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Business Strategies for Small Business Survival in Competitive Environments

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Wangtzu Moulawtous

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Business Strategies for Small Business Survival in Competitive Environments

by

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MBA, Metropolitan State University, 2014

BS, National University of Laos, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2022

Abstract

The majority of small business auto dealerships in the United States close due to business failure within the first 3 years of operation. Small business auto dealership owners who lack business strategies risk financial loss resulting in business failure. Grounded in the resource-based view theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies small business auto dealership owners used to sustain organizations beyond 5 years. There were six participants, including owners and managers from three small business auto dealerships in Sacramento, California, who used strategies to sustain business operations beyond five years. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, and a review of company websites and company documents. Through thematic analysis, five themes emerged: customer satisfaction, internet marketing, business knowledge, human capital, and effective supervision. Key recommendations include developing programs to reward exceptional customer service employees, and forming alliances with other automotive industry stakeholders to cultivate collaborative business relationships and create additional marketing opportunities. Implications for positive social change include the potential to expand employment opportunities in the community resulting in increased tax revenues and possible increased contributions to local nonprofit organizations.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my wonderful wife, Julie Moua, for her inspiration and trust in my motivation and support throughout the doctoral journey. Without her being such a wonderful wife and good mother to my kids, I could have had difficulty completing my doctoral journey. I also dedicate this study to my children, Yenghoua, Yangchengxeng, Yenglengchi, Athena, Alena, and Alisa, for their support and contribution toward accomplishing this study. I would like to dedicate this time to thank my great parents, Mouaxaytoua and Kaying, who just passed away in the last 2 years, for their support as great parents in inspiring my doctoral journey. I want to thank all my siblings, nieces, nephews, and friends for their encouragement and support. I completed my doctoral achievement because their inspiration encouraged me to work hard days and nights to conduct and achieve this study. I hope that my achievement will be a source of inspiration to future generations of my family, cousins, and friends to encourage them to become higher educators.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Small business leaders operate in competitive environments that increasingly require a competitive advantage to respond to changes in the supply chain and increased customer demands (Hopkin & Blyth, 2019). Sustaining a competitive advantage is challenging for many small and medium-sized business leaders in a competitive environment (Sikandar et al., 2021). Small businesses such as auto dealerships are valuable and significant in their contribution to the U.S. economic development, expansion, and improvement regarding processes of innovation, job creation, income generation, and business dynamics (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019). Competitive advantage is one concern for small business owners because many small and medium-sized businesses have already grown (Bvuma & Marnewick, 2020). As a result, the objective of this study was to explore business strategies that small business owners use to sustain their organizations in a competitive environment.

Background of the Problem

Small businesses account for half of all U.S. private sector employment, generate more than one half of the gross domestic product (GDP), and create approximately two thirds of all net new jobs (Cuadros et al., 2021). Small business sectors are significant in U.S. market economies that involve job creation, income generation, and business dynamics (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019). In the last two decades, small business owners have created approximately 7 million new jobs in business industries (Chuang & Zhao, 2019). Small businesses total approximately 30 million firms in the United States, representing nearly 99.9% of all U.S. employer firms, employ 48% of private sector employees and

provide 41.2% of the total U.S. private payroll (Turner & Endres, 2017). Small businesses create new jobs for the community at large (Cuadros et al., 2021).

Decreasing small business failure rates can involve improving management strategies (Agostini et al., 2019). Small business firms fail at a high rate of 50% within the first 5 years (Nizam, 2017). High business failure rates may lead to bankruptcy and cause increasing unemployment rates in communities at large (Nizam, 2017). Small business firms, such as auto dealerships, consider having highly competitive advantages over other similar comparators (Rua et al., 2018). Small business owners' lack of education, training, capabilities, experience, and management strategies can contribute to incompetence and, eventually, small business failures (Agostini et al., 2019). To succeed, small business owners should improve their business management strategies to defeat the competition and gain new customers (Postavaru et al., 2019). Improving management skills, business performance, customer service strategies, and development plans are important for organizational leaders to sustain a business (Postavaru et al., 2019).

Problem Statement

The Small Business Administration (SBA) reported that 66.67% of U.S. small business auto dealerships failed and closed during the first 2 to 3 years (Bhandari et al., 2019). In 2012, the statistics reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce (2012), closing small business auto dealerships contributed to a loss of 500,000 to 1 million jobs and caused a decrease of \$1 to \$5 million in profit for state taxes (Hudson et al., 2019; Minchin, 2020). The general business problem was that some small business owners started auto dealerships with inadequate business strategies. The specific business

problem was that some small business auto dealership owners lacked business strategies to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain organizations beyond 5 years. The targeted population was three small business auto dealership owners in Sacramento, California who used strategies to sustain business operations beyond 5 years. The study results may contribute to social change by reducing business failures and improving organizational practices in the small business automobile industry. Leaders may use the findings to create additional jobs for local communities using and implementing a data-driven strategic plan for new auto dealership startups.

Nature of the Study

Three types of research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. My choice for the research study was the qualitative method. Researchers use the qualitative research method to explore complex sets of business issues and present varied perspectives or meanings of participants (Gehrke, 2019). The qualitative method is useful for researchers to identify participants' meanings and focus on a single concept or phenomenon (Farquhar et al., 2020). Researchers use the qualitative method to provide descriptive information, assist in conceptualization, and develop a better understanding of phenomena. Using the qualitative method can provide a way to obtain an in-depth understanding of the underlying reasons, attitudes, and motivations behind various human behaviors.

In contrast, quantitative research involves numbers, logic, and objective measurements. Researchers use the quantitative research method to accumulate facts using numerical data and evaluate relationships and differences among variables (Cotta de Mello et al., 2020). Mixed methods research includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. In the quantitative analysis stage, mixed method researchers also collect and analyze data, integrate findings, and draw inferences (Behnke et al., 2020; Lanka et al., 2021). Because this study was designed to explore what strategies small business owners used to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years, rather than to examine or establish a relationship, neither the quantitative nor mixed method was suitable for this research study.

The primary qualitative designs are phenomenological, ethnographic, narrative, and case study. Phenomenology is a design that researchers employ to gain an understanding of the subjective meaning of people's lived experiences (Deniers, 2019). Phenomenological research was not appropriate because the study was not intended to explore the meanings of lived experiences of small business owners. Ethnography is a design that researchers use to study cultural practices (Woermann, 2018). Ethnographic research was not appropriate because I explored business strategies and was not attempting to understand the shared patterns of beliefs within a group's culture. Researchers use a narrative research design to focus on multiple participants and their personal stories or experiences of phenomena (Madden et al., 2018). A narrative research design did not fit this study because an individual's life experiences were not important to determine successful auto dealership business strategies. A narrative research design was

not appropriate because I explored business strategies and did not attempt to explore personal stories. Researchers use a case study design to explore a bounded system through in-depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information and describing key themes related to phenomena (Pathiranage et al., 2020). Using a case study can provide an opportunity for researchers to gain a deep, holistic view of a research problem (Lv et al., 2019); therefore, a case study design using semistructured, open-ended questions were appropriated to explore participants' perceptions and experiences in the small business auto dealerships.

Research Question

The central research question of this qualitative study was the following: What business strategies do small business auto dealership owners use to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years?

Interview Questions

1. What are the strategies you used for business sustainability in the competitive auto dealership market?
2. What methods did you use to assess the effectiveness of your strategies?
3. How, if at all, did you use the assessment data to change or enhance strategies for sustainability?
4. What were the adjustments, if any, made to achieve planned benchmarks?
5. What additional information would you like to provide to improve business skills to manage a small business through competitive advantage?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the resource-based view (RBV) theory. Barney (1991) developed the RBV theory to describe the internal sources of a firm's strategic resources and sustained competitive advantages. The RBV is an influential theory in the field of management strategies regarding the competitive advantage and organizational sustainability (Shibin et al., 2020). Within the RBV theory, there are four organizational sources of competitive advantage that leaders may use to sustain a business: resources that are (a) valuable, (b) rare, (c) inimitable, and (d) nonsubstitutable (Uwizeyemungu et al., 2018). The tenets of the RBV theory are firm resources, competitive advantages, and sustained competitive advantages in formulating innovation strategies. The RBV theory was suitable for this study because it aligned with exploring competitive strategies for sustainability in small businesses such as auto dealerships. Small business leaders might use the RBV theory to optimize the utilization of resources, develop business strategies, and create a competitive advantage for business sustainability.

Operational Definitions

Competitive advantage: Competitive advantage is a firm's benefit that enables a firm to outperform competitors by using unique and rare attributes, such as superior service quality, business resources, highly experienced labor, differentiation, and service convenience (Chao-Hung, 2019).

Dealer: A dealer refers to a person, an individual, or a legal entity that operates automobile dealerships (Famiyeh et al., 2018).

Auto dealership: An auto dealership is a business that sells new or used cars at the retail level based on a dealership contract with an automaker company (Borchardt et al., 2018).

Marketing competition: Marketing competition is related to change in a firm's business objectives and their revision, product development, regular modification as per market demands, and maintenance of good relations with society and other stakeholders (Purchase & Volery, 2020).

Organizational competition: Organizational competition is defined as competitive advantage that can obtain the capability of generating value, products, services, and ideas, which enable organizations to compete through quality (Masoomzadeh et al., 2019).

Service competition: Service competition is defined as the creation of valuable alterations in the services that customers use and is considered as valuable ideas to advance service efficiently (Dotzel & Shankar, 2019).

Small business: A small business is a company that has under 500 employees (Sepulveda, 2021).

Social competition: Social competition is defined as a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than current solutions (Taylor et al., 2020).

The resource-based view (RBV) theory: The RBV theory is a basis for leaders to create competitive advantage for business sustainability (Barney, 2001).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are beliefs that certain things are facts without verification.

Assumptions are statements that researchers assume to be true without concrete evidence to support and verify them (Kane, 2020). Conducting a qualitative study, I assumed that I could get the best results from the qualitative method for the research topic. An additional assumption was that a case study was an appropriate design for the research study. Using a case study design, I assumed that conducting semistructured interviews with multiple participants could provide more validity to the research results. The next assumption was that practitioner participants could provide honest, truthful, and comprehensive responses to the interview questions and not intentionally introduce bias. A final assumption was that the participants could respond to the interview questions accurately.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses of a study that researchers would be not able to control. Limitations of the research study are the shortcomings, influences, and conditions that researchers cannot control (Seifzadeh, 2017). The first limitation was the geographical location. The study location was the Sacramento area of California, and the results may not apply to areas with either smaller or larger populations. Luo and Chong (2019) indicated that small auto dealerships are more significant and successful in rural areas than urban areas. The data from my research study might not reflect, replicate, or imitate the enthusiasm of small business owners in other non-rural areas.

The sample size of small business auto dealership owners might have limited the study because the sample size might not represent all of the small automobile industries in the United States. My finding might not apply to small business auto dealerships comparatively larger in scope and capacity. An additional limitation was the possibility that potential for the selected small business owners might not share the full extent of their business strategies, choices, and experiences in an interview setting.

Delimitations

Delimitations in research are boundaries that researchers introduce to limit and control the scope of a study (Kanyane, 2019). In this study, these boundaries included the decision to limit the research site to a particular geographical location and the decision to focus on three particular automobile dealerships. The first delimitation of this study was the geographical location. Another boundary of the study was that I selected only small business auto dealership owners in Sacramento, California, who had a business experience of more than 5 years. In the study, I planned to focus on the three practitioners' experiences with business management strategies that they successfully used to sustain their organizations for over 5 years.

Significance of the Study

Business leaders seek management strategies to prevent business failure. Business failure may increase the unemployment rate in local communities (Toussaint-Comeau et al., 2020). Small business leaders could benefit from the findings of the study to improve the effectiveness of business strategies, decrease business failure, and increase management skills. The findings may aid small business leaders in developing business

management plans to prevent business failure in the automobile industry. Implications for positive social change may include the potential to provide new business knowledge for small business auto dealership owners to increase educational training for employees, improve professional services to customers, improve automobile sales productivity, and reduce unemployment. Improving customer services, decreasing unemployment rates, and increasing productivity could benefit for the small auto industry by increasing organizational revenues and growth.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The literature review involves identifying new ways to interpret prior research, providing a context for the research, highlighting flaws in the previous research, and determining what articles in scholarly journals contribute to the topic (Ganusauskaitė & Vveinhardt, 2020; Simsek et al., 2018). Schonberger and Vasiljeva (2019) identified that literature reviews typically include overview information, synthesis, and a critical assessment of previous research; challenge or problematize existing knowledge; and construct narrative research problems and promising research questions. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years. In this literature review, I identified professional and academic literature on small business auto dealerships' success and related research topics.

The databases and library materials used to search the literature for this qualitative multiple case study included Academic Search Complete, EBSCOHost, Business Source Complete, ProQuest Central, ProQuest Dissertations, SAGE Publications, ScienceDirect,

Government Databases, and Google Scholar. I searched the Walden University Library resources for peer-reviewed journal articles to support the literature review. The primary database search terms included (a) *sustainability theory*, (b) *sustainable competitive advantage*, (c) *successful and unsuccessful small business auto dealerships*, (d) *business strategy*, (e) *customer relationship*, (f) *business competitive environment*, (g) *business marketing*, (h) *competitive advantage*, (i) *small business development and improvement*, (j) *small auto dealerships*, (k) *resource-based view theory*, (l) *organizational competition*, (m) *marketing competition*, (n) *organizational capability and resources*, (o) *alternative theory*, (p) *social networking*, (q) *cultural competition*, (r) *business sustainability*, (s) *business model*, and (t) *strategic customer services*.

The literature review in this qualitative multiple case study includes a critical analysis and synthesis of literature related to the RBV theory. The review of professional and academic literature includes an overview of the RBV theory and the competitive business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain their organization and gain a competitive advantage. I used scholarly sources and peer-reviewed journals for the literature review. The literature review strategy consisted of searches using 670 articles in the original databases with the key terms listed above. Table 1 represents the references of the (a) peer-reviewed journal articles, (b) books, (c) dissertations, and other sources in the doctoral study. This literature review contains 81.20% of the 538 peer-reviewed journal articles, two dissertations, one book, and three other sources that had publication dates between 2018 and 2022. The literature review also contains 18.80% of the 126 articles that were published prior to 2017. The literature

review includes the following main categories: (a) RBV theory; (b) alternative theories; (c) firm resources; (d) competitive advantage and sustained competitive advantage; (e) organizational culture resource; (f) organizational economy performance; (g) organizational business mode strategy; (h) small businesses; (i) small business failure; (j) the key constructs of business models; (k) cognitive business model; (l) value creation and resource integration; and, (m) business process management and performance.

Table 1

Sources of Data for Literature Review

Publications	Published within 5 years of expected graduation date of July 08, 2022	Older than 5 Years	% of sources
Journal articles	538	119	98.06 %
Books	01	02	0.45%
Dissertations	02	04	0.89%
Others	03	01	0.60%
% of total	81.20%	18.80%	100%
Total sources	670		

Resources-Based View Theory

Proponents of the RBV theory focus on primary elements of strategic advantage, competitiveness, sustainability, and performance that may enable small business leaders to optimize internal resources (Barney, 1991). Researchers use the RBV theory to

understand how firms maintain a sustainable competitive advantage by using organizational resources including valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources (Elbanna & Abdel-Maksoud, 2020). Organizational resources are the primary determinants of competitive advantage, including firms' innovativeness (Shibin et al., 2020). Barney (1991) noted that to generate sustainable competitive advantage, a firm resource must have four attributes: (a) the resource must be *valuable*, in the sense that it exploits opportunities or neutralizes threats in a company's environment; (b) the resource must be *rare* among a company's current and potential competition; (c) the resource must be imperfectly *imitable*; and (d) the resource must be nonsubstitutable, in that there cannot be strategically equivalent substitutes for it (Bosquetti et al., 2017). According to the RBV theory, a firm's resources are significant components in formulating a sustainable competitive advantage.

Cao and Chen (2019) identified the application of the RBV theory as implementing competitive strategies for business sustainability, profitability, efficiency, or organizational design in business practices and marketing competition methods. According to the RBV theory, competitor intelligence, policy formulation, business procedures, brands, marketing, distribution, and service capabilities provide significant benefits in differentiation that leaders use to develop a competitive advantage (Pai-Chin et al., 2019). Using such resources could help small business auto dealership owners to sustain their organizations and improve the management of competitive advantage strategies (Khan et al., 2021). Proponents of the RBV theory argue that a firm's resources provide a valuable theoretical lens for small business leaders to explore business

strategies for their competitive advantage and sustainability (Khan et al., 2021). Rahman (2020) proposed that each small business has a unique portfolio of challenging resources to achieve in the competitive environment. Consequently, small business auto dealership owners should understand how they could employ resources efficiently to gain a competitive business advantage and better performance.

The concept of the RBV theory may assist leaders of auto dealerships to understand better how they can manage resources efficiently and achieve a competitive advantage to sustain their organization (König et al., 2019). According to the RBV theory, a small business leader can gain a competitive advantage by using an appropriate business competitive strategy in the marketplace (Khan et al., 2021). The RBV concept highlights the importance of valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources to create capabilities for small business leaders to achieve a competitive advantage (Rahman, 2020). The concept of the RBV theory has significant direct resources on a small business's aspiration levels in sustaining a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners must decide what resources to use to develop a sustainable competitive advantage (Khan et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners can choose to seek new resources or apply the RBV theory as a source of competitive advantage to sustain their organization (Viglioni & Calegario, 2021). Small business leaders should consider the RBV theory a significant source to improve their business and overcome competition by attracting customers and maintaining better customer services (Viglioni & Calegario, 2021).

