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## Strategies to Encourage Innovative Employee Performance in the Automotive Industry

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Derek W. McElrath

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Walden University  
2022

Abstract

Strategies to Encourage Innovative Employee Performance in the Automotive Industry

by

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MBA, University of Phoenix, 2013

BBA, Davenport University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2022

## Abstract

The lack of innovative employee performance in the automotive industry leads to failure when it comes to the execution of organizational strategies. Senior automotive managers are concerned with innovative employee performance, as it has the potential loss of knowledge and the skillset by the employee. Grounded in Vroom's expectancy theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies automotive managers use that encourage innovative employee performance. The participants were three senior automotive managers in Southeastern Michigan with at least three years of knowledge in employee work performance. Data were collected through semistructured interviews. Through thematic analysis, four themes were identified: (a) expectations, (b) communication strategies, (c) integrity, and (d) benchmarking. A key recommendation is for automotive managers to use multiple communication methods to engage staff and keep them informed. An implication for positive social change includes the potential to increase and accomplish community growth, encouraging development and innovation by helping stimulate economic growth with employment opportunities, continuing expansion, and long-term prosperity.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this study to my Lord in Savior Jesus Christ and to all who supported me. To my heavenly family my grandmother Lois Burton Holt and my auntie Karen D. Holt-Hicks believed in education and dedication in whatever you put your mind to. I miss them and always truly in my heart. To my wife, Sonja D. McElrath, I am truly blessed to have received your love, the long hours and support through this journey of my Doctorate. You have been my constant rock of support, challenging me to stay committed to earning this degree. I will always be grateful for your love, support, and patience. To my mother, Jacqueline J. McElrath, thank you for encouraging myself and my brother Jeremy, to know regardless of our circumstances, we should never give up on our dreams. I want to dedicate these two of my daughters that came into my life Breonia and Alonna; you both have been patient with me, and to know that 2019 was a true blessing for all of us when we became a family; thank you for accepting me into your lives. I love you both as my own.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Automotive industry leaders are often encouraged to use innovation when faced with organizational changes associated with technology, economic climate, and global competition. The encouragement of regulatory change has created the need for clear leadership and investment in strategies for innovative employee performance that engage employees, improve operational performance, and reduce manufacturing costs (Chavez et al., 2020). Senior automotive managers can use innovation to achieve short and long-range performance goals in the automotive industry.

### **Background of the Problem**

Managers established a growing recognition of the complementary nature of hard and soft managerial procedure set up. According to Bourke and Roper (2017), two paradigms of hard and soft management change emerged within the management change literature. The highlighted benefit of incorporating hard and soft quality management practices for the product is innovation and firm performance. Terziovski and Guerrero (2014) noted that the relationships between total quality management (TQM) and product innovation were neutral or negative.

The leadership in the automotive industry practices different styles of leadership. Khalili (2017) noted that the relationship between total quality management (TQM), just-in-time (JIT) strategies and total productive maintenance (TPM) on manufacturing performance identified that TQM practices such as (a) process management, (b) cross-functional product design, (c) supplier quality management, and (d) customer involvement significantly improved a company's cost efficiency. Hadrawi (2019)

conducted a study to test the individual impact of TQM practices on operational performance. Hadrawi (2019) found that only three TQM practices, leadership, people management, and customer focus, significantly affected operational performance.

Since the United States economic crisis in 2008, automotive manufacturing leaders have experienced unprecedented change driven by an unstable global marketplace. Some drivers associated with the volatile global market included (a) expansions in global competition, (b) weak currencies, (c) enhanced customer demands, (d) outdated technology, and (e) astringent trade policies (Yadav et al., 2015).

Automotive industries are advertising information to increase awareness for vehicle owners on automotive recalls in a timely manner, to decrease the market value. Senior automotive managers recovered from significant product safety recalls between 2005 and 2012 and maintained their corporate market share, yet problems in employee innovation still emerge (Gao et al., 2015).

### **Problem Statement**

Innovation was one effective strategy managers used to maintain a competitive advantage (Chen et al., 2018). Seventy percent of 1,000 global corporate leaders identified innovation as a top priority, with most Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) dissatisfied with their organization's innovative performance (Kluppel & Cummings, 2019). The general business problem was that some leaders did not develop and implement strategies to encourage innovative employee performance to maintain a competitive advantage. The specific business problem was some automotive managers lack strategies that encourage innovative employee performance.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies automotive managers use that encourage innovative employee performance. To complete this study, I interviewed three senior automotive managers in three manufacturing companies in the Southeastern Michigan region who successfully implemented strategies to encourage innovative employee performance. The implications for positive social change included the potential to decrease unemployment rates and help retain jobs within the local community.

### **Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study considered three methodological options for this research study: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Within quantitative research, certain techniques and strategies for collecting data are specific to disciplines. Quantitative research was design to measure and examine variables' relationships by collecting numerical data on the variables of interest (Kanazawa, 2017). The quantitative research method was not appropriate for this study because the researcher did not measure and examine the relationship of variables in this study. Qualitative researchers focus on the social aspect of research, and researchers use open-ended questions to discover what was occurring (Beck, 2020). Mixed methods research includes qualitative and quantitative elements for researchers to obtain a deeper understanding of the research problem (Guest & Fleming, 2014). The mixed method was not appropriate for this study because the purpose of this research did not require multiple methodological strategies. Based on the methodological option, the qualitative research method is appropriate when the

phenomenon is not well understood, and the researcher desires to identify and explore the problem thoroughly (Beck, 2020). The qualitative method was appropriate for this study to explore strategies that automotive managers use to encouraged innovative employee performance.

There were four primary research designs for this qualitative study ethnography, phenomenology, narrative, and case study. Ethnography involves collecting and analyzing data about cultural groups, communities, or social settings (Van Wyk & Taole, 2015). Ethnography was not appropriate for this study because the researcher did not analyze any cultural groups. Using the phenomenological design involves describing an individual's lived experiences of an event or occasion (Yin, 2018). I did not select a phenomenological design because this study was not about describing participants' lived experiences of a phenomenon. Using a narrative-based research design can increase understanding of central issues related to teaching and learning by telling and retelling participants' personal stories (Van Wyk & Taole, 2015). The narrative design was not appropriate for this study due to the requirements have to address and capture any detailed personal stories of the participants 'experiences of which I am not researching. Case study research involves an in-depth analysis of a situation rather than a statistical survey (Yin, 2018). The case study design was used to narrow a broad field of research into one researchable topic (Rania et al., 2017). I conducted a multiple case study because it allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the research questions.

### **Research Question**

The primary research question for this study was: What strategies do automotive managers used to encourage innovative employee performance?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies do you use to encourage innovative employee performance?
2. What challenges or barriers did you face when implementing your strategies to achieve innovation in the workplace?
3. How do you overcome barriers that impede or encourage innovative employee performance?
4. As an automotive manager, how do you communicate innovative concerns to employee performance?
5. As an automotive manager, what innovative employee performance strategies have you created in the past you considered successful?
6. As an automotive manager, what other strategies can you share that you used to motivate employee performance?
7. What leadership style or theory does your organization management team or leadership used?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Vroom's expectancy theory was the framework for this study, as it provided a motivational presence within the terms: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

Individual factors such as (a) personality, (b) skill, (c) performance, (d) knowledge, and (e) abilities are also supported by Vroom's expectancy theory. During my research, I found that Vroom's expectancy theory is true as it pertains to expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. However, I found out all three skill sets also require an open line of communication and respect between the leaders and employees.

Vroom (1964) stated that employee beliefs about expectancy, instrumentality, and valence create a motivational presence that encourages employees to act in a manner that produces enjoyment over pain. Expectancy is the employee's confidence in their skill set (Hayyat, 2012). Instrumentality is the process that the employee undergoes to make choices toward receiving a reward linked to their skill set (Tambunan, 2017). Valence is an emotional belief toward a bonus (Estes & Polnick, 2012). Vroom's theory was relevant for understanding this study's findings because it gives employees' the opportunity to connect with the strategies that encourage innovative employee performance.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Corporate sustainability:* Corporate sustainability was how leadership implements ways to sustain the corporation within the local community (Hahn et al., 2015).

*Environmental dynamism:* Was the rate and the unpredictability of change in environmental variables (Nadkarni & Chen, 2014).

*Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB):* This was workers' behavior that is in line with acceptable behavioral norms that are rewarded (Babalola, 2019).



*Performance management:* The performance management process begins with strategy development and define as the vision, mission, values, and identification of strategic objectives followed by the development of specific action plans to achieve those objectives (Bititci et al., 2016).

*Strategic management:* Strategic management was the continuous planning, monitoring, analysis, and assessment that any organization can meet goals and objectives (Bragaw & Misangyi, 2019).

*Strategy execution:* Strategy execution was a process that converts strategic objectives into corporate results (Srivastava & Sushil, 2013).

*Valence:* Valence is the value an individual places on the rewards of an outcome, which is based on their needs, goals, values and sources of motivation (Estes & Polnick, 2012).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

Simon and Goes (2013) suggested elements of research essential in explaining and framing a study. The characteristics of this research are the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. I will explained the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations that framed this study in the following sections.

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are unverified statements that individuals accept as a fact (Yin, 2018). Researchers show a good view of predetermined variables by displaying assumptions related to the research (Reddy & Srinivasan, 2015). I assumed that the participants of this study did have adequate information concerning the research subject.

I assumed that the participants of this study did address the interview questions thoughtfully and honestly.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are weaknesses uncontrollable by the researcher (Anderson et al., 2017). The research can have several weaknesses associated with this study. First, the participants' responses, with limited results from the leadership team's selections, may not provide a complete view of the problem. Second, replies from the participants may not apply to all automotive manufacturing businesses. Finally, some participants may withhold some actual data regarding their leadership abilities or existing leadership strategies in the workplace, affecting the final research results.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations help clarify the focus of the study by identifying the areas included and excluded from the research (Bleijenbergh et al., 2018). The delimitation of this study centered on the use of participants working in the automotive industry. Another delimitation of the research was that participants may fail to include information with other experiences within their first three years in leadership from other senior leaders.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was significant because it could identify strategies for increasing innovative employee performance in the automotive industry. Senior automotive leadership should identify their effective leadership strategies to improve innovative employee performance in the automotive industry. Finally, the research can develop recommendations that lead to a positive social change to create growth, financial

stability, and community build-up.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

This qualitative multiple case study explored some automotive managers' practical leadership skills used to encourage innovative employee performance. Leadership development consists of critical components such as implementing organizational direction and communicating a vision to all corporate stakeholders (Packard & Jones, 2015). This research will provide a model that leaders could adopt to implement the best business practices for increasing innovative employee performance.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The social change in the automotive industry goal was to increase and accomplish community growth. Social change was a process of creating, implementing strategies and actions to promote value, dignity, and the development of individuals and communities (Walden University, 2013). The findings of this study contributed to social change by encouraging development and innovation by helping to stimulate economic growth with employment opportunities, continuing expansion, and long-term prosperity. Growth in the automotive industry can encourage business leaders to collaborate with key community partners to create more social and financial development, raising the living standards of the local communities (Dai et al., 2016).

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore successful strategies used by automotive managers to encourage innovative employee performance.

I explored innovative employee performance strategies by interviewing senior automotive managers to encourage innovative employee improvements. In this qualitative case study, I completed an exhaustive review of the literature regarding Vroom's theory. I reviewed 161 sources for the literature review. Of which, 43 academic sources were published within five years related to the study topic. I included 161 references for the literature review.

A literature review was an extensive investigation of collected data from published peer-reviewed research (Lu et al., 2017). The information for this review came from multiple peer-reviewed articles with insights on the history of innovation and its adoption by automotive leaders. I ensured that more than 85% or at least 62 articles researched for this literature review were from 73 peer-reviewed sources. Finally, the literature review includes materials associated with the conceptual framework that served as the lens for this study. This literature review encompasses five main sections: (a) Vroom's expectancy theory, (b) other leadership theories, (c) history of innovation in the automotive industry, (d) automotive managers, (e) work barriers to the automotive industry, (f) corporate sustainability, and (g) leadership development.

I explored many resources using Walden University's library to access databases such as ProQuest, EBSCOhost, Scholar Works, Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM, Google Scholar, Sage Journal, Emerald Management, PsycINFO, and Science Direct. The following search terms to provide the depth necessary for an effective literature review: *corporate sustainability, environmental dynamism, organizational citizenship behavior, performance management, strategy execution,*

*strategic management, and valence*. I searched terms that were pertinent to the research framework and according to the themes from the purpose of this study.

