business managers can apply the theory to ensure that there is a harmonious and peaceful co-existence between employees (Mevo, 2019). Most successful business salons managers have a way to deal with each employee and with their customers (Perry et al., 2018). The more quality of the service the employees offer to the customers in the form of gifts, discounts, incentives, and freebies, the higher probability that the customers will buy more and come back more often; therefore, the more likely a business will sustain its operations beyond 5 years. All five business leaders confirmed the effectiveness of both Theme 1 strategies, such as the reward system to thank their loyal customers and the use of incentives or freebies to keep their clients returning.

Connecting Offering Incentives to the Literature Review

The sustainability of small businesses relies on creativeness, the use of innovative thinking, and catching up with current trends. Innovation is critical in training and helps develop sustainable business operations by exploring new ideas (Mas-Tur et al., 2020). Small business owners can generate innovative ideas on how to offer incentives that will help expand and maintain their current customers (Aminova & Marchi, 2021). Innovation escalates the chances of businesses reacting to changes in pursuit of new opportunities or new ways of thanking their customers in the offerings of gifts and discounts, leading to the sustainability of businesses. Improving entrepreneurial sustainability is important for business startups to consider creativity and business management competencies rather than pursue business security or have a technology-oriented attitude (Lee & Kin, 2019). Entrepreneurial sustainability involves small business owners' value, beliefs, vision, resolution to solve problems, and desire to achieve goals and make a profit while being thankful for their loyal customers, which is shown through incentives or freebies to keep their clients returning.

Theme 2: Actively Promoting the Business

Strategy 1: Marketing and Advertising

Marketing through social media, local paid media, signage, and community involvement are effective marketing and advertising (Ramasobana et al., 2017). The findings indicated that business owners implemented different marketing tools to bring in new customers and keep existing clients up to date. Participant 1 argued that meticulous planning for effective marketing and advertising strategies is essential to the business's

survival. Participant 2 said that getting out into the community and talking to people, using any system like reminding clients of their appointments. Participant 2 also helped customers create deals by running promotions on several of their offerings. Participants 3, 4, and 5 stated word-of-mouth promotion was the most effective marketing and advertising in interactions among members of the community. Participant 3 used flyers, yellow pages, business calendars and pens, and magnets with the business name and logo to market the business. Participant 4's success may be primarily attributed to their inclination to treat one customer as though they were 15 customers. Their success as a beauty salon owner may also be attributed to the staff's ability to connect with every customer. Participant 5 used social media for ads to market the business online.

Strategy 2: Commitment to the Business

The findings of this study indicate that business owners should use more than one strategy to commitment to their business and always work to sustain their business or increase business growth. Commitment to the business includes the passion, vision, mission, and compelling reasons that a small business owner strives to do everything in their power to achieve success. One strategy that Participant 1 indicated was important was to "stick with your strategy that works best for you and never give up." Participant 1 said that this was true for their passion for this business, their vision and mission, and all the other reasons that were important to them as a person. Participant 2 stated, "a good leader is to lead by example. Always have a mindset that you are here to provide the best service to all present and future clients." Participant 3 found that it helped that their beauty salon staff work extra and odd hours over the holidays. They stated that nobody at

the salon used additional tactics, but this was especially important: “A small beauty salon may be profitable if the owner is prepared for the inevitable lock-in periods of slow business by setting aside funds to ensure staff salaries are met despite unpredictable circumstances of low customer attendance.” Participant 3 agreed that helping oneself leads to greater customer service. Participant 3 also found that monitoring competitors’ websites to learn about their prices and offerings was effective. They claimed that their staff had access to the data gathered at the seminars and hair shows they had attended:

A hair salon’s ability to inform its clientele of the latest developments in hair care and to quash any myths that may have originated is crucial. Maintaining a little beauty parlor for five years requires a strong will and determination.

Participant 4 benefited from the decision-making process in staying in the firm.

Participant 5 was willing to accommodate when things are a little more difficult for the client and “communication with clients will let them know you are there for them.”

According to the participants, using the easy times is the greatest method of preparing for the hard times.