The effectiveness of the application of the RBV theory depends on the ability of small business managers and owners to incorporate achievement strategies, as well as how they use their resources to gain competitive advantage (König et al., 2019). Small business leaders can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by using valuable resources and capabilities that are inflexible in supply (Fornes & Cardoza, 2019). Firm resources include all assets, capabilities, information, and knowledge that an organization controls to implement strategies to improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Rahman, 2020). Small business auto dealership owners can use resources to conceive and implement business strategies to improve their proficiency and competitive advantage (Yuen et al., 2019). Firm resources can create value for an organization's competitive advantage either directly or indirectly by obtaining strategic competencies, such as differentiation or cost advantage (Bloodgood, 2019). Bloodgood (2019) also identified that by aligning their operating systems with a competitive advantage strategy, firms can create human capital and return value to their organizations. Thus, firms can accumulate, influence, and gain advantage from tangible and intangible resources resulting in value creation (Akbari et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by implementing valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources.

Valuable Resources

A valuable resource is one of the categories of significant resources discussed in the RBV theory. A firm's resources create value when organizational leaders use them to implement a competitive advantage or provide a sustained competitive advantage through

increased efficiency and effectiveness (Dungan et al., 2020). Resources are valuable when they assist small businesses in exploiting internal business opportunities or minimizing external threats (Abel et al., 2016). Using external opportunities is insufficient to achieve and improve a firm's competitive advantage because competitors may possess the resource (Shin & Lee, 2019). Organizations must have the infrastructure to realize the full competitive potential of their resources by exploiting the business resources to result in a competitive advantage (Venables et al., 2019). Leaders strive to implement and use resources to gain a competitive advantage (Divatia, 2018).

The resources of small business auto dealerships are valuable only as a source of competitive advantage or sustained competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners can use valuable resources to exploit an internal opportunity or neutralize external threats to improve the organization's competitive advantage (Saqib et al., 2020). Valuable resources can decrease the net cost, increase the net revenues, and enhance the firm's service quality beyond attainable limits (Martinez et al., 2019). If small business auto dealerships fail to exploit valuable resources, they may have a competitive disadvantage (Perkins et al., 2020). Suppose that a resource that a small business auto dealership possesses is not a valuable resource; in that case, leaders should not choose and implement strategies that exploit opportunities and neutralize threats from the environment (see Perkins et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should consider resources valuable if they can be used to improve the firm's performance, exploit market opportunities, or mitigate threats.

Small businesses can obtain valuable resources when they are underpriced (Barney, 2001). A competitive advantage can be attained if only one competing firm possesses a valuable resource and anticipates and exploits the competitive imperfection within strategic factor markets by using private information (Barney, 2001; Raimundo et al., 2018). Private information includes databases, organizational capabilities, and firm resources (Raimundo et al., 2018). The value created by available resources is a function of confidential information to purchase in the market (Venables et al., 2019). Leaders seeking to obtain above standard returns or high profits from implementing product market strategies must have more accurate expectations consistently about the future value of those strategies when acquiring the resources necessary to implement the market strategies (Venables et al., 2019).

Organizational leaders can earn a profit rate over the cost of capital based upon two factors: the attractiveness of the business location, and its establishment of competitive advantage over rivals (Dungan et al., 2020; Orr, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should emphasize the industry's attractiveness as the primary basis for superior profitability (Raimundo et al., 2018). The implication is that strategic management primarily seeks favorable industry environments, locating attractive segments and strategic groups within industries, and moderating competitive pressures by influencing industry structure and competitors' behavior (Dungan et al., 2020).

Rare Resources

A rare resource is another significant resource touched on in the RBV theory. A resource must be rare to be a source of sustained competitive advantage; valuable

resources that are not rare cannot be sources of competitive advantage (Ferreira & Fernandes, 2017). Resource rareness implies that competitors cannot access a particular resource or only have limited access to the resource (Saqib et al., 2020). Perkins et al. (2020) indicated that valuable and rare resources ensure the firm's survival and aid the firm in achieving competitive advantage, equality, and parity in the industry. Advocates of the RBV theory state that the rarer a value-generating resource is, the more likely it will be a significant source of a sustained competitive advantage for a firm (Ferreira & Fernandes, 2017). The RBV perspective maintains that firms within an industry might develop differentiated resources and capabilities, heterogeneous in value and rareness (Abel & O'Brien, 2017). Firm resources should aid the company in establishing competitive advantages; leveraging these advantages help to improve both short and long-term firm performances (Ferreira & Fernandes, 2017).

Abel and O'Brien (2017) identified that as long as many other firms do not simultaneously implement a strategic resource, the resource is adequately rare to create a competitive advantage. Many firms possess the same valuable resource, and each firm exploits that resource in a similar way; none of the firms achieve a competitive advantage (Abel & Bressan, 2016); therefore, for small business auto dealerships to gain a competitive advantage, their resources must be valuable and rare. Rare and valuable capabilities are the key drivers of economic gains that can contribute to small businesses' performance and competitive advantage (Abel & O'Brien, 2017). If a firm wants to sustain these advantages over time, its organizational resources must also be inimitable and nonsubstitutable (Saqib et al., 2020). Organizational resources include organizational

capabilities and performances (Albrecht et al., 2018; Kaukab et al., 2020). Organizational resources demonstrate characteristics, such as being unique, rare, valuable, and nonsubstitutable, leading to achieving competitive advantage (Bhatti et al., 2020). Organizational capabilities refer to capabilities that leaders use to organize tangible and intangible resources to execute an activity to improve business performance (Bhatti et al., 2020; Liu & Hsin-Feng, 2020). Leaders can also use organizational performance to enhance relationships with external stakeholders such as suppliers and customers (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Bhatti et al., 2020; Liu & Hsin-Feng, 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should need organizational capabilities and performance to obtain a competitive advantage over their competitors (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Bhatti et al., 2020).

Inimitable Resources

An inimitable resource, which sustains rarity over time, is another source of sustainable competitive advantage and high performance (Kaukab et al., 2020). An inimitable strategy is a valuable and rare resource that competitors cannot duplicate (Kaukab et al., 2020). The concept of inimitable strategy is that firms can sustain relative performance and competitive advantages only if their existing assets (i.e., marketing strategy, business information, and stakeholder data) cannot be imitated by potential rivals (Saqib et al., 2020). An imitation strategy is one of many ways that two firms may become similar in appearance, advantage, and performance (Koh et al., 2018). Small business leaders should make technological progress and deploy a combination of valuable and rare resources that competitors cannot imitate and substitute (D'Oria et al.,

2021). Developing employee stakeholder relationships and combining valuable and rare resources are critical sources of sustainable competitive advantage (Freeman et al., 2021). Small business leaders should consider trusting stakeholder relationships as valuable and difficult (if not impossible) to imitate by competitors (Freeman et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners can attempt to outsource these relationships, but presumably, so can competing firms. Small businesses that want to achieve genuinely inimitable; stakeholder relationships must be organically homegrown (Freeman et al., 2021).

Gibson et al. (2021) stated that small businesses could be imperfectly inimitable for a combination of three reasons: (a) when its valuable and rare resources are obtained through a unique historical marketing condition; (b) if the links between a firm's resources and its sustained competitive advantage mechanism are poorly understood by competitors; and, (c) if a firm's resources, such as interpersonal relations among managers, employees, and reputations are complicated situation. If small business auto dealerships obtain valuable and rare resources because of their unique business history, the organization may exploit those resources in implementing value-creating strategies that cannot duplicated by other small businesses (Biloshapka & Osiyevskyy, 2018). Without a unique path through history, small business auto dealerships cannot obtain the resources necessary to implement this specific strategy (Biloshapka & Osiyevskyy, 2018). Alternatively, suppose the link between small business auto dealerships' resources and sustained competitive advantage is causally ambiguous; in that case, it becomes difficult for competitors to know which resources and strategic advantages they should

imitate (Gibson et al., 2021). A small business auto dealership's resources might be imperfectly imitable because of socially complex phenomena beyond the ability of other organizations to manage and influence systematically, such as the organization's culture, reputation among suppliers, and interpersonal relations among their managers (Alonso, 2019).

For small business auto dealership owners to sustain a unique position, leaders must seek creative ways of configuring the various elements and sub-elements of the marketing mix so that their new marketing offerings are perceived to be different (Lahtinen et al., 2020). Small business auto dealerships must have a systemic program of constant improvement, continuous innovation, and an incessant zeal to reconfigure the marketing mix in new and ingenious ways (Mahajan & Golahit, 2020). They must aim to be change initiators and market leaders, not simply followers of trends set by their pioneering competitors (Shokrani et al., 2019). These strategies will ensure that the firm's marketing offering continues to be a resource of competitive advantage over a long period (Lahtinen et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners can design marketing processes that include structure, systems, policies, and procedures that support better decision making and faster competition implementation (Mahajan & Golahit, 2020). Since the structure and systems of small business auto dealerships are proprietary, tacit, and intangible, they are much more difficult to imitate than the relatively more tangible aspects of marketing strategy, such as product features, pricing, promotion, advertising, and distribution (Mahajan & Golahit, 2020).

Nonsubstitutable Resources

A resource is nonsubstitutable when competitors cannot duplicate the strategy provided by the resource bundle of a particular firm (Alonso, 2019). For a firm's strategic advantage to be a nonsubstitutable resource, there must be no other resources to take their place when implementing its strategy (Ashby et al., 2017). A nonsubstitutable resource becomes a sustained competitive advantage when current and potential competitors cannot duplicate the benefits of the implemented strategy (Tamminen et al., 2018). To achieve a sustained competitive advantage, leaders should possess valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources (Tamminen et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should use these resources to achieve a sustained competitive advantage over competitors (Valls-Fox et al., 2018).

To ensure sustainable competitive advantage, small business auto dealership owners must establish themselves with virtuous quality services for other firms seeking innovation, capabilities, and solutions to the marketplace challenges (Borza et al., 2021). As a result, small business auto dealership owners fully utilize their assets and resources through strategic collaboration. These assets and resources provide benefits in the form of these innovative capabilities and capacities for firms (Priaux & Weinel, 2018). The attribute of strategic collaboration can represent an extension of insufficient imitable and nonsubstitutable resources (Priaux & Weinel, 2018).

Firms with no strategically equivalent valuable resource, either imitable or rare, must exist (Tamminen et al., 2018). Small business auto dealerships with no strategically equivalent resources need to implement specific strategies to create a sustained

competitive advantage because these resources are imperfectly imitable, rare, and valuable (Tamminen et al., 2018). Small business auto dealerships' resources form a formal planning system, and a charismatic leader, while not the same, maybe strategically equivalent resources (Nyseth et al., 2019).

The imperfectly imitable and nonsubstitutable resources are particularly illustrative of the complexity of achieving a sustained competitive advantage (Borza et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners must be aware of the potential impact of substitutes, whether by similar resources or different resources that serve the same purpose. For example, to create a strong vision built by a charismatic leader, competitor firms could substitute a unique but similar leader or a very different formal planning system that generates the same common idea (Ashby et al., 2017). Many leaders might identify the same resource as a core competence, leading to corporate strategies that fail because other competitors with better skills are simultaneously pursuing the same process (Ashby et al., 2017).

Alternative Theories

The alternative theories to the RBV theory include general systems (GS) theory and social network (SN) theory. Opponents of the RBV theory have argued that it focuses on internal assets and capabilities and ignores external market factors (Schiermer, 2019). For example, Pedwell (2020) stated that the RBV theory focuses on a firm's internal business-generating resources, but it does not analyze the influence of networks on firm performance. A firm's network relationships represent the critical avenues of necessary resources for healthy survival and growth (Hye-Su & Holst, 2018). A network represents

a valuable resource in and of itself, provides strategic opportunities, and affects assertive behavior and value (Sanz, 2019). The SN theory is significant for small business auto dealership owners to understand the external relationships that bridge a firm and its outside identities (Sanz, 2019). Small business auto dealerships with a social network can cost effectively attain critical market information and gain a competitive advantage.

General Systems Theory

The GS theory is a theoretical framework developed to investigate general laws for the system of arbitrarily complex arrangements that constitute functional integrities (Yaşar, 2017). The GS theory is a scientific discipline exploring invariant concepts, law, and business models in various object domains (Sobrinho et al., 2017). The topicality of system investigations is determined by searching for universal methods of solving interdisciplinary problems, including strategic competition (Sobrinho et al., 2017). The GS theory has a long tradition in the natural, behavioral, and social sciences, where it has been used to add substantial insights to the understanding of a wide variety of business complex phenomena (Yaşar, 2017). From the GS theory perspective, small business auto dealership owners can achieve their objectives and goals when all significant activities form a whole system (Vasil, 2020). General systems theorists have argued that a firm is an entire system that is more than the sum of its parts, and therefore, parts of a system are best understood in the context of the whole (Katrakazas et al., 2020). The GST theory concept attempted to describe how related components at different business levels interacted with one another in forming a system, including the interaction of these various units at different business levels and the interrelationships among the departments

(Katrakazas et al., 2020). General system theorists have argued that all systems have some characteristics in common and that it is helpful to understand different approaches in terms of those common characteristics (Valentinov, 2017). In developing these generalizations, GS theory moved beyond descriptive terminology, asserting that the concepts and propositions of GS theory are a mechanism for providing a more complete and accurate understanding of complex business phenomena (Shaw, 2020).

The GS theory has been applied to a wide range of business competitions, from the social network of reactions in a cell to the dynamics of business marketing (Coda et al., 2019). Heiens et al. (2019) indicated that marketing occurs within the context of competition; a general theory of marketing should be consistent with the most general theory of strategic competition. The general theory of strategic competition is an appropriate foundation for small business auto dealership owners to use while working on business marketing (Coda et al., 2019). It can provide substance for the normative marketing strategy that includes market segmentation, relationship marketing, and brand equity, which small business leaders can implement to achieve a competitive advantage (Coda et al., 2019).

The GS theory applies to complex business problems involving competition and decision making (Omotayo et al., 2020). Organizational culture and policymaking influence decision making (Kefan et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should need purposeful systemic management and high-quality systems thinking to attain competitive advantage and decision making in their organizations (Šviráková & Bianchi, 2018). According to the systems thinking framework, organizations are complex systems

composed of interconnected parts, evolving altogether with emergence and interdependencies as major concepts (Benoliel et al., 2019). Systems thinking provides deeper perspectives, internal and external variables, and an understanding of how a dynamic and complex system behavior contributes to small business auto dealerships' success (Omotayo et al., 2020). The systems theory can be used to positively affect the organization in achieving its objectives and attaining a sustainable competitive advantage and business performance (Benoliel et al., 2019).

Small business auto dealership owners can use the systems thinking method to resolve complex business problems by establishing that the organizations' business activities are interconnected and consistent (see Henshaw, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should view their organizations as systems comprising different strategic components, including knowledge, culture, technology, customers, suppliers, and physical and environmental economy (Heikkilä et al., 2018). Small business leaders can view the organizations as conceptual constructs to aid leaders in learning, developing, and achieving business problematic situations (Henshaw, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners can achieve their goals when all business activities operate efficiently and proficiently (Katrakazas et al., 2020). Nevertheless, small business owners and managers of auto dealership failure with one key component of the system may threaten their organizations with a decrease in the sustainable competitive advantage and business performance (Hintsala et al., 2017; Katrakazas et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners can use systems thinking to extend sustainability initiatives beyond optimizing efficiency and proficiency by focusing on competition strategy rather than

tactics (Benoliel et al., 2019). From the systems thinking perspective, small business auto dealership owners can achieve sustainable business growth and performance by developing, performing, and understanding the relationship between the economic, business marketing, customer service, social networking, technology, working capital, and environmental factors (Omotayo et al., 2020; Šviráková & Bianchi, 2018). These business activities influence each other and positively interact, which leaders can use to sustain sustainable competitive advantages. Small business auto dealership owners can use systems thinking to establish accountability, responsibility, and obligation in business activities (Henshaw, 2019). Leaders should ensure activities are correctly attaining sustainable competitive advantages (Henshaw, 2019; Hintsala et al., 2017).

Social Network Theory

The SN theory is defined as a process individuals could use to create a bundle of valuable resources through their outside networks (Zhao & Ha-Brookshire, 2018). Social networks develop relationships with other individuals based on mutual interests, friendship, interdisciplinary, information, and other beneficial reasons (Zhao & Ha-Brookshire, 2018). Proponents of the SN theory have argued that firms can take advantage of external network relationships by connecting with external partners to exchange or share projects and information (Sachpazidu-Wojcicka, 2021). These relationships become critical resources for firms and enhance competitive advantages and performance, as supported by the RBV of the firm (Zhao & Ha-Brookshire, 2018). The firm's network relationships and the exchange of information and knowledge will

provide networking opportunities (i.e., benefits to facilitate innovation) that will evolve and develop over time (Cote, 2019; Sage et al., 2020).