### **Vroom's Expectancy Theory**

The theory for the study's research framework was Vroom's expectancy theory. Vroom's expectancy theory centered on three constructs (a) valence, (b) expectancy, and (c) instrumentality (Vroom, 1964). Valence, expectancy, and instrumentality affect employee beliefs by creating a motivational presence encouraging employees to act in a manner that produces enjoyment over pain (Vroom, 1964). Valence was an emotional belief toward a reward (Niloofer et al., 2020). Expectancy referred to the employee's confidence in their skillset (Hayyat, 2012). Instrumentality referred to the employee's processes to receive a reward linked to their skillset (Tambunan, 2017). Vroom's theory was relevant to understand how researchers connect with strategies that encourage innovative employee performance.

Leaders needed to focus on strategies aligned with an organization's mission and long-term objectives for organizational success. Senior managers made decisions based on expected results yet are not optimal (Allio, 2018). When senior managers combined the precepts of valence, expectancy, and instrumentality regarding employee performance, their decision-making process is optimal. The three perceptions, when combined, help senior automotive managers make optimal decisions based on the expected results (Allio, 2018).

Researching how much effort individuals exert and value outcomes may help to identify the degree of motivation individuals direct toward an outcome. Vroom (1964)

used leadership style as a definition for motivation controlled by the individual based on how their behavior affected the expected result. Leaders needed to focus on a strategy that aligns with an organization's mission and long-term objectives for successful growth in the organization. The leadership style in the automotive industry changed as businesses adapted to globalization and technological advances (Allio, 2018).

CEOs are making new changes within the reins of leadership. According to Allio (2018), Vroom's theory in the automotive industry might influence CEOs to take on responsibility in leadership by introducing innovation, strategies, and motivation. As mentioned earlier, Vroom emphasized the three perceptions that connect to motivation: valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. Senior automotive leaders may find these three perceptions confusing if they failed to identify what information emerges when associating employee innovation with organizational goals (Rekonen & Bjorklund, 2016).

Employee performance and behavioral leadership styles are practical and influential. When applying the perception of valence to leaders and automotive management of the automotive industry, managers will select one behavior over another behavior, believing that the chosen behavior will produce a different outcome (Hayyat, 2012). The expected or unexpected behavior of the employee performance may impact implementing strategies that encourage innovative employee performance with certain behaviors exhibited in the organization. Automotive managers will work hard to implement strategies to encourage innovative employee performance if they believe senior leaders may acknowledge the extra effort (Skarzynski et al., 2014).

The automotive industry production on a small scale was the support of the implementation success. Instrumentality, another perception of the expectancy theory, was the belief that if a person meets performance expectations and receives a greater reward (Tambunan, 2017). When automotive managers performed at their highest levels, it increased the success and implementation of organizational strategies. Instrumentality was the personal belief that outcomes from a first level may lead to different products, whether the results are positive or negative (Estes & Polnick, 2012; Vroom, 1964).

The relationship between managers and employees may connect the skill set and training to job satisfaction, performance outcomes, and organizational success. Implementing further expectancy decreases common perception and low expectations toward organization strategies (Tambunan, 2017). Managerial competency and their experience would increase critical skills among employees, which can be in short supply. When managers learn their employee's specific skill set the managers expectations can be aligned to the employee's work performance.

Senior automotive managers should examine work performance on three levels: trusting leaders, control, and policies. The affecting variables within the instrumentality theory are trust, authority, and procedures (Hayyat, 2012). The affecting variable identified as a control in the instrumentality theory creates an employee job expectation. Instrumentality theory relied on a mixture of two variants: the expectancy of workers that their efforts will generate success, the workers' belief that success will generate specific the worth of these results. The employees often lack trust in the management when the training and skills fall through a negotiated contract (Niloofar et al., 2020). Senior

automotive managers influence the effect on employees' behaviors and work performance.

The goal setting educates employees on work performance. According to Hayyat (2012), the employee's needs, goals, and values could affect the employees' motivational perception associated with self-efficacy and goal difficulty. Self-efficacy was an individual's belief in determining how well one can perform successfully in any work situation (Maddux & Kleiman, 2018). Goal difficulty was a combination of the employees' efforts and the time commitment of the employees' performance expectations set by the organization's ability to achieve their goal (Hosseini et al., 2022). Automotive managers may or may not believe he or she possesses the required skills and competencies to lead personnel effectively.

Managers control the level of the training and skills set for the employee work performance. Managers may approach the employees to use the levels of control to train and set skills successfully in any situation given. Employees are confronted with a difficult task that must derive efficient representations of the work environment from high-dimensional sensory inputs and generalize experiences to new situations (Senior et al., 2020). If the expectations are beyond the employee's ambitions and/or abilities, motivation is low because of high expectancy.

Automotive managers who considered the outcome of expectancy beyond their abilities, will place low expectancy on the results. In 2019, academic scholars theorized when leaders identify with business operations, they face several economic issues, social media, ethical origins, and environmental dynamism challenges (Hosseini et al., 2022).



Automotive managers who considered the outcome of training have given some thought to implementing standard approaches to leadership and their employee development. The senior leaders can show the automotive managers how to encourage innovative employee performance.

Researchers are finding Vroom's theory to have had different research study results observed throughout the course of recent years. According to Lloyd and Mertens (2018), Vroom's theory publication on expectancy has changed over a decade later with different research studies by Lawler and Porter (1967), Porter and Lawler (1973), Graen (1969), and Lawler (1971). Expectancy suggested that actions may lead to successful performance and motivation across the organization (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018).

Expectancy theory may help automotive managers understand how employees choose motivation.

### **Other Leadership Theories**

The study of other leadership theories confirmed the relevance of Vroom's expectancy theory for this study. In the following subsections, I offered descriptions of other leadership theories that I did not select to explain why I did not choose them. I provided leadership theories and their effects on executing strategies to encourage innovative employee performance.

### **McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y**

The application of McGregor's theory X/Y and Vroom's expectancy theory may affect employees' work performance. The application and introduction of Theory X and Theory Y have been the center of management practice (Lawter et al., 2015). McGregor

(1960) expressed a different belief, labeling individuals as lazy or productive with the creation of theory X and theory Y. McGregor's two main assumptions regarding the typical worker were, an authoritarian management strategy for managing laziness is theory X, and a collaborative management strategy for productiveness is theory Y.

Vroom's expectancy theory assumed that employee's behavior results from conscious choices with employees' work performance based on factors such as personality skills, knowledge, abilities, and experience. The theory suggested that although employees' have different sets of goals, they can be motivated if they believe that, the desire to satisfy the need was strong enough to make the effort worthwhile.

Theory X suggests that employees are lazy, irresponsible, and avoid work in the organization (Carson, 2005). The basis for the McGregor theory was employees failed to take responsibility for creativity and do not support organizational change (Rahimic et al., 2012). According to theory X, McGregor expressed that employees were lazy, avoided work, and felt indifferent toward attaining organizational goals. McGregor's theory provides an insight to encourage open communication rather than control staff in the workplace.

Leaders should consider employees' behavior to ensure successful organizational performance. Employees who engaged in organizational achievement take responsibility for their actions and are self-directed and innovative (Carson, 2005). McGregor (1960) expressed that theory Y depended on why employees were self-motivated and keen on finishing day-by-day work obligations. Based on the employees' behavior, a

collaborative management style referred to different techniques that promote a sense of unity and teamwork among managers and supervisors, whereas an authoritative strategy refers to a set of procedures through knowledge, interests, and goals.

McGregor offered a different opinion of theory X and theory Y. Theory X supports a pessimistic view, and theory Y supports an optimistic outlook. The manager's perspective of theory X leads to assumptions of predictable patterns of organizational behaviors that hinder or improve employee performance (Carson, 2005). Theory X may unknowingly orchestrate low employee morale. Theory Y can connect optimism to the current business environment and use optimism toward the development of workers.

The external environment and the outcomes influence an organizational leader's strategic choices. McGregor's (1960) theory X and theory Y models remain pertinent as senior automotive leaders keep a positive or negative perspective on their employees. The automotive industry senior manager's treatment and view of front-line employees may hinder work productivity and execution of organizational strategies. Leadership should understand the external challenges that may affect business strategy choices.

### **Deci's Cognitive Evaluation Theory**

Another theory for discussion was the cognitive evaluation theory. Cognitive evaluation theory asserts that intrinsically motivated behavior is affected by a person's innate need to feel competent and self-determined to deal with the automotive industry. Researchers used Deci's (1985) cognitive evaluation theory to examine the concepts of self-determination, competence, and influence on the enjoyment of activities (Rahimic et al., 2012). Self-assurance was when leaders show confidence in the things they say and

do, because they are sure of their abilities to focus on an individual's' motivation to grow and change through their competence. While applying a self-confidence theory to the senior automotive leaders' technical execution, researchers recommended that a singular self-assurance impact was the working environment execution and climate.

The cognitive theory defined the belief in one's ability to mobilize mental resources and select the course of action needed to meet situational demands. Deci's (1985) cognitive evaluation theory accepted that people receive either a natural or an outward clear direction. Utilizing cognitive evaluation theory, researchers focused on social events that enhance perceptions of competence, improving intrinsic motivation. A critical investment of the leaders was to provide the subordinates with feelings to support self-worth.

### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

Transformational leadership theory was defined as a construct that revolutionized the way leaders inspire the employee to exceed the corporate goals through shared values that align with those of the organization (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). Transformational leadership behavior as one of the most critical factors influencing idea generation in a working context (George, 2007; Jung et al., 2003; Mumford et al., 2002). The essence of transformational leadership theory was when leaders transform their employees through their dynamic nature and charismatic personalities. The relationships between leaders and employees focused on the exchanges of satisfaction designed to maximize gains for both interested parties.

Transformational leadership was an effective and influential leadership style to influence the behaviors and performance of followers. Burns (1978) proposed two approaches in the leadership theory: transformational and transactional leadership. Bass (1985) added to Burns' ideas and identified inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation as the four dimensions of transformational leadership behavior. The leadership approach may not be mutually exclusive; a leader can be transformational and transactional in different situations.

Leaders' support was another concept related to transformational leadership. Contemporary organizational leaders must execute and innovate to achieve success (Kucharska & Rebelo, 2022). The idea of the leader's support was effectively increasing followers' performance expectations and transforms their values and self-concept into high needs and aspirations.

Leadership as a mediator of the transformational model generates new insight into what impacts organizational commitment. McKnight (2013) noted how to demonstrate transformational leadership by its impact on organizational commitment, such as pride in being a follower of the leader. Pride in being a leader-follower was a positive emotion that is likely to motivate followers' work behaviors. In a situation, followers may perform beyond expectations and be energized to achieve higher work objectives.

Transformational leadership was associated with bridging discontinuity or achieving innovation. Bass (1985) identified inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation as the four dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors. Inspirational motivation refers to a style that

creates an attractive goal for the future (Bass, 1985). Individualized consideration was the degree to which the leader attends to each employee's needs (Bass, 1985). Idealized influence was a charismatic element of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). Intellectual stimulation behaviors encouraged creative and standard problem-solving capacity (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership was depicted it as a collection of the four dimensions.

Charismatic and transformational leadership shared multiple similarities; the differences are focus and audience. Raffo et al. (2018) noted that Burns initially considered “charisma” an integral part of the four primary components in transformational leadership. After some deliberation, Burns changed the term to “idealized influence” (Burns, 1978). Both leadership models predicted an effective leader who articulates a compelling vision of the future. Leaders’ task support involved ensuring the adequacy of resources, which is essential for job execution.

McLaughlin and Kunk-Czaplicki (2020) stated transformational leadership theories are concerned with improving the performance of followers and developing followers to their fullest potential. Bass (1985) noted that leadership was one of the world’s oldest preoccupations, and there are as many different definitions of leadership as people are attempting to define the term. The central aspects of effective leadership are motivation, inspiration, sensitivity, and communication of which have been going on over the past 300 years.

Leaders with charisma employ an animated or dramatic style when communicating, often captivating their followers. Bass (1985) suggested that if certain

people have exceptional innate leadership skills, the skills should be measurable. For instance, when speaking, charismatic leaders convey energy through non-verbal cues intended to display power, show confidence, and involve their audience emotionally in presenting the message they desire to obtain. The leadership model indicated the vision to focus on trustworthiness to show the skillset and inspire and motivate employees in the organization's work environment.