Connecting Actively Promoting the Business to the Conceptual Framework of Contingency Theory

The conceptual framework aligned with this study by providing insights and identifying strategies to help small businesses remain sustainable beyond 5 years.

Contingency theory can be relied on in determining the performance of different situations in the business consisting of a situational analysis (Mevo, 2019). Small business should have strategies that make them well prepared to deal with emergencies

that otherwise, if not dealt with, may fail to sustain operations beyond 5 years (Turner & Endres, 2017). In contingency theory, there is no particular way to promote a business; it all depends on the situation with a specific company. All five business leaders confirmed the effectiveness of both Theme 2 strategies, such as the importance of marketing and advertising strategy by word of mouth for promoting the company to their customers and the commitment to business by all employees will support the importance of actively promoting the business.

Connecting Actively Promoting the Business to the Literature Review

Motivation as a business strategy helps to ensure all the parties involved are satisfied first and can carry out their roles effectively to attain the business goals. The beauty salon owners attributed their motivation to an excellent drive for their thriving business. They attributed it to three main factors: profits, employee compensation, and positive customer feedback (see Turner & Endres, 2017). The salon owners listed profits as their top source of motivation for the business; hence, their hard work to attract the right target audience and set a good pricing strategy to ensure both the customer and owner are satisfied at the end of the day (see Mevo, 2019). Most of the owners also attributed their passion for the beauty salon business to be a factor that has seen them do well in the business for years (see Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018). Having a realistic vision and mission was also attributed to the passion for being able to see their vision become a reality (see Lythreathis et al., 2019). Therefore, setting a good vision or mission strategy can grow one's passion for the business and help them steer the business in the right direction to be successful and promote their businesses beyond 5 years.

Theme 3: Providing Excellent Service to Keep Existing Clients

Strategy 1: Fostering a Long-Term Relationship

A beauty shop may survive for more than 5 years if they foster long-term relationships with their customers by providing excellent services that their customers' wants and needs. The findings indicated that all participants implemented an appropriate long-term customer relationship strategy to improve their client relationships. Comments on this theme and strategy included the following suggestions by participants.

Participant 1 said that "customer service to me is one big issue and is an essential issue of running a business because, with excellent customer service, they will always come back. You will always get new customers in." Participant 2 expressed a good attitude of knowing how to deal with the public and handling each customer as fragile as a piece of glass: "That way, you'll keep that customer coming back." Participant 3 stated that

being an active listener regarding my clients and their needs is very important to keeping existing clients. Always give the client your undivided attention; when I say undivided attention, that means not being on the phone. I like to educate my clients about their hair, eliminating gossip in the salon because your clients leave when you are a stylist who gossips a lot.

Participant 4 stated that she "believes in customer service very, very strongly. I also take on the mentality that I will talk to and interact with everyone that comes in here. I am huge on treating people with respect and dignity." Participant 5 said that cultivating great relationships with clients, staying up to date with them, and ensuring they can do the

same by continuing to develop those ties. Word-of-mouth promotion was also a critical strategy that would aid in spreading awareness of the company. Participant 5's firm has been successful for more than 5 years because of their professionalism and high quality of service to consumers. According to them, professionalism is spoken about only sometimes in this area, especially in the beauty industry. Investing in customer relationships is integral to remaining in business (Naneetha & Bhaskar, 2018).

Strategy 2: Avoiding Mistakes through the Acquisition of Knowledge

The findings of this study indicated that all participants used a financial strategy and system, and most of the participants self-financed their businesses. In the process of doing this, they all indicated that avoiding mistakes that could cost them their business. Lessons from their mistakes, reflecting on their mistakes and successes, and the acquisition of new knowledge helped them to maintain and be successful in their business ventures.

Participant 1 stated "I put back some money and kept money in my savings for hard times to avoid the problem of having cash flow problems." Participant 2 said, the first thing I would tell anybody, if you are starting a business, is that your first three years will be your most challenging ones. Once you make it to, I'll say, 7 years, you will get over the hump. You will have little money to spend as you need within your first 5 years. So, within your first 5 years, you must keep your cost low; once you keep your cost low and see the revenue starts to come in, what you do is you save the revenue and build up your business capital. So, when something comes up, you'll have the capital to fix the product.