The central concept of social networks is a specific link between people, objects, and events (Lee & Yu, 2020). Introducing the concept of social network capabilities represents a firm's ability to develop, manage, and use networks (Fang et al., 2019). Although the RBV theory offers insights into a firm's strategic resources to attain competitive advantages, small business auto dealership owners should need to recognize and understand the SN theory to bridge a firm's outside identities (Cote, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners can use external resources to complement their resources, facilitating their performance and achieving their organizational goals (Fang et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners can use social networks to build relationships with other individuals to increase business opportunities. Develop common relationships include kinship, buyer-seller relationships, customer relationships, suppliers, competitors, and organizational hierarchy (Lee & Yu, 2020). Organizational networks consist of horizontal and vertical relationships with other firms and individuals (Fritsch et al., 2020). Small business leaders should consider networking a strategic tool for approaching new and existing customers, suppliers, and other organizations by creating long-term working relationships (Su et al., 2013). Long-term relationships include opening communication, coordination of efforts, and joint planning (Su et al., 2013). Small business leaders who engage in networking can obtain and provide critical information important for decision-making to improve the organizations' performance (Chun-Ming, 2018).

The SN theory investigates the human social organization (Schultz-Jones, 2009). Its main strength is the potential to address cross-population-level problems by building up complex social structures from individual-level interactions (Schultz-Jones, 2009). The SN theory can derive a novel social network at the individual level and measure the interpersonal aspects of human relationships (Horak et al., 2019). Leaders of auto dealerships can use this measure alongside other standard statistical variables (i.e., estimates of relatedness or reproductive success) of the organization (Naqvi et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should have a solid network for attaining critical market information cost-effectively and influence firms' performance (Horak et al., 2019). To increase firms' performance and achieve effective marketing, leaders should build up complex social structures from individual-level interactions by allowing customers and suppliers to stay connected (Naqvi et al., 2020).

Although the RBV theory of the firm assists small business auto dealership owners in understanding the secrets of how they can succeed from the firm's internal perspective, the SN theory provides insights to determine critical market information of the network from the external perspective (Zhu & Bao, 2018). Developing an external network of stakeholder interactions with other organizations can be essential for cultivating business relationships (Naqvi et al., 2020; Sage et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should create higher levels of trust, certain production factors, manage scarcity, institutional support, distribution channels, and create opportunities to improve small business auto dealerships' performance (Naqvi et al., 2020). The network of stakeholder relationships is a strategic resource with the potential to attain and

contribute substantively to the organizations' performance through their capability and ability to increase a sustainable competitive advantage (Fang et al., 2019; Jordão et al., 2020). Using social networks includes individuals and partners to connect with their contacts anywhere and anytime and access comprehensive information timely (Fang et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners can extend their operational agility to their partners, who can increase the proficiency and effectiveness of their processes and the quality of information and resources available for decision-making (Syed et al., 2020). Social networks aid small business auto dealerships in gaining valuable resources and significant capabilities. Practical resources include extensive knowledge, internally developed technological knowledge, accumulated information about customers, specialized workforce, managerial skills, contracts, equipment, organizational culture, efficient processes, and financial resources support, among others (Fang et al., 2019).

Small business auto dealership owners should understand how to build trust with their partners because faith can play an active role in the value-network constellation (Galbreath, 2002). Small business auto dealership owners can create the value of trust for their shareholders, achieve business sustainability goals, and create a competitive advantage by improving partners' trust and increasing their collaboration efforts with other partners (Sachpazidu-Wojcicka, 2021). In the SN theory, faith refers to firms' belief that their supply chain partners' firms will take actions generating positive outcomes and subordinate their immediate interests for longer-term mutual benefits (Su et al., 2013). Consequently, creating trust can contribute highly to supply chain partner satisfaction and commitment, contributing to and playing a critical mediating role in influencing that

success is the outcome variable (Choi et al., 2019). The outcome of trust includes improving productivity, increasing market information exchange, sales volume, and satisfaction, increasing services, enhancing market share, profitability, and word-of-mouth advertising (X. Liu et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should consider building trust to increase the benefit from strengthening their supply chain partnerships and advancing partnership success, as reflected in improvements in partner satisfaction and commitment (Luo & Yu, 2019). In contrast, an atmosphere of domination, distrust, and conflict generating hard bargaining and distance may prevail when the powerful party prefers a market relationship; small business auto dealership owners should avoid conflict with their supply chain partnerships (Luo & Yu, 2019).

According to the SN theory, severe global competition and a rapidly changing supply-chain management environment (Fang et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should develop their core capability and cooperate with partners to access critical resources that have become a strategic competitive advantage (Fang et al., 2019). Small business leaders should consider relationship transparency as the subjective perception of feeling informed about the relevant actions and properties of the other party in the interaction (Mitrega et al., 2017). Relationship transparency involves providing information about important business characteristics such as technical abilities, capabilities, and relationship atmosphere (Mitrega et al., 2017). A relationship atmosphere is the emotional setting of the relationship in which both parties interact (X. Liu et al., 2019). Luo and Yu (2019) said that by better understanding the other party and its value creation, relationship transparency could minimize the perceived need to

constantly search for better alternatives and contribute to satisfaction, relationship commitment, recommendation, and competitive advantage. According to the relationship transparency of social networks, small business auto dealership owners can acquire necessary information capabilities and resources from different partners. They can combine and exchange significant information, knowledge, and firm resources with their partners through social interactions and create more business opportunities through the interaction process (X. Liu et al., 2019).

Firm Resources

In the RBV theory, the firm's resources contain a bundle of resources that influence business performance (Wasiuzzaman, 2019). The firm's resources include all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, information, and knowledge controlled by a firm that assists the firm in conceiving and implementing strategies that improve efficiency and effectiveness and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Demirkan, 2018; Shin & Lee, 2019). The firm's resources of the RBV theory include human resources, intangible resources, tangible resources, and organizational capabilities that can affect performance (Khattak & Shah, 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should consider an integrated set of tangible and intangible resources that aid leaders in implementing strategy advantages to improve their efficiency and effectiveness (Van Weele et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners can use these resources to attain a sustainable competitive advantage, generate a maximum profit, and improve efficiency (Khattak & Shah, 2020).

Human Resources

Human resources of the RBV theory are a significant asset that can aid firms in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage (Eppich & Grinda, 2019). According to the RBV theory, human resources are a bundle of education, employment or industry experience that aid small businesses in delivering superior performances and competitive advantages (Wasiuzzaman, 2019). Human resources consist of personnel available to formulate, verbalize, and implement small businesses strategy (Eppich & Grinda, 2019). Human resources include the small businesses' capabilities and competencies that can contribute to the organizations' performance (Wasiuzzaman, 2019).

The human resources of the RBV theory are significant for small business auto dealerships, especially where leaders play primary roles (Xue et al., 2020). Ying et al. (2019) stated that a firm's human resources consist of unskilled and skilled work, clerical, administrative, financial, legal, technical, and management. Small business leaders and employees are tangible resources for the organization (Xue et al., 2020). However, human resources involve human capacities and behavior that have been accumulated in the small business auto dealerships over time, including training, expertise, skills, knowledge, information, and decision making available to the auto industry (Eppich & Grinda, 2019; Xue et al., 2020). Developing human capabilities is significant for small business leaders and employees to learn new business experiences and increase the knowledge, services, and skills required in small business auto dealerships (C. Liu et al., 2020).

The human resources of the RBV theory are part of the organization's human capital. Human capital is a strategic resource of competitive advantage and is significant to firm performance (C. Liu et al., 2020). Small businesses that posit adequate human capital can increase the productivity of potential activity and create cognitive competencies, establishing sustainable competitive advantages (C. Liu et al., 2020). Small business leaders with high-quality human capital, such as skills and competencies, can enhance organizational performance and competitive advantages through resources (Mishra, 2017). Small business auto dealership owners should consider human capital that significantly influences the small business auto dealerships' performance and further their competitiveness. Small business auto dealership owners can increase their human capital by attracting highly skilled individuals from the external labor market and internally developing their current members' skills (Longoni et al., 2019). Human capital is an essential resource for operations management that small business auto dealership owners need to increase their productivity and attain competitive advantages (Musibau et al., 2019). Human capital includes intellectual knowledge and expertise, the structure and quality of interpersonal networks, courage and resilience, skill and personality attributes, creativity, and embodied in performing labor to produce economic value (Longoni et al., 2019). Human capital may face an increasingly competitive environment and rapidly changes the global market (Dankyi et al., 2020).

Sustainable competitive advantages in the market can only result from effective managers and talented staff who can provide high-quality customer services and effectively manage business resources (Podra et al., 2020). Improving and developing

effective managers and qualified staff is critical for every organization and executive leader (Podra et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should create and build their human capital by offering business training, providing business knowledge, and enhancing promotion decisions (Dankyi et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners should give ethical business principles and effectively manage staff performance in their activities (Yang et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners use human capital to formulate a unique organizational structure, constitution, establishment, and culture (Dankyi et al., 2020). As a result, human capital is a critical resource of any successful competition system and competitive advantage in the marketplace.

International capital is a significant achievement resource of constant business growth that can continue business in the industry (Yang et al., 2021). International capital involves organizational knowledge, intellectual property, business designs, and business process techniques, enabling organizations to build a competitive advantage through economies of scale and scope or differentiation (Audretsch & Link, 2018; Yang et al., 2021). However, suppose a small business fails to innovate in the business market; it might inevitably fall back to a harmful, destructive, and disadvantageous situation in the market competition and finally experience a hasty market decline (X. Lu et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should achieve constant success through integrated international capital, human capital, and management services (Barra & Zotti, 2017). Likewise, the success of a firm's suite of innovative activities is a function and implementation of the quantity and quality of resources, capital, funds, assets, and

possessions dedicated to the business task (Barra & Zotti, 2017). Small business auto dealership owners should often organize, arrange, and manage their business activities and actions in portfolios of projects.

Tangible Resources

Tangible resources of the RBV theory are assets, such as production equipment, manufacturing plants, and formal reporting structures (Kamasak, 2017). In the RBV theory, tangible resources are all those that can be effectively observed and measured; that is, they have a physical and measurable nature (Van Weele et al., 2020). The primary tangible resources are financial resources (i.e., cash, securities, and borrowing capacity) and physical resources (i.e., plant, equipment, land, and mineral reserves) that consider the most likely sources of firm success (Kamasak, 2017). Small business auto dealership owners can turn these static resources into dynamic nature and transform them to create a new configuration of resources that can sustain a competitive advantage (Kamasak, 2017; Salehi et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners may optimize their financial resources to maximize profits and maintain a competitive advantage.

Financial resources are important drivers of superior business results because financial resources can support the business acquisition of other strategic resources and assets (Salehi et al., 2019). Financial resources can help the firm's strategic efforts, sustainable growth, performance, new strategies, practices, growth opportunities, and innovative activities (Einarsen et al., 2019). Financial resources can constitute constraints and provide possibilities for further development of the small business auto dealerships regarding customer services, products, and other service developments (Einarsen et al.,

2019). Levitskaya (2021) underscored financial resources as a factor that can drive the operations of small business auto dealerships. Financial resources become significant sources for small business auto dealerships to make optimal financing decisions to survive in a competitive and dynamic business environment (Tibbetts & Lutter, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners need sufficient financial capital that can easily convert into other types of resources to support the implementation of internal growth strategies and gain a competitive advantage through superior returns (Levitskaya, 2021). Financial resources of small business auto dealership owners should include, among others, financial liquidity, operating funds, borrowing capacity, and the ability to generate internal funds that are important for small business auto dealerships' survival and profitability (Levitskaya, 2021).

Physical resources mainly refer to the level of sophistication and complexity of the technology possessed by the firms, such as plants, machinery, equipment, and tools (Van Weele et al., 2020). The central part of technology could embody physical resources (Yang & Lirn, 2017). The technology of the small business auto dealership owners can expect to improve auto industry production, customer services, and business operations (Yang & Lirn, 2017). Technology can generate a competitive advantage if technology has an important role in determining small business auto dealerships' relative cost position or success in differentiation (Ying et al., 2019). As technology can influence several value-creating activities in small business auto dealerships, it can have a substantial effect on cost (Ying et al., 2019). Small business auto dealerships with high investment in technology can permit low-cost productions and achievement of economies of scale by

spreading the relatively high fixed cost over many outputs (Quan Minh & Ngo Thi, 2020). Physical resource technology is another main driver for small business auto dealerships' success. The more tangible resources small businesses have, the superior the sustainability of their competitive advantage (Quan Minh & Ngo Thi, 2020).

Intangible Resources

Under the RBV theory, intangible resources can strengthen small businesses' performance (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2020). Intangible resources are rare and valuable assets that lead to competitive advantage, enabling small businesses to withstand in the long term and become a sustainable competitive advantage (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2020). Intangible resources are usually described as a core component that is the most likely source of small businesses' success because competitors cannot easily acquire and replicate the resources (Kamasak, 2017). The critical importance of intangible resources refers to their scarcity and difficulty-imitating competitors (Yang & Lirn, 2017). Intangible resources such as culture, relationships, knowledge, and management support small businesses' sustainable competitive advantage and performance (Kamasak, 2017). Yang and Lirn (2017) proved that intangible assets boost the organizational ability to acquire external, valuable resources. In the RBV theory, proponents consider intangible assets a significant component of small businesses' sustainable competitive advantage (Cruz et al., 2017).

Intangible resources of the RBV theory can play an important role in developing and improving small business auto dealerships' sustainability (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2020). Intangible resources include relationships, collaboration, and

knowledge, which may differ from tangible resources because they cannot purchase (Cruz et al., 2017). Small business auto dealership owners must implement practices to develop intangible resources to increase their strategic advantage potential (Barua & Ioanid, 2020). The competitive value of small business auto dealerships is inevitably associated with the management and relationships of its intangible resources (Yang & Lirn, 2017). For instance, especially employee relationships support small business auto dealerships' ability to adjust and sustain organizations in the long term (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2020). Thus, to leverage the sustainability potential, small business auto dealership owners must improve employee relationships and focus on strengthening the human factor in organizations (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2020). Zhou et al. (2020) stated that employee relationships are recognized as factors shaping employee satisfaction and intention to stay in the organization. The concept of employee relationships in small business auto dealerships refers to the positive relationship between two or more individuals involved in a mutual relationship within the social network and authority dimensions within an organizational context (Zhou et al., 2020). Employee relationships can manifest and demonstrate themselves in employee participation in decision-making processes, high quality of interactions, and a sense of community within organizations (Nicholas, 2019).

According to the intangible resources of the RBV theory, knowledge considers a core resource in the success of small businesses that can influence organizations' performance (Jin & Edmunds, 2015). Knowledge is significant for decision-making, supporting effective processes, and improving business activities (Mohr & Batsakis,

2014). Knowledge is a critical basis for creativity and is recognized as significant to gaining a competitive advantage (Van Weele et al., 2020). Small business auto dealerships that obtain and retain knowledge can play a critical role in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Van Weele et al., 2020). The capability effectively uses knowledge can aid small business auto dealerships in maintaining long-term competitive advantage, improving, and implementing new technology (Oprean-Stan et al., 2018). Knowledge contributes to small businesses' development as a primary competitive advantage source and a long-lasting intangible resource (Jardon & Molodchik, 2017).

Knowledge includes two types in an organizational context: explicit and tacit knowledge (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagińska, 2020). Tacit knowledge embeds in employees' experiences and knowledge and is often non-verbalized and challenging to codify (Q. Li et al., 2019). Tacit knowledge can provide small business auto dealerships a strategic competitive advantage because tacit knowledge is complicated for competitors to replicate and distinct from many other resources (S. Ruel et al., 2019). Tacit knowledge is more difficult to transfer since it needs to be experienced and cannot be fully articulated (Caputo et al., 2019). As the degree of tacit knowledge increases, the knowledge acquisition and transferring processes increase in complexity (S. Ruel et al., 2019). However, explicit knowledge is easily codified, transmitted, and disseminated in writing instructions or documentation (Evans et al., 2015). Small business auto dealership owners should understand explicit and practical knowledge, which can be articulated, documented, stored, and conveyed within organizations (Sun et al., 2021).

Both types of knowledge contribute to small business auto dealerships' development and competitive improvement advantages (Haldin-Herrgard, 2000). Explicit knowledge resources could help solve various organizational issues, reuse significant information, and connect employees with invaluable knowledge-sharing networks (Sun et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners should consider the impact of behavioral norms on explicit knowledge sharing in organizations (Jardon & Molodchik, 2017). Assistance to create, store, and use explicit knowledge by establishing a knowledge system in small business auto dealership owners can encourage knowledge sharing between employees and leaders (Bratianu et al., 2021). Knowledge systems in small business auto dealerships shared between employees and leaders should include ideas, innovation, and managerial capabilities (Ncoyini & Cilliers, 2020). Also including organizational routines (the unique ways people work together), scientific capabilities, the firm's reputation for its goods or services, and how it interacts with people (i.e., employees, customers, and suppliers) are all signs of intangible resources (Ncoyini & Cilliers, 2020).

Knowledge resources are among the most significant contributors to a competitive advantage that small business auto dealership owners can offer supply chain partners (Ujwary-Gil, 2017). The resource is significant to understanding a firm and its value creation for stakeholders, including supply chain partners (Theeke & Lee, 2017). Lichtenthaler (2019) explored how small businesses acquire knowledge from external sources, such as suppliers, customers, and even competitors, to achieve a competitive advantage. The knowledge acquisition of small companies considers a critical source of

explaining new knowledge and creative outcomes in business contexts (Flöthmann et al., 2018). Lichtenthaler (2019) identified three primary features of knowledge acquisition: (1) knowledge resource is created through human interactions, (2) knowledge is dynamic because knowledge is required to create the future but frequently becomes obsolete once created, and (3) knowledge has a social agenda of guiding the firm for what is right to do (Lichtenthaler, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should consider knowledge acquisition that can significantly generate new knowledge and provide innovative ideas (Ferdaous & Rahman, 2019). Knowledge acquisition also creates business outcomes by putting humans at the center of strategy, treating strategy as a dynamic process, and possessing a social agenda (Ferdaous & Rahman, 2019).