### **History of the Automotive Industry**

The United States has one of the largest automotive markets and is the home to many global vehicles and auto parts manufacturers. Over the past 30 years, the automotive industry has been depicted as a scale-concentrated industry through the movement of research and development (R & D) parts (Anzola-Roman et al., 2018). Corporate leaders faced many workplace challenges, which require strategic management from their automotive managers and their employees. The general attitude in the automotive industry was changing. The automotive industry realized that the degrees of progress are not all guided by their leader's abilities.

The concept of self-leadership was primarily from the theories of social cognition and intrinsic motivation. Open advancement was when the automotive managers either forcefully try to get information created by different gatherings to join in the advancement endeavors or opportunities to develop changes (Lin & Hsiao, 2014). Inbound open development was where the automotive industry improves information based on obtaining outside information. Social cognition and learning theory suggest that

individuals' experience continues the interaction between the inner forces and the environmental dynamism conditions.

Leadership required both a clear destination and a detailed road map. The automotive industry that looks after an open development methodology will generally achieve higher creative execution (Bibi & Afsar, 2018). The strategy for opening information limits the automotive industry resources from increasing changes with their inside advancement structures. The problem with responding to the given changes in the strategic level of the senior automotive management was consolidating data. There was an unprecedented amount of data in the automotive industry's advancement to innovative responses to changes.

### **Innovative Responses to Changes**

Innovation startups in the automotive industry had proven to be very successful at delivering fantastic business results. Kuckertz et al. (2020) noted that the immediate rapid response seeks direct attention to a specific type of individual in the current public debate: innovative startups. Innovative startups can shape future financial action among the most vulnerable actors in any economy. The history of the automotive industry revealed many changes with the innovative startups such as competitors, suppliers, support organizations, and local institutions, demanding companies innovate and introduce new products and services continuously.

### **Impact on Automotive Technology from COVID-19**

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a burden on health systems worldwide. Most policy initiatives to protect economies during the COVID-19 crisis



seem to target established corporations, existing industry sectors, and economies (Kuckertz et al., 2020). The social distance infection control measures are directed toward unprotected employees and the spread of the virus, making the country of China being the epicenter of the COVID-19. Several provinces in China collectively fulfilled around 60% of China's automotive technology production demand and have been quarantined, which has led to disruptions in the supply chain.

### **Operations and Supply Chains**

Strategic choice theory was another tool that managers can use when making a business decision. The strategic choice theory focused on leaders and senior management, influencing the organization by making choices in a dynamic political process. Govindan et al. (2020) reported that epidemic outbreaks are among supply chain disruptions and most disruption threats and risks are the epidemic outbreaks that are minor at the outset. The COVID-19 episode started in Wuhan, China, and quickly affected the Chinese economy; thus, supplies in worldwide supply chains were considerably diminished (Govindan et al., 2020). Expanding on the importance for leaders to understand the external challenges may affect strategic choices.

### **Strategy**

Since the COVID pandemic, the automotive industry didn't have a single formula to adopt when facing external challenges within the supply chain network. According to Ivanov (2020), the recent effect of the COVID-19 epidemic outbreak had a significant impact on the supply chain networks. The COVID-19 epidemic and the economic situation may create a long-term disruption existence, disruption escalations, and high

uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic in the automotive industry may affect the long-term impact on the supply chain network.

### **Automotive Managers**

Innovation was an effective strategy managers use to maintain competitive advantage (Chen et al., 2018). According to Skarzynski et al. (2014), seventy percent of 1,000 global corporate leaders identified innovation as a top priority. Kluppel and Cummings (2019), shared that most CEOs are dissatisfied with their organization's innovative performance. The U.S. automotive industries consist of engine and transmission plants, and testing. The theory of strategic management was when organizational leaders share strategic intent (information) (Bolatan et al., 2022).

Changes had been made within the automotive industries production due to the innovation outcomes. Automotive industries are eager to improve innovation outcomes (Lee, 2012). Innovation had no intrinsic value to organizations. Product and service innovations must address the employee performance and market gaps to meet customer needs, thereby winning customer loyalty.

Anderson et al. (2017) noted that leaders are not often in their current positions for long because the perspectives and approaches change as businesses adapt to globalization and technological advances. Managers are not in their current positions for long due to having to learn the steps of innovation strategies. The newer generations bring new ideas, new behaviors, and new ways of looking at issues. The process of management practice was imperative to any organization and one of the essential characteristics for leaders to manage ambiguity.

In the automotive industry, employees may choose to work extremely hard to support the organization's goals or do just enough to earn their wages. Subsequently, strategies for organizational leaders are to maximize knowledge, skills, abilities and obtain the best performance possible (Mills, 2018). Based on the importance of employee motivation, workplace encouragement is a core competency of leadership. Over the past 30 years, the automotive industry employees' motivation had been in the low performance and leaders directives (Ivanov, 2020).

The motivations associated with individuals in their work performances are intense. Robbins and Judge (2016) noted that three fundamental components defined motivation: intensity, organizational direction, and persistence when the essentials are associated with workplace performance. Intensity described how strong individuals complete their daily assignments. Organizational direction supported the level of power provided by senior leaders. The final component, persistence, measures how employees maintain their efforts (Robbins & Judge, 2016).

The emotional behavior of the leaders can be affected by disinterest and apathy in any organization. Koning and Van Kleef (2015) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the effects of leaders' emotions on their follower's organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Emotional expressions influenced organizational behavior when delivered by leaders. Emotional behaviors affected organizational performance. A leader's emotions could impact followers' OCB and measure behavior. Some levels of leadership could not deal with any emotional changes, if not properly trained with the techniques to do so.

Leaders supported motivation behavior to ensure positive emotional traits of individuals. Rekonen and Bjorklund (2016) explored managerial tasks, and the challenges managers faced implementing innovative projects within organizations. Leaders must consider appropriate behavior to ensure successful organizational performances.

Individuals demonstrating positive emotional traits were the norm when dealing with management-level duties. During the past 30 years, leaders' may have been in high demand for emotional support and motivation in the automotive industry (Ivanov, 2020).

Leadership skills should be at a level to handle any issues among their employees. Anderson et al. (2017) noted that senior automotive managers' job include being able to lead their employees successfully; managers must apply leadership styles and behaviors that match the situations, the needs, and abilities of the employees they are trying to influence. The responsibility of leaders was to make sure their employees have the proper tools to handle any behavioral issues. Developing partnerships outside of the organization to meet strategic goals to balance top-down management and bottom-up participation may be intense.

### **Work Barriers in the Automotive Industry**

The automotive industry was faced with the challenges of closing with supply chain disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The automotive sector was slowing faster than expected and coming up against massive economic threats (Tate et al., 2014). Automakers faced more significant pressures on their margins as regulation and trade tensions hit their core businesses. Workers had been faced with these issues for many years and are still dealing with the issues within the pandemic. In 2019, General Motors

(GM) ended a five-week strike after looking to close plants, invest in autonomous vehicles, and slash its workforce (Winck, 2019). The automotive strike and the economic uncertainty that followed, unionized automotive worker's accepted concessions to allow GM and other automotive industries to recover.

### **Workplace Performance**

The concept of innovation portrayed a creative new product in an organizational setting. Belso-Matinez et al. (2016) stated what innovation portrayed to sustain and secure the organization. Innovation was the embodiment, combination, or synthesis of relevant, valued, new products, processes, or services. Innovation was the successful introduction of a new tool or method that leaders use in the automotive industry (Luecke & Katz, 2003). Leadership was based on the sustainability of industrial clusters of a network of inter-organizational relationships such as customers, competitors, suppliers, support organizations, and local institutions within the automotive industry (Belso-Matinez et al., 2016).

The policy structure was to change the instruments that leaders use in organizations. Biggs et al. (2016) noted that modifying the instruments such as the leader-member exchange (LMX), the team-member exchange (TMX), and the Worker Opinion Survey (Cross, 1973) are valuable to the organization to reshape the instruments for which they are designed within specific research settings. LMX, TMX, and Worker Opinion Survey are the instruments that leaders use to help diversify the policies and focus on developing a workplace of culture and recognizing the impact of globalization.

Leadership knowledge was used to manage the boundaries of employees' trust with the innovation process. Smith (2016) posited that leaders must understand the underpinnings of knowledge sharing to identify the factors that hinder managing knowledge boundaries and presented examples of team members losing confidence and trust if the innovation process did not engage them. The innovation process was relevant because the components are important for leaders; leaders' influences affect employees' behaviors and performances. What employees taken from the leadership may show the employees boundaries in the knowledge of corporate sustainability.

### **Corporate Sustainability**

The pillars of corporate sustainability indicated meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Corporate sustainability aims to create long-term stakeholder value by implementing a business strategy that focuses on the ethical, social, environmental dynamism, cultural, and economic dimensions of doing business (Kulkarni & Aggarwal, 2022). Sustainability had become a strategic priority for the automotive industry with a comprehensive sustainability strategy with well-defined goals and targets affecting the supply chain. The pillars referred to three distinct areas: social, economic, and environmental dynamism: known as the three pillars of sustainability.

### **Organizational Change**

Leaders faced different levels to maintain its organizational development goal. The primary purpose of organizational change was a practical organizational development (Wilkins & Ouchi, 1985). The business and society relationships had

generated several economic, social, ethical, and environmental dynamism challenges over the decades. The different challenges for organizations included creating society, atmosphere, and supporting the working environment such as (a) downsizing, (b) managing global competition, and (c) new technologies (Neves, 2012). The automotive industry was one of the many businesses that satisfy its employees to cope with the ever-changing work environment and ensure a successful transformation through change.

The economic issue that the automotive industry faced was to keep up with competitiveness. Automotive managers are practical, and they have begun to deal with social and ethical concerns in ways like those they have used to manage traditional business functions such as marketing, finance, operations, and risk management, with a rationale, systematic, and administratively sound fashion (Rendtorff, 2019).

Organizational changes supported the level of intensity provided by senior automotive managers. The automotive industry had issues with the innovation to develop effective strategies to maintain the leadership's pride and the competitive advantages (Prajoga, 2016).

The challenges that the men and women are facing are diversity in the CEO's position (Anderson et al., 2017). In 2014, culture changed within the automotive industry, and the leaders are bringing more women into the CEO leadership role, knowledgeable diversity officers, and programs to nurture talent (Purdue-Vaughn, 2015). A difficulty of encouraging ethical behavior is that employees are not always facing ethical dilemmas. Since 2014, society has found more women CEOs in ethical leadership that positively affect organizational citizenship behaviors.

## **Managing Global Competition**

Global CEOs faced a detailed history of resolving the financial issues with their management team. Ferrero-Ferrero et al. (2016) stated that between the years 2004 and 2008, the global financial crisis reactivated the debate regarding the effectiveness of the top management team (TMT) that formulates corporate strategies to achieve positive outcomes. The primary role of the TMT was associated with active participation in the formulation of corporate strategy. Lisak and Erez (2015) indicated that leaders should reviewed global leadership and team leadership to identify the potential leaders of diverse groups who possess the desirable behavior and traits.

The chief marketing officer's (CMO) fundamental role in any manageable global organization leads management, marketing communication, market research, product marketing, customer success, and service. Bock et al. (2015) stated that coordinating firm-wide efforts to address what customers want and what potential customers will want in the future is the responsibility of the CMO. As an essential member of the executive team, the CMO fulfills multiple roles. With the market knowledge and innovation output, the CMO was uniquely positioned to drive long-term value creation for the marketing activities of an organization.

## **Organizational Leaders**

The uncertainties that leaders faced concerning the effects of no communication with their employees is where the different strategic abilities fail. Schoemaker and Krupp (2015) outlined six strategic leadership abilities that leaders must master to overcome uncertainty. The six strategic leadership abilities are: *anticipate, challenge,*



*interpret, decide, align, and learn. Strategic leadership* was a visionary leadership style that may involve formulating and sharing a clear vision as motivating and persuading employees for the future of organizational success (Rao, 2015). Leaders must recognize the change of information regarding the importance of understanding the effects of intentions and resistance to change.