Participant 3 started reinventing their business, focusing on their net profit and not so much on the gross revenue helped to create a new competitive advantage:

When I say reinventing my business, I took anything I learned from different workshops or hair shows, so I took it back to the salon and shared it with the people who worked there. Again, you need to share your knowledge, and you can't keep it all to yourself. And I also started attending professional workshops annually for the same thing.

Participant 4 believed that they could manage the beauty salon finances without outside help was a critical error. In the last two years, they'd learned a strategy that would allow them to open and run the beauty salon without using any of their funds. They learned everything they needed to know to create a sustainable business plan and carry it out. Fostering long-term relationships with clients and learning new materials will help your business to become succeed beyond 5 years.

Connecting Providing Excellent Service to Keep Existing Clients to the Conceptual Framework of Contingency Theory

The conceptual framework aligned with this study by providing insights and identifying strategies to help small businesses remain sustainable beyond five years. Turner and Endres (2017) found that small businesses should have strategies that help them provide excellent services to keep existing clients and to make them well-prepared to deal with emergencies that otherwise, if not dealt with, may fail to sustain operations beyond five years. According to Uslu (2019), contingency theory provides a picture or

visual display of how ideas in a study relate to one another. In contingency theory, there is no way to promote a business; it all depends on the situation with a specific company.

Contingency theory is a critical theory that can be relied on by small business startups. Contingency theory can be relied upon in determining the performance of different situations in the business consisting of a situational analysis (Mevo, 2019). A key strategy that can offer a business insight into assessing the performance of other resources, such as human resources, to return profits (Shala et al., 2021). All five business leaders confirmed the effectiveness of both Theme Three strategies, such as the importance of providing excellent services by “word of mouth” for promoting the company to its customers is one of the primary ways for small business salon owners to keep existing clients and to avoiding mistakes through the acquisition of knowledge.

Connecting Providing Excellent Service to Keep Existing Clientele to the Review of the Literature

Education and training are great strategies in the beauty salon business to ensure the business provides excellent services and remains operational beyond 5 years. More customer turnout also directly translates into larger profits margins (Truong et al., 2020). To stay afloat in the beauty business, one needs to learn continuously to remain innovative and creative to keep customers satisfied and attract even more customers (Lukose, 2018). Online is a vital source of knowledge within the beauty industry; hence some business owners have come up with ways to remain connected with the latest technologies and to keep up with the latest trends as a way of enhancing their education and training.

Business owners also attribute education and training as a great way to educate themselves and their employees on how other professionals provide excellent services and the vast beauty industry trends. Attending beauty seminars and symposiums is one great way salon business owners can remain operational beyond five years (Felin et al., 2019). Through learning new ways in beauty fashion, businesses can also exchange ideas with other stakeholders in the industry (Lukose, 2018). Education and training play a key role in the beauty salon business, and getting the right education translates into business success.

Application of Professional Practice

The findings and recommendations of this study could provide small beauty salon business owners with successful strategies to establish their relationships with clients, new markets and offer discounts or incentives while growing their businesses. Small beauty salon business owners may find the results of this study will enable them to sustain their business beyond five years. Increases in clients may increase stability and sustainability within the beauty industry. Small business owners may find the themes of (a) offering incentives to loyal consumers, (b) actively promoting the business, and (c) providing excellent service to keep existing clientele as valuable tools to help sustain their businesses. The results of this qualitative multiple-case study may help entrepreneurs identify strategies also to reduce burnout in the initial three years in business. Small business salon owners are solely responsible for their success, failure, and burnout experience; however, this study could help those owners who provide a product or service develop and become effective self-leaders professionally. This study

may challenge small business owners to seek entrepreneurial education, learn project management competencies, find or become a mentor, become more involved in their communities, and strategically plan to lessen the burden of doing business. All participants contributed valuable information that could help novice entrepreneurs prepare and effectively execute strategic business practices. Strategic planning, positive thinking, professional development, and involving others are also essential strategies for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs may find relief using these strategies when battling burnout. Simple strategies like prioritizing self-care, taking mental breaks, thinking positively, scheduling time off to rest, and asking for help from family and friends may seem trivial but effectively reduce burnout. The World Health Organization (2019) stated that burnout is chronic workplace stress. Some small business salon owners experience burnout in an attempt to overcome business challenges.