The brand is another intangible asset of the RBV theory that contributes to creating firms' value (Ocak & Fındık, 2019). The brand is a resource responsible for determining consumer preference and the perception small business auto dealership owners can develop for the product or service (Gupta et al., 2008). Strong branding can generate superior customer loyalty for the organization, less vulnerability to competitors' marketing actions, and higher profit margins, among other significant consequences (Bhatia & Aggarwal, 2018). Customers can recognize the brand through advertising because the brand creates customers with numerous recognition of products and services (Bhatia & Aggarwal, 2018). It also serves as a tool for small business auto dealership owners to build a strong brand image by calling and displaying the product and service to reach the consumer's attention (Bhatia & Aggarwal, 2018).

Organizational Capabilities

Organizational capabilities mean that firms can deploy their resources, such as tangible resources and intangible resources, to perform an activity to enhance their performance (Rehman et al., 2019). From the perspective of organizational configuration, the organizational capability could understand as clusters of attributes of corporate strategies, structures, and processes (Gao et al., 2020). Organizational capabilities play an important role in increasing organizational performance and understanding how small businesses can achieve and sustain their competitive advantage (Rehman et al., 2019). The internal strengths of small businesses' inner strengths are organizational capabilities, determining how a small business gets a competitive advantage over other small businesses, and the ending result is improved performance (Gao et al., 2020).

In the RBV theory, organizational capabilities are identified and thoroughly articulated regarding how they shape culture, leadership, competencies, training, and performance management (Bhatti et al., 2020). Huang and Huang (2020) stated that small business leaders could use organizational resources to focus on the business's internal capability, determining the extent to which a firm sustains its competitive advantage. Small business leaders can focus on how best to spend resources central to corporate strategy and performance (Bhatti et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners can gain a competitive advantage by building organizational resources of business internal capability such as collective skills, abilities, and expertise to compete effectively (Huang & Huang, 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should identify their organizational capabilities and define them in behavioral and operational terms (Zhang et

al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners must ensure dedicated time, honest assessments, and spirited debate about the capabilities that will differentiate the organization from the rest, ensure successful market capture, and delight targeted customers (Zhang et al., 2021). Customers make buying decisions based on the firm's capabilities or brand, more so than the product itself (Abdulrahman, 2020). Specifically, consumers purchase vehicles based on emotion, history, and trust much more than anything else (Abdulrahman, 2020).

Organizational capabilities consist of two elements such as dynamic capability and operational capability (Sánchez-Medina, 2020). Small businesses should consider dynamic capabilities as a primary resource of competitive advantage (Akenroye et al., 2020). The dynamic capabilities resources include valuable, scarce, imitative, and irreplaceable resources (Akenroye et al., 2020). Dynamic capabilities define as a series of processes for product development, strategy development, and alliances from the process perspective (X. Liu et al., 2019). Likewise, Furnival et al. (2019) defined dynamic capabilities as a stable collective activity model from the standpoint of knowledge evolution, such as variation, internal selection, replication, and genetics. The concept of dynamic capabilities refers to the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure external and internal competencies toward environmental change (L. Liu et al., 2019). The critical role of dynamic capabilities of small business auto dealerships is to achieve competitive advantage through integrating, building, and reconstructing internal and external capabilities to adapt to rapidly changing environments (Akenroye et al., 2020). Dynamic capabilities assist small business auto dealerships in effectively responding to

changes in the dynamic environments in which they constantly integrate, reconfigure, renew, and recreate their resources (Akenroye et al., 2020). Most importantly, they can upgrade and reconstruct their core capabilities in response to the changing environment to attain and sustain competitive advantage (Akenroye et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should focus on developing dynamic capabilities to gain a sustained competitive advantage.

Operational capabilities of the RBV theory represent how small businesses operate to make a living in the present and the ability of a small business to accomplish and coordinate the tasks necessary to carry out operational activities, distribution logistics, and marketing campaigns (Takahashi et al., 2017). M. Li et al. (2020) stated that operational capabilities refer to a small business's relative efficacy in transforming various operational resources (e.g., assets, equipment, employees, and capital) into useful organizational outputs. Operational capabilities are the small business auto dealerships' ability effectively deploy heterogeneous resources, skills, processes, and knowledge, enhancing productivity and operational effectiveness (M. Li et al., 2020). In a dynamic business environment, the small business auto dealerships' ability to manage knowledge and information is significant to the competitive advantage of the auto dealerships (M. Li et al., 2020). Operational capabilities represent small business auto dealerships' ability efficiently convey organizational resources into valuable outputs, an abstract and intellectual yet critical managerial competence of small business auto dealerships in a dynamic business and competitive advantage environment (Arvidsson et al., 2019). As a

result, operational capabilities change best represents the possible beneficial outcomes in small business auto dealerships.

Operational capabilities of the RBV theory are particularly important for the high-tech sector of the small business auto dealerships, including dynamism, uncertainty, and competitiveness (Lyu et al., 2019). Specifically, for small business auto dealerships operating in a rapid-changing technology environment, agility, fast adaptation, and quick response are critical for survival and prosperity in a dynamic business environment (M. Li et al., 2020). Operational capabilities as indicators for the overarching efficiency competence of small business auto dealerships can use their assets and resources (Lyu et al., 2019). Operational capabilities include the skills, knowledge, and information necessary to operationalize, maintain, and repair technology (Kim, 2006). Operational capabilities refer to the technology that aids the development and production of technology to rapid changes in the technological environment (Lyu et al., 2019). Technical capabilities are conceptualized as accumulated knowledge and the ability to make, understand, practice, and develop this knowledge to produce new technologies (Minna et al., 2020).

Competitive Advantage and Sustained Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage and sustained competitive advantage are core concepts for understanding the RBV theory (Lim et al., 2017). Small business auto dealership owners face business challenges and struggle to gain, achieve, and maintain market share, customers, and competitive advantages in a business dynamic and complex business environment (Rahman et al., 2018). To conduct business challenges, sustain their

organizations, and gain competitive advantages, small business auto dealership owners must respond to the challenges from the market and customers, implementing a value-creating strategy, requiring efficiency, and effectiveness to foster and sustain competitiveness (Suh, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners can focus on improving customer services, reducing costs, increasing productivity, improving production quality, and satisfying customers and other stakeholders (Suh, 2018). Small businesses can optimize resource allocations that align with value-creating and practical business strategies, improve the organization's performance, and integrate the volatility markets and dynamic business environments (Leiblein et al., 2017). Small business auto dealership owners can identify the strength of active business competitions, capabilities, and profitability of the auto dealerships by analyzing, achieving, and improving competitive forces (López-Cabarcos et al., 2015). The competitive details include the threat of new competitors' entry, the intensity of the existing business dynamic competitions, and the bargaining power of suppliers and customers (Suh, 2018).

Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage refers to a superior position in the marketplace that assists a firm to out-perform its rivals (Chao-Hung, 2019). Proponents of the RBV theory stated that competitive advantage is based on factors within the firm (Wahyono, 2020). In contrast, the industrial-organization view posited that competitive advantage is mainly achieved by positioning the firm in the industry and the environment (Kalaitzi et al., 2019; Wahyono, 2020). O'Shannassy (2008) identified that firms obtain a competitive advantage only to attain positive value and higher performance standards than

competitors. Small business auto dealership owners must create positive value by achieving a competitive advantage that equals or exceeds competitors (Chao-Hung, 2019; Davide et al., 2019). The main objective of the RBV stems from generating a competitive advantage that assists small business auto dealership owners in obtaining better performance levels from their respective combinations of resources and capacities (Bertheussen, 2021). The term competitive advantage is another significant source for academics, business executives, and consultants (X. Liu et al., 2019). Barney (2001) stated that a firm experiences competitive advantages when its actions in an industry or market create economic value, and when competing, a firm engages in similar activities. Competitive advantage could be achieved when a firm implements a value-creating strategy that any firm or potential competitors are not simultaneously implementing (Barney, 1991). Barney also stated that a sustained competitive advantage occurs when the firm implements a value-creating strategy not being implemented simultaneously by rivals or other firms that cannot duplicate the benefits of its business strategy.

The concept of competitive advantage relates to small business auto dealerships maintaining a sustainable edge compared to rivals in a particular organization setting that cannot erode over time (L. Liu et al., 2019). The firm with a competitive advantage pursues a strategy not executed by competing firms (L. Liu et al., 2019). The process implemented by the firm with a competitive advantage provides the opportunity for a reduction in costs (i.e., low cost) in the provision of a product and service that can contribute to providers of the alternative differentiation strategy in a broad market segment (Izaskun & Irune, 2019). Accordingly, small business auto dealership owners

could exploit market opportunities with a product and service with superior attributes (i.e., differentiation) with some proximity to low-cost providers regarding the cost of production or provision of service in a broad market segment (Davide et al., 2019). The low cost and the differentiation strategies can be pursued in a narrow market segment and can be termed cost focus and differentiation focus, respectively (Patricia Ordóñez, 2006). Small business auto dealership owners must decide how to compete in the chosen market and compete on some distinguishing factors (Davidson et al., 2015). Leaders should provide goods and services uniquely or give similar products and services at lower prices than their competitors (Davidson et al., 2015).

A firm might span low cost and differentiation for some time. The firm is still challenging to sustain, with firms at risk of being "stuck in the middle," not executing either generic strategy well, and subsequently not achieving a sustained competitive advantage (Davide et al., 2019). Many industries have several businesses being "stuck in the middle" (Patricia Ordóñez, 2006). A firm with a favorable industry structure seeking to span low cost and differentiation will earn higher profits (Patricia Ordóñez, 2006). Kalaitzi et al. (2019) noted evidence of the firms' performance weakness for being "stuck in the middle," which firms compared with other firms with a clear generic position, tends to occur in a mature industry with a slow industry growth rate. Firms' performance being "stuck in the middle" tend to expose to their poorly conceived positioning strategies, which in the past may be carried by a healthy industry growth rate (Kalaitzi et al., 2019). The achievement of competitive advantage by a firm in an industry is a firm that aids in neutralizing threats from rival firms in the marketplace (Davide et al., 2019;

McClelland, 1994). Competitive strategies can play a significant role in determining the position of small business auto dealerships in their industry (Ferrall et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners establishing and maintaining a clear generic position can play an important role in this desirable set of business circumstances to sustain a competitive advantage (Robert, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should avoid their business being "stuck in the middle" by offering unique features to convince customers to buy their offerings (Ferrall et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners must make a fundamental strategic decision by taking the steps necessary to achieve cost leadership or at least cost parity (Ferrall et al., 2021). In addition, they must orient themselves to a particular target customer or achieve some uniqueness (Banerjee & Feinstein, 2019).

Competitive advantage involves a tendency to evaluate accomplishments, achievement, management, and success of others and standards of excellence and brilliance (Davide et al., 2019). Small global business owners or managers with a highly competitive advantage who determine and measure themselves against the business competition in the market, develop strategic management and competition strategy, seek to improve business performance, and achieve business success in the auto industry (Sun, Wu et al., 2018). Using competitive advantage to determine the business competition in the market, small business auto dealership owners should improve competitive management and strategies to gain a competitive advantage.

Small business leaders use several strategic resources to improve their competitive advantage in the market. Ismail (2016) indicated that operational excellence,

low-cost products, and product leadership are three generic strategic resources to enhance competitive advantage and the business environment. Operational excellence includes reliable, dependable, low-cost products; customer intimacy includes client-specific customized products; and product leadership includes differentiated and innovative products (Ismail, 2016). In competition, organizational leaders should focus on strategic resources to provide more functions and avoid the other non-functional strategies (Dwomoh et al., 2020). Small business leaders should diversify and expand into related products, integrate vertically into other suppliers, or merge with similar firms. Leaders could use the resource of competitive advantage and strategy to satisfy customer needs more effectively by understanding and being close to customers (Gaikwad & Sunnapwar, 2020). In particular, leaders should understand customer value perception, commit to quality, provide a high level of comprehensive service, and provide speedy reactions to competitive opportunities and threats (Dwomoh et al., 2020). Focusing on practical strategic resources, understanding the perception of customer value, providing a commitment to quality, providing a high level of service, and providing a speedy reaction to competitive opportunities and threats are significant components for leaders to take action at the business level of innovative strategies (Dwomoh et al., 2020).

Competitive strategic management is a significant resource that leaders use to improve the organization's mission and goals to sustain a competitive advantage. Competitive strategic management is the ongoing process of ensuring a competitively superior fit between the organization and its ever-changing environment (Reczey et al., 2017). Small business auto dealership owners can accomplish competitive strategic

management to manage the organization's mission and scan the environment to ascertain opportunities (Ketchen & Craighead, 2020). Leaders can merge this assessment with an evaluation of the organization's strengths and weaknesses to identify an exploitable niche in which the organization will have a competitive advantage (Ketchen & Craighead, 2020). Liozu (2018) noted that business firms could fail if the management team fails to translate strategic management into strategic planning. Strategic planning is the process that leaders can use to set priorities, focus resources, and strengthen operations (Cheung & Yu, 2020). Leaders can achieve strategic planning to ensure employees and other stakeholders work toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes and results, and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing competitive environment (Nesiba & Cuhlova, 2021). Competitive strategic management of small business auto dealerships should involve awareness of how successful and robust the organization and its strategic management are, how it might improve its effectiveness, and how circumstances are changing (Muneeb et al., 2019; Selyutina et al., 2021). Using competitive strategic management to enhance the organizations' weaknesses, mission, goal, operational plans, structural designs, and control systems are the primary factors of small business auto dealerships' success.

External and internal forces are the business factors of competitive strategic management. Leaders should understand the changing environment's complexity, difficulty, and trends that may include external forces (Vluggen et al., 2019). Other changes will be the internal forces or outcomes of actions taken by the organization itself (Vluggen et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should manage change

successfully, changing technologies, processes, and architecture to maintain a successful match with the environment (Muneeb et al., 2019). Organizations' competitive strategic management should involve a clear awareness of environmental forces and how the firms are changing and appreciate the potential and future threats and opportunities (Cescon et al., 2019). Additional competitive strategic management in the firms also involves the decisions on appropriate products and services for defined markets and the effective management of resources to develop and produce these products for the market—achieving the right quality for the right price at the right time (Denning, 2017). Understanding the changing environment's complexity, difficulty, and trends is significant for leaders (Nastase et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should manage to decide on appropriate services, technologies, management, future threats, and opportunities to maintain a successful business in the competitive environment.

Improving business environments and competitive strategic management are the critical success factors of the business dynamic. Leaders must be strategically aware, conscious, and reactive. Small business auto dealership owners should understand how changes in the competitive environment unfold (Klepić & Madžar, 2017). Small business auto dealership owners should actively look for opportunities to exploit the business's strategic abilities, adapt and seek improvements in every business area, building on awareness and understanding of current strategies, resources, and successes (Nastase et al., 2019). Leaders must act quickly in response to opportunities and barriers Comella et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners operating in organizations perform

some activities, including planning, arranging, and organizing the work of the subordinates by motivating employees, controlling what happens, and evaluating results (Mona et al., 2018; Nastase et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should be responsible for management improvement by exploiting the strategic business abilities, adapting enhancements of the business, building on awareness of current strategies, and improving business activities.

Creating customers' values, achieving the company's goal, and improving the business service environment are the long-term goals for success (Rantala et al., 2019; Weinstein, 2020). Leaders must compete effectively, efficiently, and out-perform their rivals in a dynamic environment to succeed long-term (Mortensen et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should find suitable ways to create and add customer value. Likewise, small business auto dealership owners should understand what the business is about, what business goal is trying to achieve, and which way is an important requirement determining the effectiveness of every member's contribution (Nordgren, 2008; Rantala et al., 2019). Mortensen et al. (2019) identified that every successful small business should have business self-awareness and clarity of vision, even though small business does not arise from a formal planning process. Small business auto dealership owners should have a business plan that shows the company's purpose and what the firm intends to accomplish. Small business auto dealership owners can use the business plan to help an entrepreneurial vision by providing a mechanism that aids owners, managers, and workers in functioning effectively (Caspersz & Thomas, 2015; Tracey et al., 2017).

Creating values for customers, providing business strategies for employees, and planning the business goal can sustain organizations for a long-term goal (Weinstein, 2020).

Sustained Competitive Advantages

Sustained competitive advantages are organizational assets, attributes, or abilities that cannot duplicate or exceed; and provide a superior or favorable long-term position over competitors (Kaleka & Morgan, 2017). The sustained competitive advantage sources include brand loyalty, environmental, innovation, economic, proprietary information scale, network-effect, and social-cultural (Chapman et al., 2018; M. Li et al., 2019). Sustained competitive advantages are significant characteristics that small business auto dealership owners can use to gain a competitive advantage in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment (Freeman et al., 2021). The potential for sustainability can provide small business auto dealership owners with the flexibility and resilience to react and adjust to a changeable economy (Brockhaus et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should need to attain sustainability. Amoako (2020) stated that identifying the sources facilitating sustainability potential is significant for companies' successful adaptation to a changeable environment. Small business auto dealerships rely on their internal resources to gain a competitive advantage. In the RBV theory, firms' strength depends on their inner resources (Brockhaus et al., 2019). The RBV highlights the impact the internal organization's resources have on companies' output (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019). Proponents of the RBV theory indicated a link between the organization's internal resources and the development of sustained competitive advantage (Brockhaus et al., 2019).