With organizational challenges, the leader must show the employee the motivation to be successful in their work performance. Organizational leadership reflects the innovative economy and the application of workplace tuning, re-orientating, and restructuring to maintain a competitive advantage (Graso & Probst, 2012). When analyzing organizational change, the leaders should understand the environment of their surroundings that pertained to the organization that is a link between (a) flexible work specializations, (b) innovations in lean production, and (c) the introduction of total quality management. An organization's environment was the source of resources that the organization needs. It provides opportunities and influences the various strategic decisions that executives must make. Organizational change occurs in the reaction to something that was not right and needs to be changed to improve employee development and organizational performance current (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

### **Leadership Development**

The leadership development emphasized subordinate perceptions of what a leader's behavior contrasts with the view, which maintains that leaders affect the performance of subordinates (Zhang et al., 2012). Leadership roles facilitate the execution of a company's strategy by building alignment, winning mindshare, and

growing the capabilities of others (Collen-Lester et al., 2017). The three factors affected leaders' ability to empower employees within the work environment's performance are values, character, and identity (Leavy, 2016). The effectiveness of leaders influenced their organization's by motivating and inspiring the employees' work performance. Committed and loyal employees expected their leaders to provide a clear vision of the company's strategic direction.

### **Leader's Ability**

Management traditionally seen its role as defining the problems of the workplace, developing solutions to those problems, and implementing those solutions (Hayyat, 2012). Part of labor-management relations was to protect the rights of the employees' and for employers to encourage collective bargaining (Hayyat, 2012). For any employee union that faced behavioral concerns, leaders are to assist in any way they can. Labor unions' most significant assets are the volume of people, their members' willingness to participate in union activities voluntarily, and their collective ingenuity.

Leaders who used leadership strategies are more likely to exhibit behaviors associated with effective leadership, such as defining and communicating a vision, encouraging recognition, delegating, and empowering. Bass (1985) noted that leadership was the world's oldest occupation as people continue to define the term. The study of leadership was a mature body of work that has been established by its boundaries theoretically and conceptually over decades. Leaders are catalysts for change and had the leadership traits capacity to (a) enhance, (b) maintain, or (c) impede employee performance based on their leadership abilities (Witzel, 2019). All good leaders shared

the leadership trait of confidence. Leaders can make tough decisions and lead with authority. By being confident, leaders can reassure and inspire others, establish open communication, and encourage teamwork.

### **Leadership Traits**

The principal theories of leadership trait were that leaders are born and not made. Witzel (2019) stated that early theorists studied leadership traits to ascertain the personality characteristics of a successful leader. A person who has demonstrated their skills or knowledge could take on the role of a leader. Leadership style was a trait that a leader's behaviors and characteristics might determine the employee work performance (Cheung & Wong, 2011).

A good working relationship between an employee and their manager can result in a successful outcome. When employees and managers have high LMX relationships, employees experience many beneficial career outcomes such as more frequent communication, performance, feedback, and promotions (Liden & Sparrowe, 1997). A good manager was looking to promote a particular employee that shows the initiative to lead. LMX theory was a robust explanatory theory of leadership, as unlike the other theories, using LMX this theory, researchers concentrate and talk about specific relationships between the leader and each subordinate. The critical principle of LMX theory was that leaders develop different types of exchange relationships with their employees. The quality of the developed relationship alters the impact on this leader and member exchange outcomes.

## **Leadership Styles**

The effectiveness of a leader was to show innovation to inspire an employees' work ethic. Anderson et al. (2017) noted the newest approaches to leadership, authentic leadership, provides a perspective in the tradeoffs associated with alignment to one's actions. The ancient root word authentic from Greek philosophy is defined as a popular and effective leadership style that involves remaining true to oneself. Innovation by leaders allows challenging the employees' work ethic, their ability to follow instructions, and the employees are likely to believe in what their behaviors meet their leader's demand.

Ethical issues arise in the organization when leaders show discrimination to certain employees. Another emerging theory in leadership is ethical leadership, which draws upon an understanding of both ethics and leadership to explain how leaders behave ethically and promote moral behavior among their followers (Brown & Treviño, 2014). Ethical leadership was a moral principle that governs a person's behavior or conduct of an activity. Ethical leadership was staying true to the leadership principles while being aware at the same time of the complexity of other moral issues and being sensitive to the different views of what other employees are facing against higher leadership levels.

## **Strategy Execution**

Leaders have the skillset of building the right skills for employees to bridge the strategy of execution gap. Because of increasingly flexible and dynamic work structures, organizations grant employees an increasing degree of autonomy and responsibility to

accomplish given tasks in their way and in their own time (Pulakos, 2009). Leadership development, especially development evaluation, have received increasing attention, bridging the gap between managing evolutionary (early days of man) and revolutionary innovations (exploring new to the world opportunities, creating new business potential) using a dual operating system. According to Pulakos (2009), a strategy execution framework has different issues: visualization, performance management, and improving strategy execution success rate.

**Unclear strategy or conflicting priorities.** The effective leadership role and coping strategy skills are influential. Leaders emphasized the importance of defining strategic objectives, especially in innovation strategy implementation (Lendel & Varmus, 2014). Effective leadership and managing organizations are part of an ongoing process. Low employee performance in many industries makes the leaders cope with the strategy changes when dealing with employees', especially when the team is not doing their part. The efficiencies of what leaders should include are the talent and ability to provide guidance, eliminate inconsistencies, and create a climate where people can excel and advance within the organization.

**An ineffective senior management team.** A weak manager may lack knowledge and skillset. Hrebiniak (2006) noted that ineffective managers might lack the knowledge or skills to implement the strategy to communicate with their employees. This deficiency of knowledge or skills may affect the manager's commitment to strategy implementation. The literature about the management team does not include a unique definition of the recommended involvement method for managing staff.

**Poor vertical communication.** The lack of communication from managers may create failure of the organization's goal. According to Kaplan and Norton (2001), communication is not strategic management and emphasized communicating the strategy, objectives, and strategic initiatives to employees. Managers who do not inform their subordinates about the chosen strategic direction and the changes aimed at pursuing organizational goals risk failure. To achieve an effective communication strategy, each senior manager must understand the goals and how their efforts tie into the mission for success.

**Inadequate leadership skills and development.** Leaders often fail to adjust to new changes in the organization. Noble and Smith (2015) drew attention to the importance of leadership, both formal and informal, at lower levels of the organizational structure, in the context of achieving an appropriate level of motivation. Inadequate skills of managers are associated with emotional attitude to changes and desire to be involved in their implementation. Leaders can identify when strategic management was required to sustain the leadership characteristics: reassure and inspire others, establish open communications, and encourage teamwork.

### **Strategic Management**

Communication was a key in strategic management. When managers did not use good communication skills with their employees, the employee work performance will fail (Christensen, 2014). The automotive industry was highly vulnerable to organizational change as managers are key players in strategic change. Managers' commitment to not making the change may lead to poor employee work performance (Neves, 2012).

Organizational changed strategies may describe an underlying need for improvement in organizational development.

### **Creativity**

As part of the leadership development process, innovative skills are being created. Richards and Schubert-Irastorza (2013) stated, “creativity is the greatest gift of human intelligence. The more complex the world becomes, the more creative we need to be to meet its challenges” (p. 73). Business leaders value innovation to advance generic creation skills, including idea generation, creative teamwork, opportunity sensing, and mobilizing people and resources around ideas. Creativity connects to personal growth and life satisfaction (Richards & Schubert-Irastorza, 2013). Being creative gives individuals’ opportunities to try out new ideas, new ways of thinking, and problem-solving. Creative activities help individuals acknowledged individual creativity.

Imaginative minds of individuals are constantly creating new ideas. Harris (1998) stated that creativity is an ability, an attitude, or a process. Imagination allows the individual to imagine or invent something new while pointing out that everyone has a creative skill that needs awakening. Creativity improves mood, view and solve problems more openly and with innovation (Jackson, 2006a).

Leadership workshops in the automotive industry should be planned so that leaders can increase productivity, improve decision making, as well as implementing the best leadership style. Hadj (2020) noted that the purpose of creativity was to encourage the automotive industry leaders to lead more innovation, increase employee innovation, critical thinking, and motivation. Implementing workshops may give more opportunities

for employees to grow, learn, promote, and teach. The goal of the senior automotive managers and their employees is to gain different perspectives inside the automotive industry. Jackson (2006a) noted that the purpose of creating for the employees is:

- *Having significance*: there are different levels and notions of relevance, but utility and value are integral to the idea (Jackson, 2006a).
- *Being curious with an inquiring disposition*: willing to explore, experiment, and take risks (Jackson, 2006a).
- *Being resourceful*: using your knowledge, capability, relationships, powers to persuade and influence, and physical resources to overcome challenges or problems (Jackson, 2006a).
- *Being able to combine, connect, and synthesize complex and incomplete data/situations/ideas/contexts*: to see the world freshly/differently to understand it better (Jackson, 2006a).
- *Being able to think critically and analytically*: to distinguish valuable ideas from those that are not so useful and make decisions in the right direction (Jackson, 2006a).
- *Being able to represent ideas and communicate them to others*: the capacity to explain something to a listener, create, deliver insights, and show solutions in ways that make sense to them and capture their imagination (Jackson, 2006a).

### **Transition**

Section 1 of this qualitative multiple case study included the (a) background of the problem, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose statement, (d) nature of the study, (e)



research question, (f) conceptual framework, (g) definitions, (h) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, (i) significance of the study, and (j) the literature review. In the literature review, I identified how these alternative theories, such as Vroom's expectancy theory, may help automotive managers understand their role in leading and providing solutions to encourage innovative employee performance in their organizations. In the literature review, I covered (a) Vroom's expectancy theory, (b) alternative theories, (c) history of innovation in the automotive industry, (d) automotive managers, (e) barriers to the automotive industry, (f) corporate sustainability, and (g) leadership development.

In Section 2, I provided the research method of case study design based on the research question, (a) role of the researcher, (b) participants, and (c) data collection. The section included a description of relationships associated with the problem statement and participants related to the framework identified for the study. Section 2 contains detailed surrounding (a) the ethical basis for research, (b) the protection of participants' rights, and (c) the informed consent guidelines. In Section 3, I included (a) the purpose of the study, (b) restatement of the research, (c) a presentation of the findings, (d) implications of social change, (e) recommendations for action, and (f) recommendations for future study.

## Section 2: The Project

This section includes a detailed description of the methodology and design that the researcher will use in the study. The section opens with the purpose statement and include a discussion of the (a) participants, (b) research method, (c) research design, (d) population, and (e) data collection process. Section 2 included a description of relationships associated with the problem statement and participants related to the framework identified for the study. In Section 2, concluded with details surrounding (a) the ethical basis for research, (b) the protection of participant's rights, and (c) the informed consent guidelines.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies automotive managers use that encourage innovative employee performance. To complete this study, I interviewed three senior automotive managers in three manufacturing companies in the Southeastern Michigan region who have successfully implemented strategies to encourage innovative employee performance. The implications for positive social change include the potential to decrease unemployment rates and help retain jobs within the local community.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I was the primary research instrument in this qualitative study. The primary role of a qualitative researcher was to explore a phenomenon that is not well understood (Beck, 2020). Exploring the desire to identify the problem thoroughly from the participant's data will provide a thorough analysis using personal experiences and

applications (Guest & Fleming, 2014). My role as a researcher, it was essential to report all data and remove (a) personal biases, (c) perceptions, and (c) beliefs (Yin, 2018).

These principles will apply to the case study evidence to ensure valid and reliable data during the study. I adhered to the ethical research principles outlined in *The Belmont Report* and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) online training I completed in 2015. I followed the ethical standards mandated by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before conducting the interviews. As the researcher, I do not have any professional experience in the automotive industry. I only reported on the collected data and not his own viewpoint or thoughts.

The process of qualitative research has various levels in gathering data. Flick (2018) discussed each stage of the process of designing a qualitative research question, selecting a sample, choosing an appropriate strategy, developing a conceptual framework, researching data sources, and preparing for data collection and analysis. A researcher must collect data to show their evidence to support the qualitative research. A case study database provided an organized way to store data in a format that allows easy access to further reliability. A chain of evidence shows the appropriate process and procedures on the path from the research question through the findings that are in the database (Yin, 2018).