Implication for Social Change

Small business owners remain essential for local competitiveness and productivity (Ludmila et al., 2017). The implication for positive social change includes providing a better quality of life to the local community, increasing jobs, and improving citizens' welfare. Increased profits may also allow small business owners to offer discounts, incentives, and services to their community. Small beauty salon owners with increased profits may be more involved in community-based charitable organizations. The implications for social change include a positive impact on small business owners as entrepreneurs and their local communities through the increase of sustainable businesses and other entrepreneurial activities. Business sustainability could lower unemployment

and increase local tax revenues to benefit citizens. The strategies identified in this study could help entrepreneurs reduce burnout and become self-leading to effectively execute business activities with the appropriate behavioral and cognitive strategies to achieve their goals. Entrepreneurs that use effective strategies may increase their effectiveness at managing resources and self-management. The mismanagement of resources can cause burnout (Atma et al., 2021). The sharing of my study may help entrepreneurs understand the potential impact on their businesses and local communities if strategies to reduce burnout are not a priority.

Recommendations for Action

Beauty salons should be considerate of their clients. Mario Batmanghelidjh, a world-renowned hairdresser, says he can differentiate himself by paying close attention to his clients' needs. A beauty salon can maintain strong customer relationships. Implementing the strategies presented in this study can help entrepreneurs identify the gaps from where they are to where they need to achieve their desired business goals. Entrepreneurs should prepare themselves to face and endure challenges because of the complexities of doing business (Torres et al., 2017). My first recommendation is for entrepreneurs to pursue a business endeavor or career path they love. People start businesses for different reasons, but passion may compel entrepreneurs to work through challenges, including burnout, because the business may mean more to them than money. My second recommendation is for entrepreneurs to develop a strategic business plan for their endeavors and professional growth and development. Self-employed entrepreneurs should understand that their business endeavor is as strong as they are, and any

weaknesses they may have, the business may also have. Small business owners should plan for the business, themselves, and their employees. Small business owners, as entrepreneurs, should understand their role in an existing organization and plan to grow accordingly. My final recommendation is for entrepreneurs to become self-leaders. Self-leadership skills may help entrepreneurs organize their responsibilities, reach sustainability, and reduce burnout by leading themselves to implement the appropriate behavioral and cognitive strategies to succeed. Other recommendations were mentioned by my participants that also deserve some attention under recommendations for action. Recommendations for action were also made for small beauty salon owners to develop as many personal connections as they can with their clients. The next recommended action for small beauty salon business owners is to continue building relationships. By activating your community, your business will survive for over 5 years. The last recommended action is for beauty salon business owners to offer creative discounts or incentives to their clients.

Recommendation for Further Research

The purpose of this study is to identify the strategies small beauty salon business owners use to maintain their business beyond five years of beginning operations. Further research is crucial as it shows that small businesses are vital to the US economy. Small business owners are responsible for creating over half of all new jobs in the country, according to the Small Business Administration (SBA, 2018). The findings from this study indicated the necessity for further exploration of strategies used by small beauty salon owners to maintain their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations. I

recommend that researchers conduct further research to address the study's limitations. I relied on the knowledge and interpretations of five small salon business owners in Georgia for the credibility of the interview data. Therefore, a larger sample should be considered in a different geographical region, especially since the study's conclusive findings might not transfer to other geographic regions or business cases.

Researchers may consider conducting a quantitative or mixed-method research study to explore strategies small salon business owners use to remain in business longer than 5 years. Researchers should test the significance of the relationships among various variables, such as community involvement, growth rate, capital availability, business longevity, and market variations. Researchers could also couple a quantitative correlational study with a qualitative method to cross check and triangulate statistically analyzed numeric data with interview data collected from participants using open-ended questioning. A quantitative or mixed-method study regarding small salon business owners maintaining their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations would result in findings that may generalize to a larger population.