RBV theory focuses on non-observable factors in developing organizational potential (Saqib et al., 2020). It acknowledged that primarily intangible resources such as employee relationships contribute to the organization's performance (Y. Lu et al., 2021; Saqib et al., 2020). The essence of organizational sustainability is strengthening the environmental, societal, and economic systems within business operations (Chapman et al., 2018). This principle is significant since the concept of sustainability will keep small business auto dealerships running by helping organizations prosper without compromising the needs of the future (M. Li et al., 2019).

Small business auto dealership owners can use the business process strategy to create a new customer-oriented value, satisfaction, and fulfillment and the primary judge of enterprises' competitiveness (Cyphert, 2021). Small business auto dealership owners may use resources of the RBV theory to create the relationship and services regarding the primary beneficiaries and other stakeholders, such as the organization through employees, shareholders, and external collaborators (Shibin et al., 2020). Dubey et al. (2019) indicated that firms use resources from RBV theory to innovate employees through new business knowledge and service strategies. New business knowledge and service strategies may include improving business services, creating customer relationships, developing market demand, increasing shareholders' wealth, and enhancing competitive advantages (Bhat & Darzi, 2018). Business leaders in technology computer firms use RBV theory to improve the business environment by producing differentiated, innovative products and services that could increase the organization's competitive advantage and sustainability (Kiewitz et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership

owners can use business improvement to consent a vast majority of small businesses with resources to compete effectively.

Successful technology commercialization is a significant factor in business survival in the competitive market. Inków (2020) indicated that with growing attention, concentration, and awareness of business innovation, small business leaders must pay a small and medium-sized enterprises' technology commercialization capability to facilitate the marketing of technology innovation. Small business auto dealership owners can use technology commercialization to involve business processes requiring business improvement, development, manufacturing, growth, and marketing (Zemlickiene & Turskis, 2020). Series of business processes are follow-up processes leaders can transform various technology improvements, business competitive advantages, and assets, such as designs, patents, and knowledge, into profits (Bammert et al., 2020). From the perspective of business invention, technology commercialization is likely an overarching concept, perception, and theory covering the whole process of the business service concept, including effective marketing and production (Gusberty et al., 2018). In this regard, using successful technology commercialization of business invention may serve as a significant capability to customers by satisfying consumers based on various quality, cost, speed, and technology-related business factors.

Organizational Culture Resource

Organizational culture is an important resource of the RBV theory. Corporate culture is the most significant element in organizational change efforts (Thakur et al., 2018). Organizational cultural involves norms, values, habits, expectations, and new

ways of thinking that relate to a competitive advantage (Francischeto & Neiva, 2019; Fung et al., 2012). Organizational culture affects managerial decision-making and assists managers and leaders in designing more efficient business processes and activities, implementing appropriate business policies, and developing effective business reward systems to support organizations in competitive advantage (Jiao et al., 2019; Walker, 2021). Small business auto dealership owners can use organizational culture resources to create new business ideas of competitive advantage and develop mechanisms for implementing business ideas and transforming them into opportunities to respond to the fast-changing business environment in competitive advantage (He et al., 2020). In the RBV theory, organizational cultural strategy is being a core element of successful business dynamic and drives changes in almost every aspect of organizational performance, including management resources, fundraising strategy, business modeling, marketing resource, and communication process (Lee & Chung, 2020; Walker, 2021).

To be successful, small business auto dealership owners should maintain the organizational focus on the culture, mainly because the corporate culture is the primary resource for building trust, relationships, and value between employees and leaders that can facilitate the organization to become successful (Lee & Chung, 2020). Fatma and Adiguzel (2019) indicated that positive organizational culture in business industries significantly influences the quality of customer services, customer relationships, teamwork between employees and leaders, and innovative development. Employees are more likely to believe in the organization's values, goals, mission, and vision (Fatma & Adiguzel, 2019). Small business leaders should focus on creating a culture of employee

engagement to attract and retain quality employees in an increasingly competitive advantage.

Employee engagement should consider a long-term commitment to the organization and employees, supporting the other in an era of increasing national and international operations (Shuck et al., 2017). Employee engagement is an effective strategy for long-term organizational sustainability in the competitive environment and markets (Hyo et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should consider employee engagement to increase operational performance. Employee engagement includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold together to conduct business, treat employees and customers, and provide value for the wider community (Lee & Chung, 2020). The significance of employee engagement can contribute to the organization's unique social and psychological environment.

The increasing implementation of boundaryless organizations poses a challenge for leaders who strive to create and maintain employee engagement (Piezunka et al., 2018; Tauetsile, 2021). Small business auto dealership owners can achieve a competitive advantage by effectively increasing the employee engagement strategy (Hyo et al., 2020). For instance, small business auto dealership owners should show respect and recognize employees for their contributions, be visible to employees, encourage upward communication, and inspire confidence in the organization's future (Hyo et al., 2020). Firms should increase the engagement level of employees by communicating clear goals and expectations to their employees (Tauetsile, 2021). Small business auto dealership owners should share information and numbers with employees, encourage open

communication, promote organizational effectiveness, reputation, and values, and increase the motivational level of leaders' success (Tauetsile, 2021). Firms need to achieve high levels of employee engagement in domestic and global firms to promote the retention of talent but also foster customer loyalty and improve organizational performance and stakeholder value, leading to competitive advantage (Duque et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should continually demonstrate their competence, capability, proficiency, influence, and persuade others of the value of their organizational products, services, and ideas (Wilson et al., 2013).

Organizational cultural factors also involve the work environment that leaders can use to cultivate and measure employees based on value creation and competitive differentiation (Walker, 2021). Errichiello and Micera (2018) identified several important dimensions of culture that distinguish highly progressive organizations. Small business auto dealership owners can assess and strengthen the culture perspective strategy within and across their organizations. Firms must demonstrate trust with employees, involve employees with strong capabilities in initiating and managing partnerships, and build strong alliances inside the business (Errichiello & Micera, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should create better conditions for revolution and trust where information from inside and outside the business organization is systematically collected, easily and quickly accessible, and communicated (Errichiello & Micera, 2018). The organization's small business leaders should signal that a competitive advantage strategy is highly desirable by setting ambitious goals in different areas and establishing motivated teams to find ways to implement the vision (Piezunka et al., 2018).

The support for the business competition is the symbols and rituals, whose main objective is to identify a new behavior and an incentive in the competitive environment (Ray & Mondal, 2017). Such symbols and rituals refer to employees' internal and individualized motivation (Widmann & Mulder, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should consider building potential and capability in employees to be aware of creative thinking, management, and implementation of ideas (Widmann & Mulder, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should have a dimension of the relationship, which refers to the models of interaction within the organization in innovative ideas that can rarely be the product of a lone genius (Ju et al., 2021). Building a collaborative environment and accepting different ways of thinking, viewpoints, and diversity provide a reasonable basis for a competitive advantage strategy (Irving et al., 2020).

Organizational social competition is the process of developing practical solutions to challenging environmental issues. Corporate social competition is a new solution for business models, services, and projects that facilitate better responsiveness to the different social challenges of the society (Ratten, 2019; Van Wijk et al., 2019). The new solution includes exchanging ideas and values, shifting roles and relationships, and integrating private capital with public support (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2019). The new solution is more effective, efficient, and sustainable for small business auto dealership owners by facilitating better social challenges (Marques et al., 2018). Organizational social competition is a part of a new culture of business empowerment, central to creating appreciable and significant social change in business improvement (Purtik & Arenas,

2019). Small business auto dealership owners should use the value of social competition strategy to generate influential social services that have economic viability to facilitate the organization (Marques et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should contribute to emerging markets through the context of social competition strategy. A corporate process that embeds social impact across the organization should create a social service competition strategy and relationships to engage, develop, and retain talented employees (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2019).

Organizational Economy Performance

The organizational economy performance of the RBV theory is an economic doctrine that can reformulate the traditional model of economic growth (Maletič et al., 2015). The organizational economy performance is associated with environmentally friendly management, ranging from internal performance benefits to external marketing benefits (Maletič et al., 2015). Small business auto dealership owners can build competitive resources in their operating system using an environmental management system standard associated with the triple bottom line performance benefits (Njoroge et al., 2019). These performance benefits include environmental, social, and market benefits to achieve a competitive advantage (Maletič et al., 2015; Njoroge et al., 2019). The organizational economy is defined as a new economic resource that introduces new goods and production methods (Costa et al., 2019). It also includes conquering a new source of supply of raw materials or half-manufactured goods, opening a new market, and carrying out the new organization of any industry (Costa et al., 2019). According to the RBV theory, the economic condition competitiveness of industrial enterprises is based on

proactive, active, reactive, and passive that ensure an increase in the quality of the manufactured products and the efficiency of the used resources (Carrera-Portugal, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should focus on the organizational economy necessary for successful competitive development based on economic resource competitiveness.

Because of the organizational economy performance, small business auto dealership owners should decrease expenses and increase workforce productivity; the firm leaders can ensure the market's competitiveness (Ofem et al., 2020). The current organizational economy is the critical stimulus for the civilized development of the World System's evolution (R. Li et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should manage and implement business development and solutions to increase the organization's survival, competitiveness, and future success factors (Bystrov et al., 2021). The organizational economy is among such factors that include implementing new materials, technologies, types of products, and organizational sustainability (Ofem et al., 2020; Omonov & Veretennikova, 2016). The factor of the organizational economy is a dominant factor of stable development, taking into account the restrictions in the inner and outer environment of business and corporate entities (Bystrov et al., 2021). The organizational economy is an important resource of stable development for small business auto dealership owners because economic growth in highly industrialized countries and international competitiveness are driven by competitive advantage and technological change (Maletič et al., 2015).

In the RBV theory, the organizational economy typically implements a new organizational method in the undertaking's business practice and competitive advantage (Dentoni et al., 2020). The organizational economy is necessary to increase operational efficiency, customer relationship, and employee satisfaction, improve and develop a firm's innovativeness, organizational improvement, and sustainability (Saha et al., 2020; YuSheng & Ibrahim, 2020). The organizational economy is often necessary for small business auto dealerships to succeed. Leaders can employ the organizational economy to create long-term competitive advantages and generate new management methods and business models, such as organizational sustainability (Dentoni et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners can use organizational sustainability to manage a business with new business ideas and practices for sustaining and expanding the business into the global market. Nur Fadiyah and Sazali (2019) explored the case of a Brazilian family-owned company of rubber products operating in health, education, and coatings based on organizational sustainability of business knowledge to develop and manage a business in the competitive environment. As a result, organizational sustainability has become a significant factor of the new millennium that leaders use for corporate social responsibility in business to enhance the long-term dynamic economic and environmental business performance (Nur Fadiyah & Sazali, 2019).

Market Development and Relationships

Market development and relationships of the RBV theory involve implementing a new marketing resource that can create a new value for customers and shareholders (Muharam et al., 2019). Market development and relationships are components of the

competitive economic strategy that represent a business strategic plan to incorporate the advances in business technology marketing and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing (Quaye & Mensah, 2019). In small business auto dealerships, market development and relationships are significant resources that they can use to gain a competitive advantage for the organizations, create new value for customers, and increase shareholder value (Quaye & Mensah, 2019). Market development and relationships are the generation and implementation of new business ideas and competitive advantages that leaders use to create, communicate, and deliver value to customers in the small business auto dealerships to compete with competitors (Muharam et al., 2019). Using market development and relationships strategy may increase customer marketing efficiency, gain an organization's competitive advantage, and create customer value and relationships (Alomari et al., 2019).

Market development and relationships also involve significant changes in product design and pricing. As a competitive market develops, new market resources become more critical (Krasnov et al., 2018). Developing new market resources helps managers improve their firm's competitive advantage and expand business opportunities (Gibb, 2006). Competitive market development is implementing a newly developing market resource involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion, or pricing (Krasnov et al., 2018). The strategic implementation of competitive marketing can lengthen the revenue stream from new and existing products by extending their marketplace lifespan (Alomari et al., 2019). In small business auto dealerships, market development and relationships are significant

marketing resources of production design, promotion, and pricing that can lengthen the stream of production (Alomari et al., 2019). Competitive market conceptualization might provide value by incorporating radical and incremental activities, distinguishing it from product and process innovation, maintaining the current or prospective customer as the primary stakeholder, creating a distinction between improvements and inventions, and embracing the boundary spanning perspective (Chou & Kimbrough, 2016). Market development and relationships also involve business products and services that can distinguish business improvement and maintain prospective customers as a primary stakeholders and value (Cave et al., 2019).

Small business leaders are the critical success factors for competitive market development and relationships strategy to find new marketing methods to sustain the organizations (Cave et al., 2019). Influential leaders who focus on competitive marketing and relationship could drive organizations to find new, innovative, and better methods of convincing existing and prospective customers of the value of the organization's products and services (Quaye & Mensah, 2019). Small businesses will succeed in a competitive advantage if leaders employ market development and relationship resources (Hoque & Yakob, 2017). Some valuable marketing resources include virtuous quality service and acceptable prices that leaders can use to achieve superior value (Sedunova & Golichenko, 2020). Quality service and affordable prices are the primary strategies business leaders use to improve organizational success in the competitive environment, maintain a sustainable competitive advantage, and increase profitability and long-term economic competitiveness (Shayestehfar & Yazdani, 2019). Providing quality service and fair

prices may result in repeat sales, improve positive word-of-mouth referrals, increase product differentiation, increase customer satisfaction, strengthen loyalty, and create trust (Shayestehfar & Yazdani, 2019). Leaders should develop customer focus on technology development, good price promotions to perform competitive transactions, and good after-sales service to avoid customer dissatisfaction (Sedunova & Golichenko, 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should improve the development of high levels of competitive marketing and its practical implementation to provide direct benefits to firm performance.

Competitive Service and Relationships

Competitive service and relationships of the RBV theory involve an intentional change in the new business services to customers (Syapsan, 2019). Competitive service and relationships are a significant resource of growth in firms that relates to the organizational economy by providing an intentional change in the business services, providing new benefits to the customer, and improving the service firm's profitability with business practice and financial management (Asgher & Hanif, 2018). Service firms innovate by changing the service or the companies' new services (Hosseini et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should change the service delivery processes or provide new service processes to meet customers' needs. New service processes include new or improved production, delivery, or distribution methods, often involving new information technologies (Syapsan, 2019). Competitive service and relationships may affect significant relationship roles of staff, strategic partners, and customers (Gomes et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should change the organizational and

managerial structure, service provider that supports service provision benefits and services to customers, and build customer relationships through service competition strategy (Gomes et al., 2018).

Leaders' ability in competitive service and relationships is the critical source for applying new service strategies to customers' needs (Gomes et al., 2018). As service firms, leaders' competitive edge lies in their ability and capability to acquire, absorb, and apply new information to the needs and frustrations of customers, competitors' service offerings, customers' service priorities, and the technologies available to support service delivery (Kwon et al., 2020). Export and import profitability is frequently linked to the service competitions that offer customers a new or innovative service in the market (Taghreed et al., 2019). Blinda et al. (2019) indicated that customers would pay up to a 10% premium for new services that address a previously unmet need. The premium services may consent firms to recover the extra costs of developing and servicing an import market without jeopardizing profitability (Taghreed et al., 2019).

Importing and exporting competitive services and relationships are significant for small business auto dealership owners to facilitate their organizations to increase high profits. Beynon et al. (2020) noted that several ways link competitive service and relationships to export and import readiness. To effectively resource a firm's export and import initiative, leaders should introduce internal organizational competitions to handle different customer demands (García-Sánchez et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should find the most profitable products in an export and import market if they offer a high-quality service or service delivery process new to the target market (García-

Sánchez et al., 2018). To adapt to the cultural norms of a firm's target market, small business auto dealership owners should change the features of their organizations' service or the assistance they may deliver to customers (Beynon et al., 2020). Using high-quality, competitive service that links to import and export readiness may include handling different demands, finding the most valuable products, and changing service manners to help the organizations increase profits and growth (García-Sánchez et al., 2018; Masoomzadeh et al., 2019).

Improving competitive service and relationships may increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Martin-Rios et al. (2019) noted that competitive service and relationships focus on competing by changing the rules and making competitors irrelevant. Small business auto dealership owners can achieve competitive service and connections to increase customer satisfaction and strengthen customer loyalty, translating into increased repeat purchases, cross-selling related services, and recommendations to others (Martin-Rios et al., 2019). Heng et al. (2020) discussed how firms could benefit from competitive service and relationships by improving operational efficiency—well-chosen organizational competition can help decrease production costs and increase profitability. Firms also benefit by increasing staff retention—finding appropriately skilled staff is often challenging for service firms. The challenge of generating new ideas and the satisfaction of contributing to success can motivate the team and help attract and retain skilled persons (Heng et al., 2020).

An additional benefit, customers are more likely to be loyal to a service firm with low staff turnover (Abdi et al., 2018). Enhancing staff skills—one unexpected benefit that

service firms report from competitive service and relationships is that their staff can learn new ways of collaborating and interacting with customers through the business process (Abdi et al., 2018; Freixanet et al., 2021). Enhancing staff skills often includes heightened respect for different perspectives, which translates into greater customer satisfaction. Increasing marketplace recognition—as the competition becomes visible to customers, the reputation of the innovative firm is enhanced, and the likelihood of being viewed as a market leader increases (Heng et al., 2020). Improving operational efficiency, increasing staff retention, increasing marketplace recognition, and enhancing employees' skills are significant factors of competitive service and relationships that can help leaders increase profitability.