A researcher's valuable data created a validation source by using the triangulation data for the study. Researchers need to be aware of the assumptions and biases they hold as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research because the focus and interpretive thinking are critical (Clark & Vealé, 2018). The qualitative

research strategy used triangulation data to validate the study. The source of using triangulation data viewed as a qualitative research strategy assists the researcher in validating the different sources of information. Data triangulation occurred when results from one study are supported by other data sources for the same phenomenon, strengthening the construct validity of the study (Yin, 2018). During the research, I gathered the interviews and documentation to collect the data and mitigate potential personal biases. I categorized my perspectives to prevent viewing data through a unique lens. Using triangulation enhanced the reliability of the results and the probability of reaching data saturation (Fusch et al., 2018). The primary role of a researcher was data collection through a semistructured, Microsoft Team interview in a qualitative research study. The interview protocol enables a structured flow of relevant questions to each participant to eliminate biases, thereby enhancing the richness of the data collection and analysis.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study consisted of three senior-level automotive managers who have worked in the automotive industry located in the Southeastern region of Michigan for three years or more. Yin (2018) indicated that a good case study should always make clear which information is the factual description according to specific criteria for participant selections. The sample population is appropriate for this study because the perimeters set by a researcher should allow data saturation to occur. According to Mason (2010), data saturation was met when enough information is obtained in the study. For this qualitative multiple case study, the participants had to

have prior and current experiences as senior automotive managers. They were able to participate in the interview process. To be eligible to participate in this study, the participants had to be senior-level automotive managers who work in the automotive industry in the Southeastern region of Michigan. Additional eligibility requirements were that participants must be at least 18 years old at the time of the interview and worked in a supervisory position for more than three years.

According to Yin (2018), researchers may be selective in their choice of study participants. I selected the participants whose characteristics align with the central research question and understand the purpose of this study and the research goals. The participants in this study have shared the same characteristics that included the successful application of leadership responsibilities reflected substantial knowledge, and contextual diversity about successful strategies used in innovative employee's performance in the automotive industry.

### **Research Method and Design**

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some automotive managers use to encourage innovative employee performance. To achieve success, the researcher conducted interviews using open-ended questions with senior automotive managers in three Southeast Michigan automotive manufacturing industries. The method and design provided insight into the research question. I provided the descriptions and justifications of the method and design used to conduct this qualitative research study.

## **Research Method**

Researchers can conduct quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods studies (Yin, 2018). Quantitative researchers collect numerical data to measure and examine variables for testing theories or hypotheses (Berkovich, 2017). A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because the researcher will not test a theory or hypothesis. The quantitative method approach lacks the thoroughness of a personal, Microsoft Team interview. The mixed method is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methodology (Guest & Fleming, 2014). The mixed method was not appropriate for this case study because of the need for quantitative data; a mixed-method design will deviate from the nature of my research study. A qualitative method focuses on the social aspect and permits the use of semistructured, open-ended interview questions to explore the participants' viewpoints (Singh, 2015). Researchers used the qualitative research method to achieve an understanding of the specific business problem of a study (Clark & Thompson, 2016). Researchers who employ the qualitative method gained a better comprehension through interviews, observations, and artifacts (Yin, 2018).

A qualitative method was the best choice for my research because it promotes understanding and clarifies the interpretations of a social business problem ascribed to a selected group of individuals. A qualitative approach develops knowledge and explanations of human behavior using a diverse sampling method instead of the tailored course used in a quantitative study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The rationale for choosing a qualitative method was to provide a methodological framework to explore successful strategies automotive managers use to encourage innovative employee

performance. Encouraging innovative employee performance was vital to maintaining potential opportunities for improving local growth within the community. The purpose of this qualitative study was to develop an in-depth understanding of strategies employed by senior automotive managers to encourage innovative employee performance. The qualitative approach will allow the collection of rich data and an account of the problem under investigation.

### **Research Design**

I considered four possible research designs for this qualitative study (a) ethnography, (b) phenomenology, (c) narrative, and (d) case study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I chose a multiple case study to explore strategies some automotive managers use to encourage innovative employee performance. This case study design allows researchers to gather data obtained from interviews and observations of participants to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Yin, 2018). Using a qualitative case study design, the researcher developed an understanding of the relationships between research, theory, and practice as a potential discussion and multidirectional experience (Rule & John, 2015). This research aims to gather data on the research problem to understand the phenomenon better based on the participants' experiences and viewpoints.

For this case study, I did not choose these other possible research designs for a qualitative study: (a) ethnography, (b) phenomenological or (c) narrative. According to Van Wyk and Taole (2015), ethnography involves collecting and analyzing cultural groups, communities, and social settings. As the researcher, I planned to study many

perspectives and approaches from a diverse group of senior automotive managers instead of tailoring my study to one culture group. Ethnography was unsuitable for the study, and I did not explore one or more groups' cultures.

The phenomenological design involves describing an individuals lived experiences of an event (Yin, 2018). The phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study because it involves describing participants' lived experiences of a phenomenon. My focus was to enable the data analysis and validation within and across three automotive manufacturing organizations. Phenomenological design was useful when exploring from the lens of individuals 'real-life experiences (Norman, 2019).

The narrative research design was not chosen for this study because it involves the person's historical view of an event extended over numerous years following a timeline (Van Wyk & Taole, 2015). The narrative approach describes data collected from documented stories (Lohunis et al., 2016). Narrative research design was not appropriate for this study because of the requirements to address and capture detailed personal stories of the participant's experiences. The narrative design was useful when creating multiple narratives on each participant's life.

Data saturation in qualitative research was the continuous collection of data until no new ideas, themes, or concepts emerge to answer the research question (Van Rijnsoever, 2016). Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that the richness of the data collected was more important than the quantity because failure to attain data saturation in a qualitative study could affect the quality and validity of the research study. Yin (2018) noted that more than two participants could enhance the richness of a study. To ensure



data saturation, I conducted member checking after completing the interview process to afford all three participants the opportunity to review, append, and confirm the accuracy of data collected until no new information emerges. According to Harvey (2015) justification of data saturation occurs when the researcher can no longer gather any new information during the interview process.

### **Population and Sampling**

The sampling for this multiple case study consisted of three senior automotive managers from three different automotive industries located in Southeast Michigan. Researchers can obtain informed choices about sampling, which enhanced the synthesis process through purposeful techniques (Flick, 2018). Fusch and Ness (2015) noted that purposeful sampling techniques contribute to the identification of interviews rich in data, and researchers will gain detailed knowledge during the interview process. A researcher can identify and select the interviewees using their judgment based on the criteria used in the study when using purposeful sampling (Yin, 2018). For my research, the participants possessed three years or more experience as a senior automotive manager and had knowledge and experience in the automotive industry to provide relevant answers to my research questions. Additionally, I recorded the findings, including interviewing the participants to reach data saturation.

A researcher should select the right sample size instead of gathering an immense amount of data (Mason, 2010). Qualitative sampling allows researchers to choose a small unit of interviewees to represent a population on a critical subject to confirm variation, which describes a consensus of information using a systematic process (Fusch & Ness,

2015). Data saturation occurred when the repetition of data occurs, and interviewees did not present any new information (Mason, 2010). Gentles and Vilches (2017) stated that there are no minimum or maximum participants required to achieve data saturation in a qualitative study. I selected the sample size of three for this study.

The participant selection criteria was done through the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to the chosen automotive industry for my study of which included three senior automotive managers in the Southeast Michigan region who had sustained successful innovation strategies beyond three years. I collected and analyzed data from each of the three participants by doing individualized Microsoft Team interviews until there was no new data in the participants responses. I chose three participants for the sample size because the researcher risks having extensive repetitive data that larger sample sizes may have. There was a point of diminishing returns with larger samples, which lead to more data but does not necessarily lead to more information (Mason, 2010). The population selection process included a purposeful sampling of senior managers employed for at least three years in the automotive industry environment throughout Southeast Michigan. I conducted each interview in a setting that was comfortable and convenient for the participant and agreed upon before the videoconference interview. The area was also distraction-free to ensure the participant was at ease and free to answer the interview questions.

### **Ethical Research**

For this study, I followed the procedures outlined by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), which was Walden University's standard for

completing a study. I did not violate any ethics, ensuring the protection of the rights and confidentiality of the participants throughout the research process. In accordance with the IRB, I intended to contact the participants by emailing an informed consent form. I ensured the nature and purpose of the study, the researcher's responsibilities, confidentiality guidelines and the role of the senior automotive manager are included in the consent form.

The consent form included stipulations for the three senior automotive managers to ensure the senior automotive manager knows there was no compensation for participation. I clarified the researcher's identity, the study's objective, the role of the participants, and how the results will be used (Roller & Lavrakas, 2017). Informed consent means that participants may exercise their rights to agree voluntarily or refuse to participate in the study at any time (Roller & Lavrakas, 2017). The senior automotive manager has the option to receive a copy of the results of the study upon completion as an incentive. The senior automotive manager be required to sign the consent form and agree to have their statements recorded for the interview. A unique identification code corresponded to each participant to protect the identity of the interviewee. During the research process, I used codes to identify the participants. I stored the information in the password-protected computer and backed it up in cloud storage. I maintained to store the data securely for five years to protect the confidentiality of the participants, and then destroy all the data.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I served as the primary data collection instrument for this study. As part of this study, I forwarded the interview protocol to participants of the organization (see Appendix A). I provided the semistructured interview questions prior to view (see Appendix B) and was provided an email directory to reach out to the potential participants to schedule the interviews. Individuals' participation was voluntary and at their discretion.

The automotive industry understanding that their organization's responsibilities include sharing a list of participants with contact information and providing a meeting room to conduct private interviews (see Appendix B). I conducted semistructured Microsoft Teams interviews utilizing open-ended questions (see Appendix B). Primary sources of data came from interviews during qualitative case studies (Neusar, 2014). According to Yin (2018) suggested data collection sources can be useful when collecting data such as interviews, documentation, direct observation, observation of the participants, and archival records. I intended to incorporate the informant-centered view, as I am a novice researcher. Singh (2015) noted interviews are a rich source of data for case studies. Qu and Dumay (2011) suggested that the use of semistructured interviews has the advantage of flexibility. Semistructured interviews allows the researcher to modify the order of the questions, control the pace and obtain valuable responses.

To make certain the data collected for this study is thorough, reliability and validity must be established. Reliability relates to the consistency and repeatability of

the data source (Sarma, 2015). I ensured that a copy of the interview questions were given to participants before the interview session by email. Reliability reduces the chances of bias within the study. To properly ensure the validity of the qualitative study, the following must ensure: (a) the research question is valid for the projected outcome, (b) the design is valid for the methodology, and (c) the chosen methodology relates to the research question (Leung, 2015). I ensured the study's credibility, findings, and interviewees' conclusions (Cole & Harbour, 2015). Member checking includes verifying spoken words with written transcripts of dialogue for accuracy (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

### **Data Collection Technique**

The central research question guiding my doctoral study was: What strategies do some automotive managers use to encourage innovative employee performance? To start the data collection process, I researched Ford, Chrysler (Stellantis), and General Motors websites to find senior automotive managers. I then compiled a list of emails, phone numbers, and names of the senior automotive managers listed on the company's website. I emailed the senior automotive managers an invitation and consent form. The senior automotive managers that were interested and met the criteria, responded with "I consent". No incentive was offered to avoid any misleading, bias information, or making participants feel obligated. After receiving consent by email from the willing participants, I scheduled a date, time, and location to meet with each participant. I sent a confirmation email to each senior automotive manager to confirm the date, time, and interview location of the video-conference call (see Appendix B). I collected the data for this study,

with the participant's approval, using audio recordings, notes, and Microsoft Teams. Data saturation occurred once the researcher found repetition in the interview data, and the subsequent interviewee presented no new information (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Finlay (2013) noted that interviewees could express their viewpoints and explain their experiences in semistructured interviews. The semistructured interview process was designed so that the researcher can ask the participants a list of questions related to the research question. I adhered to the interview guidelines and conducted a semistructured interview with all three participants (see Appendix A). I contacted each participant before the interview to reintroduce myself and confirm the scheduled appointment. To build a trusting relationship with participants and set them at ease, interviewers should contact the participants personally (Haahr et al., 2014). Each participant was sent a consent form via e-mail to inform them of the research purpose, privacy, and procedures of the study. The interview was performed using Microsoft Teams and limited to 45 minutes (see Appendix A). I used a digital recorder in addition to Microsoft Teams recording to make sure I didn't lose any data.

Using semistructured interviews provides some advantages, researchers can delve deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive issues (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Semistructured interviews are used for data collection to gather information from the key informants with attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and personal experiences related to the topic of interest (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). A semistructured interview has structure, but another advantage was the researcher has the flexibility to ask follow-up questions to obtain rich data. Semistructured interviews may have disadvantages.