Reflections

My experience at Walden University as a doctoral student has allowed me to gain knowledge regarding small beauty salon owners' strategies to maintain their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations. The leading factor that motivated me for this study was my interest in learning why most small salons appear to be thriving but end up failing within the first 1-4 years after opening. Many of my relatives were small salon owners for less than 4 years, pushing me through my educational journey.

As I reflect on the background, biases, challenges, and benefits of this doctoral study, my initial thoughts before conducting the research were small salon business owners close because of poor customer service, marketing, and capital. Conducting this study expanded my comprehension and knowledge of the strategies used by small business owners to maintain their business beyond 5 years. I faced the challenge of obtaining a full commitment from participants because they needed to be more open about sharing private information with strangers, may not entirely know what to expect from the participants, and locate sources aligned with my study. Researching sources necessary to complete my study was also a challenge. However, through research, I learned that most small salon businesses close because of a lack of growth strategies, interpersonal skills, communication, professional relationship with clients, and marketing strategies. Although challenging and time consuming, the doctoral study process has been highly gratifying. The process was full of emotions, engaging, and exciting. I learned the value of patience because of this process. I enjoyed building relationships with colleagues, my mentor, and professors and becoming a scholarly writer. I learned to maximize my time and research deeper into topics I may need help understanding. I learned throughout my study to be persistent, and change is unavoidable.

I had the rewarding experience interviewing five small business salon owners in Georgia and building relationships with successful business owners. The participants in this study provided the vital information needed to answer the research question. After building relationships with the participants, they were happy to help me in my journey. I am forever grateful for their contribution to this study. Although challenging, I am

inspired to launch a small business beauty supply store or start a consulting firm after graduation because of completing this study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the strategies small beauty salon business owners use to maintain their business beyond 5 years of beginning operations. The target population consisted of five small business owners located in Georgia who have been in successful operation for more than 5 years. The participants in this research were the owners of five different businesses in the beauty industry who have found sustainable methods of running their business. This research gathered information via virtual interviews, website, newspaper articles, and social media.

As the researcher for this study, it appears to me that the data indicates that contingency theory closely aligns with each of the three themes. During data analysis using Yin's (2018) five-step process of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding the data, three major themes emerged (a) offering incentives to loyal consumers, (b) actively promoting the business, and (c) providing excellent service to keep existing clientele. The findings indicated that implementing strategies to maintain business growth, build relationships with customers and community, offer discount and incentive, secure capital, and engage in effective marketing are essential for small salon business owners to maintain their business beyond 5 years. New and existing small business salon owners might implement the recommendation from this study to maintain their business successful operation for more than 5 years. The implication for

positive social change includes providing a better quality of life to the local community, increasing jobs, and improving citizens' welfare.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Research Study Title: Small Beauty Salon Business Strategies for Sustaining Operations Beyond 5 Years.

Here are some sample questions:

1. What strategies did you use to maintain in business beyond 5 years?
2. What marketing strategies did you use to survive beyond 5 years?
3. What business strategies did you use to manage the key processes and systems within your business?
4. How did you overcome the barriers to implement the strategies used to remain in business beyond 5 years?
5. What type of leadership styles did you used to manage employee productivity?
6. What other issues would you like to discuss about your strategies for sustaining your business within its first 5 years?

Interview Procedures

- Contact participant prior to meeting to check for questions, reconfirm time and location.
- In observing the COVID-19 protocols, I will conduct a zoom, telephone, or face-to-face interview to adhere to social distancing.
- The interview duration will be 45 to 50 minutes at the location and time convenient for the participant.
- I will present eight interview questions and follow up with some probing questions as needed.

- With your permission, I will record the interview using a Smartpen and other devices.
- The purpose of recording is to listen for write-up and transcription of the findings later.
- The recorded data will aid in transcribing the interview I will present to you after 3 days to confirm the accuracy of your words.
- You will receive a copy of the interview transcript for member checking and approval.
- Thank you for willingly sharing your experience with me.
- I will schedule follow-up member checking interview after few days to firm interview transcript.