Competitive service and relationships also involve customers' needs and management of the business process. Manca et al. (2018) indicated the success or failure of competitive service and relationships linked to two primary factors: correct reading of the market and what matters to customers and appropriate management of the business process. While firms usually give explicit attention to the market factors, they are much less likely to manage the business process (Manca et al., 2018). Robbins and O'Gorman (2016) indicated some principles that may facilitate leaders to manage the business process successfully. Small business auto dealership owners should ensure that the business delights customers while meeting the needs of all stakeholders and remaining financially viable (H. Li et al., 2020). Leaders should consider introducing a new performance measure of the return on innovation investment (H. Li et al., 2020).

Providing a vision to drive the change process is an effective strategy for firms. Leaders should think about competition in the company and then change the physical environment to reflect that vision (Lysek et al., 2019). For example, if leaders want employees to brainstorm implementation ideas, create a space where the challenge can be posted, and employees can add their thoughts (Lysek et al., 2019). Firms should provide a risk-tolerant environment where one does not expect always to succeed (Lysek et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should find a way to recognize the creative work of employees that does not result in an adaptive competition, such as circulating a list of ideas proposed, with the names of the proposers, or creating an excellent *try* award (Gharleghi et al., 2018). Using principles to manage the competition process, small business auto dealership owners should make sure the business delights customers, introduce new services, and change the physical environment to reflect the organization's visions. Small business auto dealership owners should provide risk-tolerant environmental work and find a new way to recognize employees' creative work (Anning-Dorson et al., 2017).

Establishing a lifelong learning orientation for employees is the factor of service development and relationship that can improve an organization's success. Small business auto dealership owners should select a lifelong learning orientation that involves all organization members (Hsieh et al., 2019). Leaders should build choice and ongoing learning into employees' work-life by letting employees choose what projects to work on or allocating time each week to work on their ideas (Lian & Ling, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should support creative thinking in a diverse, information-rich

environment (Weinberger et al., 2016). Small business auto dealership owners should establish a lifelong learning orientation to improve business successes and growth, including letting employees choose what project to work on, allocating time for employees to work, and supporting creative thinking in a diverse (Pigozne et al., 2019; Rowland et al., 2017).

The creative process may require some inputs to stimulate new concepts (Reibenspiess et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should ensure that employees are exposed to new ideas through techniques (Reibenspiess et al., 2020). For example, they ask employees to report on the implications of a new trend, encourage employees to report on their training implications, subscribe to a range of journals for employees, and arrange staff interchange with sister organizations (Reibenspiess et al., 2020). Firms should provide a cross-functional systems perspective to analyze the impact of change and oversee implementation (Wegman et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should build multiple perspectives using cross-sector teams to brainstorm new ideas or encourage staff to role-play different customer and staff perspectives and resolve differences.

Organizational Business Mode Strategy

Organizational business mode strategy is the sum of the actions that an organization intends to achieve long-term goals by using the resources of production, marketing, inventory, and other business activities to gain a competitive advantage (Nadeem et al., 2018). Organizational business mode strategy must be compatible with other factors to improve business performance (Yuliansyah et al., 2017). Therefore, to

make small business auto dealerships continuously increase business performance, it is necessary to have organizational structures and work processes align with their business resources and strategy (Nadeem et al., 2018). Organizational business mode strategy is about the competitive advantage that small business auto dealership owners can use to facilitate organizations' goals of long-term prosperity, success, and affluence (Verma & Sharma, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should need business resources and strategy to allocate resources most effectively and successfully.

The business strategy is particularly significant in resource allocation decisions (Al-Omouh et al., 2018). The business resources and strategy are concerned with doing an individual business to survive, grow, and be profitable long-term (Al-Omouh et al., 2018). The three modes of business resources and strategy are planning, entrepreneurial, and adaptive, which can be useful for leaders to achieve competitive advantage and maintain the organizations (Cavaleri & Shabana, 2018). Planning mode is one of the most significant strategies of management processes leaders use to ensure sufficient resources and stability to conduct a comprehensive organizational goal and sustain business in competitive advantage (Li, 2021). In the entrepreneurial mode, strategy is developed mainly by a strong visionary leader who actively searches for new business opportunities, is growth-oriented, and is willing to make bold decisions or shift strategies whenever necessary (Kissi et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2018). An adaptive mode is an approach to strategy formulation in which leaders emphasize taking small, incremental steps and reacting to problems rather than seeking opportunities and attempting to satisfy several organizational power groups (Deng et al., 2018; Lei & Liao, 2019). The right choice

depends on contingency variables such as the size, volume, and age of the business firms and decision-makers power (Eggert et al., 2017). As a result, organizational business mode strategy, including business planning, entrepreneurship, and adaptive modes, are the practical implementations of the primary goals that small business auto dealership owners can use to sustain organizations' performance and gain competitive advantage (Stosic-Panic, 2019).

Planning mode strategies are the factors of organizational management activities that leaders use to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, and ensure employees work toward the organization's goal (Santana-Sarmiento & Velázquez-Medina, 2021). Business leaders worldwide are adopting strategic planning to face business challenges in a highly competitive and rapidly changing business environment (Jamali et al., 2017). Effective business planning modes are critical to an entrepreneurial company's long-term success and the ability to raise capital and grow successfully in the competitive environment (Guerry & De Feyter, 2012). Influential small business auto dealership owners who prepare business plans should tell a story, make an argument and conservatively predict the future. Breeze and Pamala (2020) indicated that all business leaders have different stories to tell, distant views to make, goals to achieve, and unlike futures to predict. Leaders should resist the temptation to copy others or follow a rigid outline (Arriagada-Benítez et al., 2017).

Planning mode strategies are a strategic approach that includes a clear statement of objectives, a plan of action to reach those objectives, and a systematic analysis of the organization and the environment (Breeze & Pamala, 2020). Small business auto

dealership owners should achieve and follow the business strategy of planning mode when the organization is mature and well established (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should agree with the organization's objectives, have adequate resources to engage in opportunity analysis, and have low environmental uncertainty (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). The business-planning mode is significant to an organization's long-term success and the ability to raise capital successfully in the competitive environment.

Entrepreneurial and adaptive modes are significant factors that leaders use to gain a competitive advantage in the market. In the entrepreneurial mode strategy, small organizations with a strong leader take full responsibility for planning on behalf of the production department with entrepreneurial skills, good in planning, organizing, and motivation to sustain business in the competitive environment (Harrison et al., 2018; Kissi et al., 2020). The business strategy of the adaptive mode is a strategic approach characterized by the organization's objectives, and the means to achieve these are continually adjusted (Breeze & Pamala, 2020; Lei & Liao, 2019). The adaptive model of strategy making is the most effective strategy when environmental uncertainty is very high (Kyobe, 2008). Small business auto dealership owners should use adaptive strategy mode and focus management's attention on the short-term when internal power struggles make it impossible for senior management to agree on where the organization should be going (Kyobe, 2008; Shu, 2017). Leaders should use adaptive strategy mode to gain a competitive advantage (Koronis & Ponis, 2018).

The business strategy of the entrepreneurial mode presents a strategic approach in which a strong leader, usually the organization's founder, draws on personal judgment, decision, and experience to form an intuitive image of the organization's direction (Vila-Lopez & White, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should realize the business strategy of the entrepreneurial mode characterized by bold decision-making in which periods of pause are followed by periods of sprinting (Harrison et al., 2018). They should understand the entrepreneurial mode strategy that is more likely to be effective when the organization is young and small, when a single, influential leader has an intimate knowledge of the business, or when crises occur (Breeze & Pamala, 2020; Harrison et al., 2018). The entrepreneurial mode focuses on opportunities more than problems, but the adaptive mode is characterized by reactive solutions to existing problems rather than a proactive search for new opportunities (Capello & Lenzi, 2016).

Small Businesses

Small businesses create most of the jobs in the United States. Small businesses play an instrumental role in the U.S. economy, produce most of the nation's new jobs, employ half of the private sector workforce, and provide half of the personal actual gross domestic product (Blankson et al., 2018; Downie, 2017). Small businesses that innovate are most likely to grow and expand the firms into large businesses and become a source of highly technologically advanced, high-quality productions and services and high-paying jobs in the future (Galan-Mashenene & Kumburu, 2020; Jones & Graham, 2018). The trend of small businesses, especially patenting, is becoming a focal point in applied economics, management principles, and policymaking (Galan-Mashenene & P.

Kumburu, 2020). U.S. Small Business Administration (2016) indicated that small businesses represented 99.7% of all the U.S. employer firms, and approximately 80% of small businesses create new jobs. Roughly 9,500 entrepreneurs start new businesses each year, of which nearly 26 new businesses start daily (Coetzer et al., 2017; Dele-Ijagbulu et al., 2020; U.S. Small Business Administration, 2016). As a result, small businesses are drivers of the U.S. economy that can give small business owners entrepreneurial spirits and create more jobs for the communities.

Small businesses are a necessity for adapting to changes in the competitive business environment. Small businesses generate economic value in employment, goods and services, exports, taxation income, and innovation (Dreyer et al., 2017). Small businesses also operate more efficiently than large firms but are more vulnerable to failure because leaders lack business resources and strategies (Simsek et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners may require flexibility in operations to assist businesses in responding to changes in the business climate, product, and business life cycles (Coetzer et al., 2017; Dele-Ijagbulu et al., 2020). Outcomes from small businesses depend on internal and external factors in the broad environment in which they operate (Dele-Ijagbulu et al., 2020). Internal and external factors include capabilities, resources, and competitive strategies (Vatuiu & Lazaroiu, 2019). Lyu et al. (2019) stated organizational leaders use resources, abilities, and competitive approaches to determine organization performance. Small business auto dealership owners can use internal and external factors to achieve company performance, operational business services, and

competitive advantages to sustain a business in the competitive environment (Lyu et al., 2019).

Small Businesses Failure

Small business failure involves many reasons that can affect the organization. Kücher et al. (2018) clarified the primary cause of small business failure. Small business owners that start with undercapitalized or insufficient capital may have a potential or higher chance of failure in the business industry (Blankson et al., 2018; Kücher et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should understand the effect of small business owners' failure because they are not keep updated information or accurate records (Yang & Del-Carmen, 2019). They do not use adequate financial controls, do not develop specific business plans, and do not use professional advisors (Yang & Del-Carmen, 2019). Small businesses managed by managers without previous industry experience, without management experience, without any college education, and marketing skills may have a higher chance of business failure (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2018; Yang & Del-Carmen, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should recognize those small businesses operated by leaders without experience, capabilities, and education, who select products/services that are too new or old, start during a recession, and may have a higher chance of failure (Schwarz et al., 2021).

Small businesses that provide products that cannot attract and retain quality employees may have a higher chance of failure than firms operated by leaders who select products/services in the growth stage and at the right time (Schwarz et al., 2021; Vivel-Búa & Lado-Sestayo, 2021). Younger people start a business, a business started by one

person, and business owners whose parents did not own a company have a higher chance of failure (Vivel-Búa & Lado-Sestayo, 2021). Small business auto dealership owners should identify leaders who lack business resources, planning, capabilities, and insufficient capital, start the business for the wrong reasons, and poor location may have a higher chance of increasing business failure (Eskreis-Winkler & Fishbach, 2019; Raynard, 2017).

Business strategic planning involves business success and growth. Leaders lacking proper planning is one reason small businesses fail, are unsuccessful, and go out of business (Van Al-Shami et al., 2019). Entrepreneurs fail to create strategic business plans, such as workforce needs, analysis of competitors, sales and expense forecasts, and marketing budgets (Ajayi & Olaniyan, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should have a strategic business plan (Souza et al., 2019). The business plan should include where the business will be in the next few months to the next few years, contain measurable goals and results, and have specific lists with dates and deadlines (Souza et al., 2019). Nizaeva and Coskun (2019) identified that business entrepreneurs expand more than one firm that has experienced bankruptcy. Small business auto dealership owners should decide about expansion only after carefully reviewing, researching, and analyzing what they should need to increase new employees, facilities, and systems (Souza et al., 2019; Wapshott & Mallett, 2018). Business planning is necessary for company growth and success (Van Trang et al., 2019). Using business plans can let companies track growth, establish a budget, and prepare for unforeseen changes in the marketplace (Van Trang et al., 2019).

Networking is an effective strategy that business owners can use to advertise their products to attract customers. While traditional advertising methods are still helpful, networking is the best way to market the business, such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (McCorkle & Alexander, 2019; Ter Wal et al., 2020). According to the research firm Clutch, Shafi et al. (2019) identified that nearly 46% of all small businesses do not have one network. Small business auto dealership owners should create one of the network sites by using any number of self-service platforms to promote the business so customers can perceive, recognize, and observe (Wapshott & Mallett, 2018). YuSheng and Ibrahim (2020) indicated that lack of product differentiation is a small business problem. Product differentiation is a marketing process that displays product differences (Ghosh, 2021). Ghosh (2021) stated that product differentiation makes a product more attractive, good-looking, and gorgeous by contrasting its unique qualities with similar effects.

Successful product differentiation creates a competitive advantage for the product's owner, as customers view the products as unique or better (Puzio et al., 2020). Small business owners of auto dealerships must build a strong product differentiation plan to compete effectively, such as a unique value proposition (UVP); without UVP, the organization will get lost in the competition (Puzio et al., 2020; Sherman, 2017). Networking is an important personal skill for business people and necessary for entrepreneurs (McCorkle & Alexander, 2019). Networking in the entrepreneurial ecosystem is a productive approach that can help small business owners of auto

dealerships build strong relationships with other entrepreneurs from different nationalities and fields of interest (McCorkle & Alexander, 2019).

The Key Constructs of Business Models

The fundamental constructs of business models are creating new business models that better satisfy customers' needs than existing ones (Aversa et al., 2019). The fundamental constructs of business models are related to strategic management, administration, and marketing decision-making process in organizations (Du et al., 2020). In the auto industry, the basic constructs of business models include small businesses, strategic marketing decisions, business processes, business methods, internal contextual factors, and external contextual factors (Schneider & Clauß, 2020). Strategic marketing decisions are significant factors for small business auto dealerships regarding business function and financial performance (Dadzie et al., 2021). The important elements in strategic marketing decisions influence most functional areas of business management and decision-making (Dadzie et al., 2021).

Small business auto dealerships are significant independent organizations, and the principal power of decision-making exists in particular individuals with ownerships (Truong et al., 2017). The business process is the category of business concepts or variables throughout the appearance of the need for strategic marketing decisions and the final obligation and commitment (Sun, Xiao, et al., 2018). The business method represents how each phase or step of the strategic decision-making process that small business operators or leaders of auto dealerships can conduct those procedures (Truong et al., 2017). Internal contextual factors are significant characteristics associated with the

manager's decision-making process and the organization itself, affecting how they perform the strategic marketing decision (Love et al., 2021). External contextual factors are the fundamental forces external to the business, influencing how they conduct the strategic marketing decision or decision-making (R. Kumar et al., 2019). The business model innovations are strategic management, administration, and marketing decision-making processes (Chattopadhyay, 2018; Love et al., 2021). With these business models, small business auto dealership owners can solve the business problem by identifying the customers, engaging with customers' needs, delivering customer satisfaction, and monetizing the customers' value (Schneider & Clauß, 2020).

Competitive Business Model

The business model has become a strong competitive advantage in the marketplace. The business model is a critical resource to success with the current globalization of economic activities (Akmaeva et al., 2020). The business model is a multi-dimensional concept, which goes beyond, knowledge, expertise, skills, and technology competition to include new means of distribution, advertising, promotion, marketing, or design (Kang & Na, 2020). The business model is the driver for business growth in the high-tech sectors of the economy. Organizational leaders can apply the business model as a differentiator to conceive, visualize, distribute, and deliver novelty to the marketplace (Saravia-Matus et al., 2018). The business model includes new products and unique concepts supporting financial sustainability, viability, and capability (Kang & Na, 2020). Organizational leaders can apply the business model to strengthen the corporate mission and the processes for developing and implementing new concepts

(Kang & Na, 2020). The business model is the significant driver of business growth and success that can develop new products, create new market systems and rules, and provide new concepts for administrative practicability and sustainability (Aversa et al., 2019; Kang & Na, 2020).

The business model is important in a time of instability, which provides the small business firm with a way to break out of the intense competition (Desyllas et al., 2020). The primary goal of the business model is to realize new revenue sources by improving service and product value to meet customer needs (Kang & Na, 2020). The digital age has become an impetus for business models, as technology has dramatically changed how companies operate innovative productions and deliver to customers (Aversa et al., 2019). The global marketplace has further driven the need for the business model, as companies must react to stiffer international competition and the increased potential for systemic risk (Kazmane, 2018). The international competition and systemic risk force companies to turn to business models to stay competitive and foster growth in the competitive global marketplace (Kazmane, 2018).

Using the business model to create a sustainable competitive advantage, business environment, and differentiation is significant for organizations in the marketplaces (Aversa et al., 2019; Eckhardt, 2013). Small business auto dealership owners use the business model to improve the effectiveness, competence, capability, ability, and efficiency of business core processes and functions (Kazmane, 2018). They use the business model to provide opportunities for organizations to specialize, focus, and shift quickly to seize business growth by helping the organizations to become more nimble,

dexterous, reactive, responsive, sociable, and approachable in the business industry (Jose et al., 2020). Innovating on business models and operations can create opportunities for cost savings and lead to additional revenue generation opportunities (Aversa et al., 2019). Using the business model to create new paths to growth is the most important for organizations (Aversa et al., 2019). The business model includes choices for the mission, vision, core values, brand identity, preferences for core competencies, processes, strategic partners, options for managing customer relationships, and choices for products and services (Pattinson, 2020).