Because of their lack of standardization, semistructured interviews might lead to information that is not reliable or dependable (Saunders et al., 2015). The interviews can also lead to bias, as the researcher's comments or non-verbal communication might lead to bias in the way the participants respond to the question (Saunders et al., 2015). For the interview sessions with the participants, I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A). The interview protocol serves as a procedural guide that included the interview questions and a script of what I said before and after the interview questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Triangulation is an important concept regarding data analysis for an empirical study (Fusch et al., 2018). Multiple external analysis methods concerning the same events and the process's validity can enhance by triangulation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Triangulation is important in ensuring the reliability and validity of the data and results (Fusch et al., 2018). I triangulated multiple sources of data to enhance this study's validity and reliability. To collect data for triangulation, I conducted interviews asking open-ended questions to participants, observing participants, and reviewing resourceful documents, such as meeting agendas, and current employee evaluation forms.

By conducting videoconference interviews, I planned to gain as much information as possible. Researchers can monitor tone, word choice, and body language changes to gain a deeper understanding with face-to-face interviews (Steber, 2017). One of the significant advantages of interviewing is that the highest response rate allows the use of all types of questions (Yin, 2018). An advantage of using video conference interviewing

was I could use face-to-face or video conference interviewing to get a deeper understanding of the strategies that senior automotive managers use to encourage innovative employee performance in a personal way.

There are disadvantages researchers may face when conducting semistructured interviewing process may lack the required skills to conduct research, the participants providing incomplete responses and with time constraints the participants' availability could cause problems with securing interviewing times (Yin, 2018). One disadvantage is the length of time spent recruiting participants and conducting interviews. Finding participants was time consuming because not only was I searching for participants, but they also had to be the right fit for this study. In-depth interviews are time-consuming, as interviews must be transcribed, organized, analyzed, and reported (Steber, 2017). Another disadvantage was the time constraints of participants. Participant availability could cause problems with securing interviewing times. The last disadvantage was the long time it took to conduct member checking. Member checking required more time from both the participants and me to ensure the data were accurate by the participants' standards.

To support the integrity of the data collection process I used member checking techniques. Member checking optimizes the data transcripts, including handwritten notes, and provide a summary to the participants to solicit feedback on the authentication of the analysis (Cole & Harbour, 2015). I allowed senior automotive managers five days to review their transcripts and respond. None of the participants made any changes to the transcripts. Member checking allowed me to validate participants' responses and validate



the data collection technique. Member checking can enhance the credibility of the data collected. Participants received an email request to have a short follow-up interview and confirm the analysis of their discussion to ensure accuracy and enhance the study's validity. The participants approved their summary transcripts.

### **Data Organization Technique**

The data organization technique is necessary for analyzing, reviewing, and providing interview data accuracy (Greckhamer et al., 2018). I used a separate file for each participant documenting their company's documents, the date, time, and location of the interview, the implied consent form, along the transcript from the summaries for member checking. I used designated codes for each participant. Upon entering the data organization stage, I reviewed the notebook journal, input the data into a qualitative analysis software database, and verify the accuracy of the data (Staller, 2015). All recorded interviews are coded using a different label name to keep the data separate and confidential, Senior Automotive Manager-1, Senior Automotive Manager-2, and Senior Automotive Manager-3 (SAM1, SAM2, and SAM3). I used Version 12 of NVivo Software, the recommended software for researchers using qualitative data management. I uploaded the data into NVivo 12, enabling the production of different themes essential to analyzing thematic techniques.

The data stored according to the Walden University IRB requirements to ensure participant confidentiality. Researchers are responsible for the collection of data and participant confidentiality (George & Blankenship, 2015). I stored the paper data, recording device, and transcripts inside a fireproof file cabinet in my residence. All data

was password-protected, encrypted, and locked away, ensuring maximum protection from hacking, fire, and other natural hazards. Paper documents will be shredded and all recordings will be deleted from the recorder in 5 years after my study completion as recommended by the Walden University IRB's requirement.

### **Data Analysis**

Methodological triangulation is a qualitative data analysis process. Data analysis involves implicit or explicit information collection, classification, interpretation utilizing interviews, and the review of printed documents (Cope, 2014; Watkins, 2017).

Researchers can arrange interview data in order, categories, or patterns to identify recurring themes (Yin, 2018). Creating a sequence is important for the researcher to conduct an in-depth analysis looking for similarities, differences, recurring themes, and an explanation of the collected information (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). During my research, I found that Vroom's expectancy theory is true as it pertains to expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. However, I found out all three skill sets also require an open line of communication and respect between the leaders and employees. I also found that four additional themes emerged from Vroom's theory.

Yin (2018) stated that data is collected, by the researcher, from various sources, archives, and private and public websites. I collected data from three senior automotive managers using the defined interview protocol (see Appendix A). Upon completion of the interviews, I transcribed the interview participant's responses to Microsoft Word. I used the member checking process to ensure that the interpretation of participant's responses were accurate. Yin (2018) suggested that researchers use the participants' review and

member checking of the interpretation of the data to enhance the accuracy of the data collected during the interview.

I used the five-stage data analysis outlined by Yin (2018) (a) gathered data, (b) organized data, (c) coded data, (d) created themes to draw inferences, and (e) concluded the findings. I used thematic analysis for my multiple case study. I used the data analysis software, NVivo 12, to assist to convert raw data into common themes (Yin, 2014).

Novice researchers used thematic analysis when conducting a qualitative research method because it gives the researcher flexibility in data analysis. In a multiple case study design, the detailed and defined data description interpreted by the researcher using thematic analysis as a process for the qualitative study (Clark & Vealé, 2018). Yin (2018) noted that researchers use NVivo 12 to interpret the interview data quickly through open-ended questions, and coding to find the common threads from the individual participants. The researcher's objective is to find patterns that are evident in the data (Saunders et al., 2015).

Data analysis is the interpretation of recorded data to organize and systematically combine data (Fusch et al., 2018). Researchers can improve their research quality, accuracy, validity, and reliability using triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018). Researchers can use methodological triangulation when the data collected is from multiple resources to provide a clear view of the phenomenon (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I used methodological triangulation to triangulate the company information, social media pages, interview data, and interview notes. There are four types of triangulation (a) data, (b) investigator, (c) theory, and (d) methodological (Fusch et al., 2018). I used methodological triangulation

to understand and interpret my research data. Data collection, interpretation, research project design, problem definition and location, and providing the research analysis are part of the data analysis process identified by Yin (2018). I collected the information, interpreted the data, conducted data analysis, and presented my conclusions.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Researchers hoping to ensure the research process achieves the reasonable standard and the data presented in the study can be trusted must ensure reliability and validity (Cooper, 2016). Qualitative research will be used by the researcher to develop semistructured interview questions to assist in reaching commonality, consistency, reinforced validity, and the collection of data (Noble & Smith, 2015). I utilized the interview protocol outlined in Appendix A to maintain study reliability. I collected data from each participant in the same manner as before reducing the mistakes in protecting the information.

#### **Reliability**

Researcher reliability in qualitative research is when researchers follow the original data collected, analyze it to reach a similar conclusion, and ensure consistency of the questions asked during the interview process (Sarma, 2015). Researchers must ensure consistency within their study results, enhancing their findings' dependability (Leung, 2015). I encouraged the trustworthiness of this study by using a standard interview protocol (see Appendix A) and maintaining a detailed recording of the participants' interviews. I conducted member checking throughout the data collection process to increase the dependability throughout my study. When done correctly, member checking

could enhance understanding of the phenomenon while maintaining data integrity (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). After each interview, I transcribed the audio recording to ensure I captured the information verbatim. I sent out member checking invitation emails to each participant to conduct member checking interviews. I provided each participant with my interpretations of their responses to ensure I did not include any personal bias. All participants agreed that my interpretations were correct and no changes needed to be made.

### ***Dependability***

I ensured that the interviewing and the transcripts of the participant's responses is used correctly. The qualitative research ensures that interviewing and the transcripts of the participant's responses are used correctly. Dependability for qualitative research provides comfort that other researchers' studies would find the same conclusion (Morse, 2010). Dependability creates an audit trail of the activities and includes: (a) the selection of participants, (b) data collection, (c) analysis of the data, and (d) presentation of the findings (Golafshani, 2015). Interviewees in the data collection process served as experts and sources of validation during the interview process. Member checking allowed for the validity of the research findings obtained from the participants' reviews and agreement with the interpretations of the interview responses (Carton & Lucas, 2018). I performed member checking by having the participants review the response analysis, which will strengthening the validity and reliability of the data, supporting the dependability of the study findings.

**Validity**

Determining the data validity requires congruence of the findings to establish a level of trustworthiness in the study. Validity consists of credibility, confirmability, and transferability (Leung, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The validity of qualitative research was related to the study data. Leung (2015) noted researchers conducting studies might enhance validity by utilizing the appropriate processes, tools, and data throughout their research. As the researcher asked detailed questions and conducted member checking to validate.

***Credibility***

With the focus of credibility, the researcher ensured that the collected data results of the qualitative research are accurately interpreted. The researcher may establish creditability through establishing a level of trustworthiness, accuracy, and interpretation of the data collected from the participants (Morse, 2010). I conducted member checking to increase the accuracy of any data recorded. Using methodological triangulation to verify the consistency of data sources based on multiple experiences contributed to expanding the study's credibility. Noble and Smith (2015) reported the sampling process should support the data collection associated with the overarching research question and required access to participants who could help classify information-rich cases.

***Confirmability***

Confirmability included the degree to which the researcher used the individuals' review and validated the results of the research. According to Yin (2018), confirmability implies the research findings, and the interpretations connect to the data for a more

accurate understanding by other researchers. Noble and Smith (2015) reported if the researchers repeated the study with the same data, the results would be similar; the original researcher should ensure confirmability by capturing detailed notes throughout the study analysis phase. As the researcher, I conducted member checking, methodological triangulation, and documented the procedures through the study. The researcher showing confirmability during their research acting as the data collection instrument in a qualitative study may prove the autonomy to interpret the data, determine the consistency, and increase the study objectivity (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

### ***Transferability***

Transferability is the degree to which the results of qualitative research apply to the other contexts. Transferability is a researcher's ability to use the results obtained to assist other researchers with similar interests (Bengeston, 2016). In qualitative research, transferability requires the researcher to provide details about the case organization, sample method, and participants. Qualitative researchers who apply rigor to the data collection and analysis process while utilizing interview protocols and using the semi-structured interview process may support transferability (Fusch et al., 2018).

Transferability is up to the readers of a qualitative study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I emphasized the study's population, geographic location, and demographics to create a detailed description of the literature and promote potential duplication and transferability.

### ***Data Saturation***

Data saturation occurs when obtained information does not yield any new or relevant data (Mason, 2010). Failure to reach data saturation impacts the quality of the

research conducted and interferes with the validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Marshall and Rossman (2016) noted that researchers could track saturation by recording principal codes using a saturation grid listing with research questions against interviews and covering all saturation bases. Yin (2018) suggested that a researcher should reach data saturation in their study to ensure the information provided was reliable and valid. I asked questions until no new data was obtained.

### **Transition and Summary**

Section 1 of this qualitative multiple case study included the (a) background of the problem, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose statement, (d) nature of the study, (e) research question, (f) conceptual framework, (g) definitions, (h) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, (i) significance of study, and (j) literature review. In the literature review, I identified how these theories might help automotive managers understand their role in leading and providing solutions to encourage innovative employee performance in their organizations. The literature review covered the following topics: (a) Vroom's expectancy theory, (b) alternative theories, (c) history of innovation in the automotive industry, (d) automotive managers, (e) barriers to the automotive industry, (f) corporate sustainability, and (g) leadership development.

Section 2 of the research method of the case study design was based on the research questions, (a) role of the researcher, (b) participants, and (c) data collection. In section 2, I included a description of relationships associated with the problem statement and participants related to the framework identified for the study. Section 3 contained details surrounding (a) the ethical basis for research, (b) the protection of participants'



rights, and (c) the informed consent guidelines. Section 3 will contain an introduction, including the purpose statement and the research question. Next, I presented the presentation of the findings. Section 3 also included the (a) application to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations for action, (d) recommendations for further research, (e) researcher reflections, and (f) a conclusion.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies automotive managers use that encourage innovative employee performance. The study's participants included three senior automotive managers in Southeastern Michigan, who possessed three years or more experience in the automotive industry. The participants selected for this study were experts in their field and acquired knowledge from their extensive background in the automotive industry. The senior automotive managers had comparable and varied responses when asked about the strategies to encourage innovative employee work performance in the automotive industry.

I used the thematic analysis and NVivo 12 analysis software to code and organize the interview transcripts, video conference, and journal notebook notes to classify all relevant data into topical themes. The resulting themes were (a) expectations, (b) communication strategies, (c) integrity, and (d) benchmarking. The proceeding paragraphs constitute information pertaining to the study's findings and identified themes, application to professional practice, social change implications, recommendations for action and further research, and my reflections and conclusion.

#### **Presentation of the Findings**

In this study, I addressed the overarching research question: What strategies do automotive managers use to encourage innovative employee performance? Each of

the participants had least 3 years or more of experience as a senior automotive manager in the automotive industry in Southeastern Michigan. I achieved data saturation after three interviews were completed and the answers from interviews became repetitive.

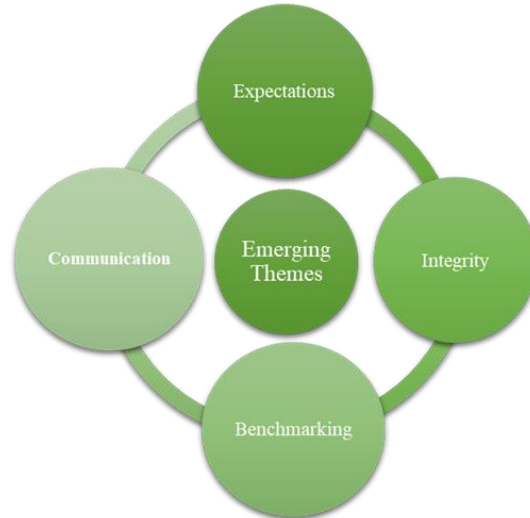
The data collection for this multiple case study included three semistructured interviews with participants who worked in the automotive industry. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants opted for videoconferencing meetings through a website meeting tool called Microsoft Teams. Participants for this study were (a) senior automotive managers in the automotive industry from the Southeastern Michigan region, (b) were above the age of 18 years old, and (c) had three years or more of experience and knowledge. In the interviews, each participant answered seven open-ended questions about strategies and innovative employee performance (see Appendix B).

After the interviews were conducted and digitally recorded, I used Yin's prescribed thematic analysis code and analyze the data. To maintain confidentiality and privacy, I utilized codes SAM1, SAM2, and SAM3 instead of using the participant's names in the study. The data captured under each participant label identified common themes among interviews.

Following my thematic analysis, I transcribed the audio recordings into NVivo 12 software to keep a notebook journal of each interview conducted. I used methodological triangulation to strengthen reliable results and to verify the consistency of data sources based on multiple experiences contributed to the automotive industry. I also used member checking to validate the participant interviews.

The conceptual framework that guided this multiple case study was Vroom's expectancy theory (1964). Vroom's expectancy theory centered on three constructs (a) valence, (b) expectancy, and (c) instrumentality. Vroom (1964) stated employee beliefs are created by a motivational presence encouraging employees to act in a manner that produces enjoyment over pain. The expectancy theory was conceptualized in 1964 by Vroom, and the theory indicated that employee performance supported (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) performance, (d) experience, and (e) abilities. The purpose of Vroom's theory is to understand senior automotive managers strategies to encourage innovative employee performance.

I designed the interview questions for this study to receive responses that would give insight into different success strategies used to encourage innovative employee performance. The themes that emerged from the data analysis were organized into broader themes to provide strategies used in the automotive industry as shown on Figure 1. In the following subsections, I discuss each of the emergent themes and explore their alignment with Vroom's expectancy theory. I also compare the findings to those of existing literature to determine which findings disconfirm, confirm, or extend knowledge on the topic.

**Figure 1.***Core aspects from the Interviews***Theme 1: Expectations**

The first theme I identified was expectations. The participants responded to the interview question to emphasize the need for knowledge and skills when implementing and creating businesses processes throughout the organization. Senior automotive managers expect to see results from their successful strategies, they get feedback from employees by listening, and allow employees to share their ideas (Szász et al., 2021). The three participants confirmed that their expectations contributed to encourage innovate employee performance.

The strategies of training and career development support the instrumentality model of Vroom's theory. In this case, instrumentality can describe a manager's belief that good performance will lead to an intangible reward (Nimri et al., 2015). Based on a review of existing peer-reviewed literature, employee expectancy as it relates to their

beliefs regarding rewards can be used effectively by the automotive manufacturing senior leaders as an effective strategy to encourage innovate employee work performance.

### ***Theme 1 findings***

The three participants responses were different, in reference to the key performance indicators (KPI). SAM 1 responded about the KPIs from question 1, “Well, I think in order to encourage your employees, you have to set a clear objective, and expect the measurable outcomes”. SAM 2 stated, “The first one would be KPI driven year over year improvements, and that's simply for an incremental improvement target to set targets, basically for the employees”. SAM 3 stated, “One has a voice to express their challenges, but a mechanism for employees to share ideas between themselves, working in the automotive industry and particularly after the pandemic it can be very stressful, mainly in the supply chain”. The final results from the three participants showed that there needs to be continuous improvement on job performance as well as problem-solving strategies within the automotive industry to increase the productivity for the business. The incentive to improve the employee's performance should be a performance-based merit.

All three participants recommended that when creating business processes and benchmarks, leaders should refrain from the employee expectancy, but instead focus on creating solutions that impact real change. The participants believed that benchmarking of processes was an outlier of strong organizational success. A department or organizational leader with clear solutions provides a venue for success when management leaders focus on world-class solutions designed to create success (Bigler & Williams,

2013). Each participant advised that benchmarking is an important tool that leaders use to stay up to date to identify any potential areas of improvement, as well as set clearer business goals.

### **Theme 2: Communication Strategies**

The second theme I identified was communication strategies. Effective communication plays a significant role to engage in motivating employees (Evans et al., 2016). Communication is important for organizational success, and without it, motivation, leadership, and productivity cannot survive (Holmes & Scull, 2019). The participants emphasized the need for effective communication strategies. Effective communication strategies increase success when strategies include regular scheduled meetings, teamwork, and collaboration.

Effective communication strategies decrease when strategies fail from mistrust and suspicion. To achieve an effective communication strategy, each senior automotive manager must understand the organization's goals, and how their efforts tie into the company's mission for success (Holmes & Scull, 2019). By using effective communication strategies, each manager can be clear about expectations and ultimately get the results they need to deliver projects on time. The lack of communication from managers may create failure of the organization's goal.

### ***Theme 2 findings***

Participants also talked about the impact of the leader's verbal statements and their actions in relation to creating effective communication strategies for employees. All three participants, discussed in their responses about the importance of scheduled regular

meetings. SAM 1 stated, “As managers, we encourage our employees to bring their exciting ideas to the table to share their ideas of interest, which is the actual value of experienced information”. SAM 2 stated, “A manager needs to communicate, and having town hall meetings is an excellent source of communication with employees and having a quarterly report on their job performances.” SAM 3 stated, “We have weekly team meetings to ensure that we are not constantly pulling the plug out there. As managers know, the issues of concern that the employees are seeing may get in the way of preventing growth.”

When relating the new research findings from the data collection to the conceptual framework, communication failures impact performance because the senior automotive managers may not deliver on a promise made to an employee. The expectancy of results by the manager can change the employee work performance. The participants provided details on the importance of providing employees an opportunity to voice their concerns.

### **Theme 3: Integrity**

The third theme I identified was integrity. The three participants responded to the interview question; the integrity of a leader was a critical component for strategy execution. SAM 1 believed the importance of the leader’s style through inspiration, creditability, and trustworthiness, whereas SAMs 2 and 3 believed leaders had an influential role in enhancing employee engagement and considered the communication of the leader as its related to the workplace integrity. The participants considered integrity a clear best practice, and a key organizational goal. Employees who display enthusiasm in



completing their duties display a strong bond between employee and leader. Leaders aid in this area, by being transparent in their decision making. When employees lose trust in leaders, the bond created that supports organizational goals are broken.

### ***Theme 3 findings***

Leaders have been proven to influence and motivate employees by inspiration, integrity, and the promotion of teamwork. The three participants responses were different, but similar in reference to learning from failure. SAM 1 stated, "During performance reviews, which we do annually twice a year. We try to identify what are employees' strengths, as well as some organizational opportunities for improvement. As a manager, we never criticize employees' weaknesses". The three participants had learned from failure. SAM 2 stated, "Allowing them to take ownership of their work and creating a safe space where failure is framed as a learning opportunity that comes abroad". SAM 3 stated, "As a manager, we find out what does not work and come together to find a better solution that does work". When applying the theme of integrity to Vroom's expectancy theory, senior automotive managers may have an expectancy of trust by managers as it relates to their job duties and benefits. Any potential flaws with integrity can violate trust and hinder the completion of organizational goals.

### **Theme 4: Benchmarking**

The fourth theme I identified was benchmarking. Participants emphasized the need for knowledge and skills when implementing and creating business processes throughout the organization. Participants saw benchmarking as a key to successful strategy execution and employee engagement. Benchmarking is a technique that allows

for a continuous and systematic process which confronts effectiveness measured by (a) productivity, (b) quality, and (c) best practices that leads to superior performance (Kuzmicz, 2015). By working together, employees become engaged in the company's success and willing to share ideas.

#### ***Theme 4 findings***

According to Vroom (1964), motivated employees pursue courses of action that support outcomes they believe will occur. SAMs 1, 2, and 3 suggested that benchmarks allowed departments and organizations to test processes already in place. SAMs 1, 2, and 3 responded that transformational leadership would be their style of leadership. When asked the interview question, SAM 1 stated, "As a manager believes the four things that encourage diversity of thought and experiences are trust in the system, trust in the individual, realizing we part of the team, and not individual performance accolades". SAM 2 stated, "An idealist leads the company, and they have this grand idea of vision for what they want the company to go and what they believe in making for the company." SAM 3 stated, "On a more micro level, they're seeing things that we're not seeing at the macro level and getting that feedback and had input and making sure that we're creating an environment where everybody feels like they have a voice". By documenting policies and procedures, senior automotive managers could reevaluate strategies, identify weaknesses, and assess the effectiveness of their procedures.

By working together, employees become engaged in the company's success and are willing to share ideas and participate in success. As I continued to ask subsequent questions for clarity, additional information regarding benchmarks was provided by the

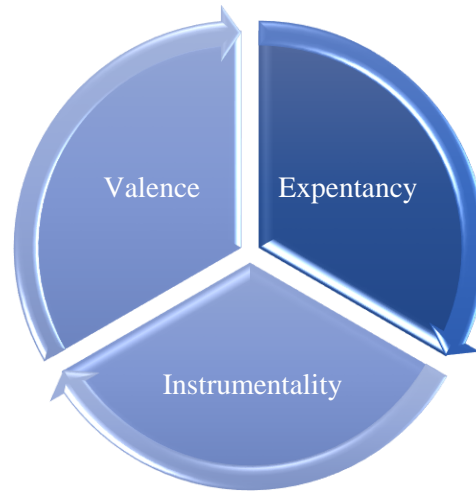
participants. Participants recommended benchmarks focused on empowering employees through (a) motivation, (b) career development, and (c) a challenging work assignment.

### **Conclusion of Findings**

The findings of this study were consistent with strategies to encourage innovative employee performance in the automotive industry. Grouping the themes allowed me to gain a better understanding on whether the senior automotive managers created a strategic solution to help execute employee work performance by applying Vroom's expectancy theory to the study findings as shown in Figure 2. Vroom's expectancy theory focused on the premise employees engaged in workplace actions based on outcomes beneficial to their goals. The conceptual framework for this study was Vroom's expectancy theory. The expectancy theory was conceptualized in 1964 by Vroom, and the theory indicated that employee performance supported (a) personality, (b) skill, (c) performance, (d) knowledge, and (e) abilities. Vroom's theory provided an opportunity to explore how automotive manufacturing senior leaders use best practice solutions for enhancing frontline manager's work performance.

**Figure 2.**

*Core aspects from Vroom's expectancy theory*



In presenting the research findings, I discussed the participant's responses to the following themes (a) expectations, (b) communication strategies, (c) integrity, and (d) benchmarking. I explained how the data addressed the overarching research question and aligned the study findings with existing research. Through semistructured video conference interviews, I gained an in-depth understanding of the senior automotive managers understanding of strategies to encourage innovative employee performance in the automotive industry for successful strategy execution. By using semistructured interviews, data saturation occurred when no new themes or information emerged from the data collection.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The results of this study provided strategies for automotive industry senior leaders to manage the strategies to encourage innovative employee work performance in the automotive industry. Based on the study findings, senior automotive managers use

strategies in innovative employee work performance to troubleshoot problem areas in the automotive industry. The senior automotive managers, who are often considered credible by their direct reports, can impact the engagement of employees (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). From the research findings, the participants believed innovation was important to support employee work performance. Tinkham (2013) offered a different approach, recommending leaders become creative change agents, applying different workplace strategies to achieve a variety of objectives. Participants felt a bond existed between managers and employees that could be used to support strategies to innovate the work performance.