Another significant strategic management and practice business model is the powerhouse (Agathokleous, 2021). The powerhouse is the Best Management Practices Institute (BMPI) which aspires to support small business individuals, groups, and organizations in the community at large that aids them in achieving business excellence and outstanding through the best management strategies and practices (Shutt & Liddle, 2020). The powerhouse concept is based on the three methods: superior strategy, middle strategy, and inferior strategy (Borjalilu & Ghambari, 2018). Borjalilu and Ghambari (2018) stated that it is also based on the six focuses: customer focus, process focus, human capital, competition capital, power leadership, and power performance. Small business auto dealership owners can use the powerhouse concept of three methods, and six focus on sustaining a competitive advantage (Agathokleous, 2021; Shutt & Liddle, 2020). Morales et al. (2019) noted that organizational leaders could use the six strategic drivers to achieve continuous improvements, developments, and enhancements in enterprises at different levels with the application, function, and relevance of the best

management models and advanced information technology. Small business auto dealership owners could apply the six strategic drivers as best practices to sustain their competitive advantage and market status (McMillan, 2019).

Small business auto dealership owners can establish a powerhouse to develop small businesses into a regional technology and service center (Liddle, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners integrate facilities to help organizations use the latest management tools to improve and build their competitive advantage (Liddle, 2019; McMillan, 2019). Powerhouse's initiatives plan to create images for small business auto dealerships as a regional service center (Shutt & Liddle, 2020). Small business auto dealership owners can build a culture of service productivity and quality in the organizations and improve competitive advantage by developing, improving, and disseminating effective business practices or good service practices (Borjalilu & Ghambari, 2018; McMillan, 2019).

Value Creation and Resource Integration

Customer value creation is significant for firms to gain a competitive advantage (Kim, 2019). Meng et al. (2020) stated that customers' roles are a source of firms' performance that are considered value creators (Leroi-Werelds et al., 2017). On the other hand, firms consider service providers where service could be the use of resources to support customers' everyday practices, physical, mental, virtual, and possessive, thereby facilitating their value creation (Taheri et al., 2017). Firms thus act as value facilitators by providing resources representing potential value to customers, such as goods, services, and information (Leroi-Werelds et al., 2017). One of the firm's critical supportive roles is

offering and communicating compelling value propositions to current and potential customers (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2018; Oyner & Korelina, 2016).

Value propositions are often treated as a firm's promise about the potential value of an offering (Oyner & Korelina, 2016). Value propositions should also acknowledge the customer's role in value creation (Oyner & Korelina, 2016). More specifically, value propositions should communicate the potential value of the offering and the customer's resource-integrated position, which is required to transform this potential value into real value (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2018; Mahmoud et al., 2018). From small business auto dealerships' viewpoint, their roles in value creation are to propose value propositions, contribute resources and places, and provide primary conditions for customers' creation behavior (Leroi-Werelds et al., 2017). Small business auto dealership owners and customers should achieve mutual assistance and cooperation in creating value and achieving "win-win" benefits (Mahmoud et al., 2018). Value creation emphasizes collaboration between small business auto dealership owners and customers (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2018). The focus is on improving enterprise production efficiency and enhancing customer participation in organizational processes (Hariyati et al., 2019; Meng et al., 2020). Small auto dealership owners need to support a product or service's lifecycle to create more value for customers (Meng et al., 2020).

Customers and small business auto dealership owners interact through customer resource integrations (France et al., 2020). Value creation is an activity in which participants collaborate through direct customer resource interactions to promote one or both (customers and small business auto dealerships) parties' value contributions (France

et al., 2020). Customer resources are the key to revealing the value creation mechanism (Bu et al., 2020; France et al., 2020). If value creation is easily understood comprehensively, it will inevitably involve a deep understanding of customer resources' influence on customer value in the creation process (Bu et al., 2020). Customer resources include intelligence, experience, physical strength, emotions, physics, finances, time, behavior, relationships, society, culture, roles, customers' abilities, and wishes (Meng et al., 2020). Customer resources in value creation are the factors acquired or controlled by customers who can create value (Åslund & Bäckström, 2017; Leroi-Werelds et al., 2017). Customers obtain value creation through interaction with small business auto dealerships.

Customer focus is another resource that considers a solid contributor to the business's success that involves ensuring all aspects of the organization by putting customer satisfaction first (France et al., 2020; X. Luo et al., 2018). Customer focus means that the activities of the companies intend to benefit the customer, but the customer is seen from the companies' perspective (Goyal et al., 2017). Efforts are usually made to gain information about the customers' needs and want, although always in a framework that originates in the companies' view of the product and its features (Islamgaleyev et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners need to gain entry into the customers' perspective and adopt the customers' viewing of the product (Lesakova & Rehak, 2020). To fully develop the potential quality, small business auto dealerships need to move beyond simple customer focus and create a more profound customer understanding (Lesakova & Rehak, 2020). Customers can use advanced information

technology to access small business auto dealerships' websites and obtain product information online before they enter the store (Duan et al., 2018).

Owing to the widespread of using the Internet, many small businesses of the market environment and customer demands are undergoing, experiencing, and suffering drastic changes (Lesakova & Rehak, 2020; Luo & Homburg, 2007). Based on this circumstance, to win over the market, small business auto dealership owners should promote customer-oriented marketing strategies and service qualities, enhance customers' satisfaction with their needs, and use state-of-the-art technologies (Cayre et al., 2018; Duan et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should improve customer relations by understanding market realities, market situations, customer expectations, customer fulfillment, and customer satisfaction (Duan et al., 2018; Lim et al., 2020).

High customer fulfillment and satisfaction are about organizations building business relationships with customers and transferring to loyal, long-term customers (Lim et al., 2020; Yang & Zhang, 2018). By building relationships with customers, small business auto dealership owners should provide, create, direct, and sustain high function and performance business services through the identification, classification, operation, deployment, consumption, alignment, implementation, and execution of marketing strategies, business plans, and business objectives (Mirarab et al., 2019; Yang & Zhang, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should ensure that business processes, procedures, practices, and methods used to design, develop, deliver, distribute, support, and provide business services to customers continue to function and performance

efficiently and effectively (Goyal et al., 2017; Mirarab et al., 2019). The significant resource of customer focus is to improve customer relationships, understand customer expectations, customer fulfillment, and customer satisfaction, and efficiently provide business services to customers (Yang & Zhang, 2018).

Business Process Management and Performance

Business process management (BPM) involves managing business activities of organizations' performances and competitive advantages (Djedovic et al., 2018). The BPM is defined as a discipline supporting business processes using methods, techniques, and software to design, enact, control, and analyze operational processes involving humans, organizations, applications, documents, and other sources of information (Bucher & Winter, 2009; Djedovic et al., 2018). Using BPM can provide high-quality customer service to achieve total customer satisfaction and fulfillment (Zelt et al., 2019). The management team of auto dealerships should have the high technology of streamlined systems and efficient business processes that aid in quickly responding to customers (Bressolles & Lang, 2020; Zelt et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should develop business process management, enhance cross-functional cooperation systems in control, increase staff communication, and improve work efficiency, keys or factors to business excellence and outstanding performance (Yang & Zhang, 2018).

The business function information should show business health and support daily operational business processes (Balashov et al., 2018; Giacosa et al., 2018). Each business service should have its important function and performance indicators, which

must meet customer needs and ensure that best practices could implement to avoid and stay away from common business service issues (S. Lee et al., 2021). Small business auto dealership owners should ensure that all the employees are trained, motivated, responsible, capable, knowledgeable, and competent to constant customer expectations.

Small business management faces uncertainty because of changes in market demands. To overcome these problems, leadership must design and develop the desired strategy for future adaptation to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage in the market era (Guangxi et al., 2020). Leadership power could influence others through the ability of leaders (B. Kumar et al., 2019). Leadership power can attain new heights in business achievement, accomplishment, success, and competitive advantage (B. Kumar et al., 2019). Small business firms should need strong leaders to apply talented staff to successfully implement innovative customers and marketing strategies through an effective working process in the business industry (Stead & Elliott, 2019). The management team of auto dealerships should provide leadership development, enhance the leadership system, and implement strategic management to help organizations establish strong leadership (Stead & Elliott, 2019).

The firm can create sustainable bridges in the different functional areas to develop, increase, and improve process capability, competence, and profit and loss (P&L) (Schwarz Müller et al., 2017; Sperber & Linder, 2018). Small business leaders can build strong process managers, supervisors, and P&L business ownership; consolidate and combine process execution, achievement, and implementation of operations over time (Sperber & Linder, 2018). The management team of auto dealerships should elevate the

relationship profile of the operations workforce within the firms regarding business process management (Jayaraman et al., 2018; Sulieman, 2017). Small business auto dealership owners should use the power of leadership to achieve an organizational goal and a competitive advantage (Sulieman, 2017). Improving and managing power leadership can help small auto dealership owners increase an effective working process and gain a competitive advantage.

Performance measurement systems (PMS) involve achieving excellent business results, increasing a high profit in the market, and gaining a competitive advantage (Waqar et al., 2020). The PMS of marketing competition is fiercer than ever in the business environment because the competition is flowing, circulating, and exceeding at a frantic pace (Jin & Smith, 2020; Waqar et al., 2020). Even when small businesses have achieved high profitability in the market and gained a competitive advantage, small business auto dealership owners should still attempt their best to strengthen their management and competitive strategies (Batko, 2017). Specific in customer services, streamlined business process, human capital, innovation capital, and effective leadership to achieve outstanding PMS in the industry (Batko, 2017). The management team of auto dealerships should assist their organizations in developing a balanced PMS in business, thoroughly assessing their organizational performance, and classify the business performance gap between competitors and organizations so that continuous improvements and developments can occur in the future (Maestrini et al., 2018).

The PMS also involves improving business dynamics and organizations' performances to attain a competitive advantage (Elgazzar et al., 2019). The PMS is a set

of business performance indicators that can reflect, replicate, and imitate organizations' key value-adding activities, actions, and functions (Elgazzar et al., 2019; Lisi, 2018). An effective PMS plays an important part in supporting managers in tracking organizational performance to determine the degree to which strategic objectives have been met (Asiaei & Bontis, 2020). Companies fail to fully reap their benefits if their underlying resources and capacities, mainly knowledge resources, are not appropriately managed (Asiaei & Bontis, 2020). Small business auto dealership owners can use organizational control systems, such as PMS, to control, influence, and influence employees to complete tasks and exert efforts in confident, positive, and specific ways to increase organizational performance and sustain competitive advantage (Jha et al., 2017).

Asiaei and Bontis (2020) noted that the design of organizational control systems, like PMS, must be a sufficiently innovative strategy to attain a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners could benefit from knowledge-related capacities and creativity, such as knowledge management (Asiaei & Bontis, 2020). The PMS can play a role as a lever to facilitate the management of small business auto dealerships' knowledge-based functions by providing relevant information on the firm's strategic resources to customers (Asiaei & Bontis, 2020; Couturier & Sklavounos, 2019). Couturier and Sklavounos (2019) also indicated that some advantages of knowledge management factors, such as improved communication and relationship with customers, supported employee growth and development, and enhanced organizational agility, might indirectly affect organizations' performance through the mediating effect of PMS.

Transition

Section 1 introduced the core of the doctoral study, including (a) the background of the study, (b) the problem statement, (c) the purpose statement, (d) the nature of study, (e) the research question, (f) interview questions, and (g) conceptual framework. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore business strategies in the small business auto dealership owners used the management skills, knowledge, and practices to sustain their organizations for more than 5 years in the competitive environment. The nature of the study includes the qualitative method and case study design in the research study. The conceptual framework of theory innovation is related to the business problem, as well as the business innovation, management strategies, business strategies of competitive advantages, and the research method. Section 1 also included the definition of terms, the significance of the study, the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and the literature review. The literature review included information regarding business strategies and knowledge that influence management decisions and choices made by small business owners.

In Section 2, I describe the data collection section of the information criteria in detail to offer data collection instrument, technique, and analysis process regarding how to collect and analyze data, validate, and reliable instruments. Section 2 also explains the research method and design, followed by a description of the target population, sample size, and sampling methods. A detailed description of the data collection instrument, data collection technique, data analysis plan, confidentiality procedures, and the validity and reliability of the study instrument is in section 2. Section 3 may include an introduction

including the purpose statement, research question, findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change/behaviors, recommendations for action and further study, and concludes with researcher reflections.

Section 2: The Project

Small business leaders have been experiencing the effects and the consequences of business competition to gain a competitive advantage. Gaining a competitive advantage is a significant issue for many small business owners to sustain their organizations' competitive market (Gorynia, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should use competitive resources to develop the business skills, management, performance, strategies, and practices required for business success (Abu-Rumman, 2018; Sołoducho-Pelc & Sulich, 2020). In Section 2, I describe the components of my study, which include: (a) the purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) participants, (d) research method and design, (e) population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection instruments, (h) data collection technique, (i) data organization technique, (j) data analysis, and (k) reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain organizations beyond 5 years. The targeted population was three small business auto dealership owners in Sacramento, California who used strategies to sustain business operations beyond 5 years. The study results may contribute to social change by reducing business failures and improving organizational practices in the small business automobile industry. Leaders may use the findings to create additional jobs for local communities using and implementing a data-driven strategic plan for new auto dealerships startups.

Role of the Researcher

I was the primary instrument for data collection in the research study (see Ajumobi et al., 2018). The role of a researcher is to formulate the research question, select an appropriate research method and design, collect the data, and analyze the data (Ajumobi et al., 2018; Suh, 2018). I conducted semistructured interviews with each of the study participants. A researcher may collect data through personal interviews or focus groups, conducting in-depth interviews, making observations and recording notes, and taking photographs (Nelliot et al., 2019). Conducting qualitative interviews is a challenging research activity for researchers (Frew & Breheny, 2020). My role as a qualitative researcher entailed participating in all phases of this research study by recruiting potential participants, selecting an appropriate research method, collecting data, transcribing recordings, and analyzing data.

My relationship with the topic of small auto dealership sustainability derived from being an emerging small business auto dealer since 2008. My work experience was as a professional car salesperson for 5 years in the automobile industry. As a professional car salesperson for 5 years, I had experienced the struggles of small business auto dealerships in my community that struggled with decreased profitability and had difficulty sustaining their organizations.

Researchers should follow the principles of the Belmont Report while conducting a research study to achieve research goals and objectives (Favaretto et al., 2020). The Belmont Report summarizes the basic ethical principles and guidelines for protecting human subjects of research identified by the National Commission (Adashi et al., 2018;

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). The Belmont Report includes the differences between research and practice and addresses three basic ethical principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Favaretto et al., 2020). To ensure that all human subjects are unharmed, researchers should respect all participants by treating everyone as an autonomous person and approaching them in a just manner. In my role as a researcher, I purposefully selected participants to eliminate vulnerable humans in line with Belmont guidelines and principles. The use of the Belmont Report protocol included obtaining informed consent from willing participants and maintaining their confidentiality. The Belmont Report also recognizes the personal dignity and special protection of participants with diminished autonomy (Adashi et al., 2018). I kept participants' information secure and ensured adherence to ethical limitations by following the Belmont Report's principles and guidelines for protecting human subjects within the research protocol.

The experiences of previous researchers are critical to a research study. Kishishita et al. (2019) described how bias can occur in any research phase, including study design or data collection, as well as in the data analysis process. Bias management is a significant challenge for qualitative researchers who use interviews to collect data (Prater et al., 2017). During every research study stage, researchers must be mindful of possible biases and deliberate on strategies to mitigate biases (Ayorinde et al., 2020). To reduce bias, researchers should reduce nonverbal expressions during the interview process (Ayorinde et al., 2020). While researchers cannot eliminate the research study process in their experiences, they can take measures to mitigate these influences' effect on the

research findings (Suh, 2018). In this study, I reduced bias by maintaining a high ethical standard through honesty, professional competence, and reading articles related to the research study. Marino (2020) stated that researchers can focus on self-understanding of the topic area and the impact of their expectations. I mitigated bias by focusing on understanding the topic research area and my expectations as a qualitative researcher.

I also used reflective journaling to ensure that my actions were ethical manner during the interview process. Werner et al. (2018) recommended implementing a journaling process to ensure the exclusion of personal bias, morals, or beliefs when researchers conduct qualitative research. Researchers should use reflective journaling as a resource to ensure the mitigation of personal bias (Geibel et al., 2021). I maintained a journal to manage, determine, and reduce any potential bias that could affect the data collection in the research study. To avoid a personal preference, ethical protection for each participant is significant during the study (Richardson et al., 2017). I provided trustworthiness by informing participants that their confidential information would remain secure, thereby minimizing risks and maximizing their benefits. Participants received assurance that their personal identity would be strictly protected and that only I could listen to their interview audio recordings and interpret their verbatim transcriptions.