Based on the findings from this research, senior automotive managers organizations can attract employees who want engagement, and this engagement can lead to an increase in higher profitability. When employees are not motivated to complete job duties, there is no expectancy of rewards and their behavior associated with this lack of expectancy can hinder their support and workplace performance (Anderson et al., 2017). It is imperative that business leaders understand what engages or disengages employees and how the results of engagement or disengagement impact organizational sustainability.

To gain and improve overall business results, automotive business leaders should strive to motivate employees to perform at higher levels. Employees who are motivated to improve their job performance, often become loyal to the organization. According to Plaskoff (2017), managers who understand the views of leadership strategies can achieve a higher level of employee engagement, improvements in productivity, and corporate

profits. Automotive business leaders should gain and improve overall business results by motivating employees.

As noted by participants, senior automotive managers who understand why employees are disengaged can develop solutions that enhance workplace motivation and employee expectancy. According to Vroom (1964), (a) valence, (b) instrumentality, and (c) expectancy independently influence motivation, but when combined create powerful workplace results (Estes & Polnick, 2012; Vroom, 1964). Employees make decisions that are based on expected results (Hayyat, 2012). Senior automotive managers who understand why employees are disengaged can create a positive, safe, and productive work environment.

Senior automotive managers should use an open-door policy to encourage open communication as well as feedbacks that employees may have. Sopiah et al. (2020) recommended organizational leaders (a) value respect, (b) create fairness, and (c) development emotional connectivity in the workplace. Workplace motivation and employee performance are fostered when leaders provide employees with the opportunity to communicate issues they experience. The use of an open-door communication strategy supports an atmosphere for career development and growth.

Four themes emerged from this research, (a) expectations, (b) communication strategies, (c) integrity, and (d) benchmarking. If senior automotive managers incorporate specific strategies into their business models associated with the themes identified in this study, the managers may expand growth potential for the organization. The participants confirmed that they are supportive of workplace solutions that increase employee

engagement and expectancy. Participants believed their efforts have worked in the past but felt efforts should be monitored to maintain growth and sustainability. Reaching the top within your marketplace is one goal and staying on top within your marketplace another goal.

Employee performance within the workplace settings should be fostered by senior automotive managers. Nasomboom (2014) suggested determinants of organizational effectiveness are job involvement and leadership trust. Senior automotive managers should foster workplace settings that help create employee motivation and employee expectancy toward achieving and reaching those goals (Havold et al., 2021). By applying effective workplace strategies, senior automotive managers can improve employee performance and greater yields of organizational success.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The results from this study might affect social change by providing an understanding of the relationship between (a) social commitment, (b) employee involvement, (c) local partnerships, and (d) new attitudes toward community responsibilities as shown on Figure 3. For automotive manufacturing senior leaders, understanding employee actions as it relates to job performance and work engagement can be useful in connecting their efforts to organizational goals. Automotive manufacturing businesses are focused to create more sustainable practices, and the benefits are not limited to organizational profits. Employees employed by firms with strong social values tend to absorb these core values and gain more social awareness of

their community (Dai et al., 2016). Effective innovative employee work performance should matter to both management and the employee with any organization.

**Figure 3.**

*Core aspects from the Social Change*



**Recommendations for Action**

Effective strategies to innovate employee work performance should matter to both management and the employee associated with any organization. Zheng and Muir (2015) suggested organizations of all sizes face anxiety when determining how to manage workplace talent effectively. I would make four recommendations following strategies which are based on the results of this study. The four recommendations include (a) review communication strategies, (b) review their open-door policies as it relates to employees, (c) review to encourage innovation and determine current business process, and (d) review the relationship between management and employees as it relates to integrity and trust as showing on Figure 4. Senior automotive managers should encourage



innovative strategies that foster working relationships with (a) employee unions, (b) training, and (c) diversity. The failure of any relationship can impede the attainment of organizational goals.

**Figure 4.**

*Core aspects from Recommendations*



**Recommendation 1: Review communication strategies**

Based on the results, I have listed the following recommendations for actions. My first recommendation is that senior automotive managers review communication strategies. This allows senior managers to review how (a) organizational goals, (b) workplace strategies, and (c) business processes are shared with employees. Senior automotive managers may find (a) current meeting schedules, (b) written memorandums, and (c) informal briefings, address these issues or there is room for improvement.

**Recommendation 2: Review their strategies to encourage innovation for managing employee issues**

My second recommendation is for senior automotive managers to review their open-door policies as it relates to employees. Senior automotive managers can review their strategies to encourage innovation for managing employee issues by conducting an internal assessment, which helps employees' understand (a) corporate culture, (b) senior leader flexibility, (c) communication with customers and suppliers, (d) hiring and maintaining a skilled workforce, and (e) training and mentorship. The senior automotive managers should ask questions that help the managers understand how comfortable employees feel about sharing workplace issues. Utilizing effective communication strategies allow managers an opportunity to assess employee engagement strategies and match the skill sets of the employee with the firm's strategic goals.

**Recommendation 3: Review the relationship between management and employees**

My third recommendation is to review the relationship between managers and employees as it relates to integrity and trust. Information provided by the participants suggested the impact of integrity is important when building trust between senior automotive managers and their employees. Leaders should review practices to identify areas for improvement or create innovation encouragement if none exists. Participants considered leadership an imperative to maintaining employee engagement. Senior automotive managers should understand the relationship between employee engagement, profitability, and the level of investment provided by the organization. Well-developed strategies to encourage the employees can close the gap between expectancy, workplace motivation, and job performance.

**Recommendation 4: Review current strategies to encourage innovation and determine business processes**

The fourth and last recommendation is for senior automotive managers to review the results from this study, to identify current strategies to encourage workplace innovation and determine if current business processes enhance employee engagement and job performance. Senior automotive managers can conduct (a) employee surveys, (b) informal meetings, (c) brown bag lunch sessions, and (d) monitor workplace strategies that are designed to help them measure progress and maintain organizational effectiveness.

The findings from this study are important to automotive business leaders and may be transferrable to business leaders and management professionals in other sectors. The results can be shared at leadership conferences, through business publications, and publication in peer-reviewed journals. I will also share my findings through seminars and training on best practice solutions, leadership, and workplace training. These forums provide opportunities to present insights regarding this study. I will send a copy of the study findings and recommendations to all participants. I may also provide consulting services to organizations regarding leadership, training, and employee engagement strategies.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies automotive managers use that encourage innovative employee performance. All the researchers have a responsibility to describe the limitations of the data and the

implications when reporting the results (Anderson et al., 2017). One of the first limitations identified will be reviewing the data based on the participants' lived experiences. I recommended future research take place using a different sample within the automotive manufacturing population. I also recommended a quantitative or mixed-method study to complement the findings of this qualitative study and evaluate the effectiveness of strategy to encourage innovation.

All participants in this study emphasized the importance of communication and benchmarking of processes as important when crafting a clear business strategy. I recommend conducting additional research regarding encouragement of innovative employee performance within a business environment to fill an existing gap. In this study, I explored the creation of strategies automotive manufacturing senior leaders use to encourage innovative employee performance in Michigan.

I recommend future research be conducted within other business markets that can complement or contradict the information, possibly identifying an industry-related problem. A review of workplace policies could have enhanced the participant's responses and identified strategies to encourage innovative employee work performance already used by the organization. My final recommendation is for researchers to conduct this study in other geographical locations, to ascertain if geographical locations can define a problem with strategy execution.

### **Reflections**

As I reflect on my doctoral journey, the Doctor of Business Administration Program at Walden University has been rewarding and challenging. From the beginning

of being accepted into the program, I was excited about learning and the challenges awaiting me. My original goal in conducting this qualitative case study was to build my competence as a researcher while exploring a business practice that could enhance leadership and employee engagement related to workplace performance and organizational profitability. This journey has transformed my mindset because I now view many issues through a broader lens.

Through the academic research, I found that Vroom's expectancy theory was prevalent in its introduction and often criticized by the academic community. During the research, I believed there was still a need for business leaders to fully understand employee innovation as organizational leaders attempt to connect employee work performance to organizational goals. The study involved three participants working in Southeastern Michigan. Each participant shared their implemented strategies encouraging innovative employee performance, to help explore success strategies automotive managers use. The data collection was processed through insight that enhanced the knowledge of the automotive manufacturing senior leaders on how they viewed their roles when using strategies to encourage innovative employee performance.

Throughout the process, I refrained from including my personal bias when conducting research. I conducted the interviews and allowed the participants to share information based on their implemented strategies. During the interviews, I observed the physical environment, body language, and other nonverbal cues; this would be unrelated to the study.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies used to encourage innovative employee performance in the automotive industry for successful strategy execution. I interviewed three senior automotive managers about their strategies used to encourage innovative employee work performance used to enhance business sustainability. To ensure the validity and reliability of the responses, I used member checking, triangulation of the data, and data saturation. Following data analysis, these themes emerged after a rigorous data collection and transcription review process: (a) expectations, (b) communication strategies, (c) integrity, and (d) benchmarking. The findings revealed that (a) expectations of employees' job performance, (b) communication of a shared vision, and (c) maintain integrity are all critical components for organizational success, and employee innovation.

The conceptual framework presented in this study, known as Vroom's expectancy theory, represents one tool the senior automotive managers can use to identify strategies to communicate, encourage employees to use innovation in their work performance, and use competitive advantages in the industry. Videoconference-based semistructured, interviews and member checking were used to collect data from three senior automotive managers in Southeastern Michigan region. Senior automotive managers who manage employees' work performance could benefit by enhancing their communication efforts, minimizing mistrust and suspicion, and implementing innovative training plans. As the employees' work and begin to feel appreciated and respected, this may provide an opportunity to increase productivity.

The automotive industry has survived many challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic globalization. Maintaining a competitive advantage under the umbrella of (a) political globalization, (b) intellectual property protection, and (c) social responsibility can hinder a firm's success. At the same time, organizational leaders must also manage one of their most important assets, their human capital talent. Business leaders should implement workplace solutions that (a) anticipate change, (b) communicate effectively, (c) maintain integrity within the business community and everyone associated with the organization succeed, and (d) define benchmarks (Mubarak & Noor, 2018). What was most impressive to me, was the sincere devotion from the three participants I interviewed, and their willingness to share important information. I gained a greater understanding of different leadership styles, workplace solutions as well as how everyone that is associated with an organization plays a key role in the automotive industry success. The findings from this study have encouraged me to look at how strategies that encourage innovation can improve other business sectors by motivating and improving employee engagement and organizational efficiencies.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview: Finding strategies automotive managers use to encourage innovative employee performance?

1. I will begin the interview by greeting and thanking the participants for agreeing to participate in the interview. Next, I will make sure I introduce myself and restate my research topic to the participants.
2. I will explain the voluntary nature to participate and the flexibility to withdraw at any time.
3. I will ensure participants read and ask related questions before I begin the interview.
4. I will ensure that the participants get a copy of the consent form to keep.
5. I will inform participants of the interview procedures, which will involve using an audio recording of the interview. Ask permission to start recording.
6. The interview will be restricted to 45 minutes for responses to seven interview questions, to any follow-up questions.
7. I will inform participants that I will make the summarized interviews available to them in 7 days' time frame via email to ensure appropriate interpretations of their responses.
8. At the end of the interview, I will thank the participants for their time and participation.
9. I will also confirm the participant's contact information, and I will ensure that it is okay for me to contact each participant if I have any further questions.

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

To complement the research question, I will use open-ended semi-structured interviews.

The interview questions are as follows:

1. What strategies did you use to encourage innovative employee performance?
2. What key challenges or barriers did you face when implementing your strategies to achieve innovation in the workplace?
3. How did you overcome key barriers that impede or encourage innovative employee performance?
4. As an automotive manager, how do you communicate innovative concerns to the employee performance?
5. As an automotive manager, what innovative employee performance strategies have you created in the past you considered successful?
6. As an automotive manager, what other strategies can you share that you use to motivate employee performance?
7. What leadership style or theory your organization management team or leadership use?