The interview protocol is the foundation of qualitative interviews. An interview protocol increases the reliability and consistency of a research study, as researchers are bound to follow the study process of data collection (Wright et al., 2018; Yin, 2016). Researchers ask exploratory research questions that assist participants in providing data

and carefully listen to the responses from participants to get a deeper understanding (Saddour, 2020). As a qualitative researcher, I conducted face-to-face interviews using semistructured interview questions to encourage the exchange of follow-up questions to understand participants' responses better. I planned to use the interview protocol as a guideline to keep the participants gathering relevant information in the allotted timeframe. Qualitative researchers rely on interview protocols to achieve research commonality, consistency, and reliability (Hollin et al., 2020). The interview protocol is an instrument of inquiry describing the interview process related to the aims of a study and as an instrument for a conversation about a particular topic (Hollin et al., 2020). An interview protocol (see Appendix A) was used to ensure that the same procedures were followed with each participant during the interviews.

Participants

Researchers use eligibility criteria to select participants for their study (Oczkowski et al., 2017). Qualitative researchers recruit participants with in-depth knowledge and expertise on the phenomenon of interest (Kwok, 2020; Lindstrom et al., 2020). In this study, the eligibility criteria for participants were used to select owners of auto dealerships in Sacramento, California, who had successfully used business strategies to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years. I recruited knowledgeable participants who had implemented business strategies by contacting owners of small auto dealerships in Sacramento, California via the LinkedIn social media platform. I contacted responding managers, introduced myself, explained the purpose of the study, and asked for a referral of candidates who could participate in the study by email. Obtaining nominations from

small auto dealership managers increased the chances of candidates with the required business implementation experience aligned with the overarching research question. Researchers use purposeful sampling to select participants with business experiences and knowledge (Ahmad, 2019; Jacobs et al., 2020). To eliminate vulnerable human research subjects in the study in line with the *Belmont Report* and establish alignment between the participants' characteristics and the overarching research question, I purposefully selected participants who met the inclusion criteria with adequate experiences regarding the phenomenon under study. Researchers should select participants who can demonstrate the ability to succeed in the business of a competitive environment while making profits (Wolff et al., 2020). Each selected participant possessed the necessary insights, capabilities, and experience in implementing strategies to succeed in business.

Researchers should use specific criteria to gain access to desired participants (Routhier et al., 2019). Owners and managers are responsible for guiding, monitoring, and controlling researchers' access to the information within an organization (Gretenkord et al., 2019). Researchers should get permission to perform research studies from owners and managers (Gretenkord et al., 2019). I requested and gained access to participants through owners and managers after receiving Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study. For the interviews to occur, I must receive permission from owners and managers to discuss business information on how they used capabilities, resources, and strategies to sustain their businesses and gain a competitive advantage. Kaufmann and Tzanetakis (2020) indicated that researchers can send a letter inviting eligible participants to participate in a study by email or person. I emailed an

invitation letter to eligible participants after receiving permission from owners and managers to conduct the study. The selected participants received an invitation letter by email to participate in the interview. The invitation letters included clarification of the research study and an explanation of the inclusion criteria for the study. It also consisted of the interview confirmation regarding the date and time and a description of the confidentiality and informed consent process. Katainen and Heikkilä (2020) indicated that participants invited to participate in an interview must voluntarily agree and sign a consent form before the study begins. Those who agreed to participate received an informed consent form in a subsequent email and signed and returned the form to me, indicating their agreement to participate.

Researchers should establish a working relationship with participants before conducting a study (Hyun-Hee et al., 2020). The relationship between participants and researchers should be energetic, and the consequence of the relationship should be overtly stated (Civaner et al., 2017; Hyun-Hee et al., 2020). I established working relationships via email with the participants by building confidence. Researchers should make personal contact with participants to develop working relationships with them (Bashir, 2020). The relationship between a researcher and participants is important to build an environment of trust (Mukumbang et al., 2020). Participants who agreed to participate in the study met the established criteria and signed a consent form. A consent form could provide information relating to the purpose of the research, and should indicate that the information provided regarding the participant's identity, individuality, and confidentiality will not be compromised (Suh, 2018). The consent form also included

information indicating that participation in the study was voluntary. I clarified the purpose of the research study, the procedures for data collection, and the risks and benefits of participating in the research study. I clarified that the study would not involve collecting any personally identifying information from the study participants.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The qualitative research method was most suitable to explore the participants' experiences in the study in-depth. The use of the qualitative research method is the most appropriate technique for researchers to study the meaning that people attribute to lived experiences (Kawulich & D'Alba, 2019). I used the qualitative method to explore business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years. Bravington and King (2019) indicated that researchers can use the qualitative method to explore small business owners' experiences in greater depth using semistructured interviews to understand a phenomenon. I used semistructured interviews to understand how to build a sustainable business operation in a competitive environment. Using semistructured interviews helped me concentrate on the how and why of the particular business issue. Researchers use the qualitative method to ask what, where, and how questions of participants who have experienced the phenomenon under study (Toews et al., 2017).

Researchers use the quantitative method to analyze results and problems based on statistical data and inferential statistics (Crowe et al., 2017). Quantitative research typically involves testing, measuring, and verifying numerical data, while qualitative

research involves words or consideration of experiential narrative data (Natow, 2020; Xu, 2021). A researcher using the quantitative research method may apply objective measurements and conduct mathematical and statistical analyses of data collected through polls and surveys (Apuke, 2017; Natow, 2020). Researchers use quantitative approaches to examine correlations between two variables (i.e., independent and dependent variables) through numerical data and statistical analysis (Yue & Xu, 2019). A quantitative research method was not appropriate for this study because numerical data and statistical analysis relating to the variable were unnecessary.

A mixed-method involves a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods in a study. Researchers use the mixed-method approach to explore problems and solutions instead of understanding the cause of issues (Chan, 2019). The mixed-methods process was not suitable for this research study because I did not need the quantitative aspects of the methodology.

Research Design

Researchers employ a research design to integrate the different components of a study. A multiple case study is an empirical inquiry that researchers use to explore a contemporary, specific, and complex phenomenon within humans' real-life context (Runfola et al., 2017). In this study, the selected research design was a descriptive, multiple case study design used in conducting semistructured, face-to-face interviews with the participants. A multiple case study is an in-depth investigation of a particular person, group, or community (Chung & Byrom, 2021). A multiple case study design can incorporate a variety of data sources, leading to in-depth qualitative findings. Haven and

Van Grootel (2019) noted that the research design involves exploring research questions, interpreting results, and drawing conclusions to prepare a model for others. A multiple case study was the most appropriate design for this study. I used a multiple case study to explore business strategies that small business auto dealership owners and managers used to remain profitable, gain a competitive advantage, and sustain their organizations.

Besides using a multiple case study, researchers may use other research designs for a qualitative study, including phenomenology, ethnography, and narrative design (Islam & Akagi, 2018). Researchers use the phenomenological design to understand the person experiencing the phenomenon under study or the interpretations of the lived experiences of individuals (Winter, 2019). Islam and Akagi (2018) indicated that researchers use phenomenological design to gain insights into participants' experiences, attitudes, behaviors, processes, and opinions. A phenomenological study was not suitable because the goal of the research study was not to explore how individuals situate themselves in the world based on their experiences. An ethnographic design is a traditional approach that researchers use to analyze the daily lives, beliefs, behaviors, and activities of an entire cultural group or community over a specific period (Mink et al., 2018). An ethnographic research design was not appropriate for this study because I did not explore cultural phenomena' daily lives and practices. I did not study each participant for extended periods to analyze the data thoroughly. In this study, I explored business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years.

The narrative design involves the participant providing details from their personal life to form a narrative (Visser et al., 2019). The narrative design helps identify individuals' experiences and life stories and develops a core focus on studying the living experiences (Pathiranage et al., 2020). Researchers use a narrative design to identify individuals' life stories and experiences (Nigar, 2020). The narrative design was unsuitable for the study because it did not involve gathering individuals' life stories and experiences.

Data saturation is a significant factor in collecting data when considering qualitative research. In qualitative research, saturation is reached when the data collection process no longer offers new information (Gill, 2020). I ensured data saturation by continuously interviewing participants until no further information was obtained. If data were not replicated from the interviews initially planned, I used snowball sampling to recruit additional participants to gain information until data saturation was reached.

Population and Sampling

The population for the study included six participants of small business owners and managers from the three small auto dealerships located in Sacramento, California, who have developed successful strategies to remain profitable and sustain their organizations for at least 5 years. The selected participants would have experiences, capabilities, and knowledge of business strategies to maintain their organizations' survival in the competitive environment (see Edward et al., 2018). Sourinejad et al. (2020) indicated that researchers use a purposeful sampling strategy to select participants who understand the research problem and generate dense information that is unique to

fulfill the research question. Purposeful sampling is the technique used to obtain a representative subset of a small population to serve a specific purpose for the research study (Chikowore & Kerr, 2020). Collecting data using purposeful sampling can help filter data for a larger population (Walton et al., 2019). Purposeful sampling is the most appropriate strategy for identifying and accessing prospective participants with the business experience and knowledge to contribute to the study by providing information-rich data (Chikowore & Kerr, 2020). The data collected from this study could aid in the research area of business management strategies—the purposeful population sampling for this study aligned with the research question. The central research question of this qualitative study was the following: What business strategies do small business auto dealership owners use to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years?

Researchers use purposeful sampling, a non-random process to represent particular categories of participants in the final sample study (Creed, 2017; Muafi & Kusumawati, 2020). The sample size must be large enough to gather the information to address the research question but small enough to contain data saturation (Gill, 2020). I selected the number of participants for this study by examining the sample sizes in three studies with a similar context that generated the necessary information to achieve data saturation and answered the overarching research question. Researchers select sample size based on participants' knowledge, capability, experiences, and expertise required to contribute to the study (Ali et al., 2019). The purposive sampling strategy aids researchers in selecting individuals who represent an adequate sampling for conducting a qualitative multiple case study (Smart et al., 2019). Researchers use purposive sampling

strategies to select potential participants with unique and valuable perspectives on the phenomenon in question and specific criteria for inclusion in the study (Fang-He et al., 2019). Lee et al. (2017) used three participants in a qualitative case study to explore the adjustment strategies employed by an underrepresented group of female business owners of small firms and compare their adjustment strategies with their male business counterparts. Waller et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative case study with five participants to successfully explore entrepreneurs' business strategies to market their mobile game application development businesses. In this study, I used purposive sampling to select six participants of owners and managers of the three small auto dealerships who have experience, capability, and knowledge in implementing successful strategies to remain profitable, gain a competitive advantage and sustain their organizations.

Data saturation is the conceptual standard for estimating and assessing qualitative sample sizes (Kim et al., 2020). Data saturation refers to the degree of information redundancy that researchers collect and encounter in interview-based research (Guest et al., 2020; Hadavimoghaddam et al., 2021). I collected the richness and depth of the data during interviews to determine when I reached data saturation. Researchers can use member checking to elicit data-rich responses from the selected participants (Brear, 2019). Member checking is the term that implies an opportunity for participants to approve particular aspects of the interpretation of the data they provided in the interview-based study (Carlson, 2014). I used member checking to gain more in-depth responses from participants and ensure data saturation. The research process for transferability and transparency of member checking for this study was to summarize one page transcripts of

data collected from each interview, including key points and themes. I emailed the transcripts to participants for 15 minutes review and asked participants to provide feedback and respond to whether the transcripts were accurate or needed revisions. Data saturation can reach the point when researchers collect enough information to replicate the study, when researchers no longer obtain additional new information and when further coding is no longer feasible (Fofana et al., 2020). Hancock et al. (2016) reached data saturation after the first six participants completed the interview questions and responded to two fellow participants in the study (Hancock et al., 2016). The sample size of this study was six owners and managers from three small auto dealerships in Sacramento, California. To ensure data saturation, I continued interviewing participants until the information became redundant.

The selected participants for this research study should meet the inclusion criteria, answer the research question, and participate in the interview (Watt et al., 2020). Participants who did not meet the requirements would be excluded from participating in the study (Ekirapa-Kiracho et al., 2017). I selected participants who met the criteria and had experience implementing successful strategies to remain competitive and answer the research question. Participants who agreed to participate in the study received an informed consent form from me through email and returned a consent form by replying, "I consent," as an electronic signature via email. Evered (2021) identified that an informed consent form is significant for adequate information transfer between researchers and participants. An interview setting can decrease or increase the quality of the information provided by participants (Rostami et al., 2018). The interview setting

should occur at the most suitable location for the participant, at a place of their choice, in a private room that can minimize interruptions (Mengoni et al., 2017). To avoid interruptions, I conducted in-person interviews with participants at the three small business auto dealership owners' offices in a private room. Distractions can affect participant concentration and interfere with the flow of an interview and the data collected (Skingley et al., 2018). Participants can share relevant information related to the research questions when they feel more comfortable during an in-person interview process (Sheikh & Hoeyer, 2019).

Ethical Research

The informed consent process is a significant part of the study and involves providing the participation details to ensure each participant is fully aware of the purpose research (Villamañán et al., 2020). Informed consent is a central tenet of research that protects participants' contributions to the study (Hohl et al., 2019). Using a consent form may attract potential participants to make the proper decision regarding their participation in the research study (Grady et al., 2017). My initial email invitation letter to the participants included the informed consent form outlining pertinent details of the study. The informed consent form included: (a) the objectives of the study, (b) the research question, (c) the IRB approval number, (d) my contact information, (e) potential study risks, (f) their rights as participants, (g) extent of their involvement as a participant, (h) participant withdrawal information, and (i) compensation (see Matlock, 2017). As a result, participants at the three small auto dealerships confirmed full acknowledgment of their intention to participate in the study.

The informed consent form includes the information that participants can refuse to participate in the interview without penalty and with no further obligation (Gesualdo et al., 2021). Researchers must respect participants' decision to withdraw from a study (Gesualdo et al., 2021). I informed participants that they could withdraw from the study through email communication. Consequently, no participants at the three small auto dealerships withdrew from the interviews during my study process. Further, I ensured participants understood that their involvement in the study was voluntary, and I did not offer incentives or compensation to participate in the research. Offering an incentive for participation in a qualitative research case study is not common (Ali-Khan et al., 2017).

Researchers should convert the real individuality of participants into fake identities to protect participants' confidentiality (Wolf & Beskow, 2018). I labeled all participants of the three small auto dealerships to protect their confidentiality, such as PSAD1, PSAD2, and PSAD3. During the study, I protected the information of participants as confidential and anonymous as required by the IRB regulations. I did not start my research until I had an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval number from Walden University. The IRB is an institutional committee that reviews all research to ensure it complies with the university's ethical standards, including that participants' rights are protected and that the researcher adheres to the regulations set forth by Walden University (Folkers & Bateman-House, 2018). I strictly adhered to Walden University's ethical guidelines for the research process for protecting human subjects. I included the Walden IRB approval number before recruiting participants. The documents in the

appendices used in the study included: (a) an interview protocol in Appendix A, (b) interview questions in Appendix B, and (c) an informed consent form in Appendix C.

Once I received IRB approval number 02-15-22-0587401 to begin my research, I sent an email invitation letter to each participant that included the informed consent form and an outline of the research study, as shown in Appendix C. Once participants received the informed consent forms, I asked them to return the consent form through subsequent email within a week, replying, "I consent to the interview," as an electronic signature. Participants' information will remain protected without any accident revealing or disclosing information during the interview process, as recommended by Solomon and Bronstein (2021). As mentioned in the participants' informed consent form, participants would be aware of their anonymity in the study before recruitment. I ensured information was protected by labeling each participant with a number (PSAD1, PSAD2, and PSAD3) instead of the business or individual's name. Researchers should protect participants' personal information rights and respect their privacy during the research process (Ebadi et al., 2019; Luamba, 2019). To protect the confidentiality, all information, including electronic files of interview transcripts, records, and paper data, will be stored in a privately locked cabinet in my office for 5 years. I would use a shredder to shred all the paper data and destroy all the electronic information using KillDisk® software to delete all research interview files, transcripts, and raw data after 5 years. Archibald et al. (2019) noted that all data are secure, kept for 5 years, and only the researcher can access the participant's personal information. I kept the participants and organizations confidential;

the study's publication did not include the names of the individuals or the terms of businesses and precise geographic locations.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument for this case study (see Tjaden et al., 2019). Data collection in qualitative research can involve direct interactions in a group or an individual setting (Roberts et al., 2020). In the case study, data can potentially have six origins, and it is recommended to collect from at least three sources: documentation, direct observations, archival records, participant observation, website visits, and interviews (Koduah et al., 2018). In this study, the primary data collection instruments were semistructured interviews, a review of company documents about multigenerational workplace strategies, company websites, and member checking.

I used semistructured interviews regarding the strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain their organizations to address the research question. Eret (2017) indicated that researchers use semistructured interviews to standardize questions within an interview protocol for consistency, stability, and reliability. To generate responses appropriate, applicable, and relevant to research problems, I used semistructured face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions within an interview protocol (see Appendix A) to standardize the interview questions (see Appendix B). The interview protocol addressed my interview process and aided me in keeping the focus on the research topic, lending to research reliability (see Whitmore et al., 2018). Researchers use an interview protocol with open-ended questions to gather data regarding a phenomenon to ensure data saturation (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Having an

interview protocol with open-ended questions was significant not to cause bias to answer a certain way, which helped me emphasize the meaning of questions rather than the wordings, making an interview interactive and free from mining participants for facts (see Sidenius et al., 2017). I recorded my interviews through a digital Searick voice recorder after participants consented to be recorded to enhance the accuracy of the data collection (see Whitmore et al., 2018). Along with semistructured interviews, I collected the small auto dealerships' documentation about management strategies to analyze as well. I reviewed company documents to identify management procedures, business strategies, and resources regarding multigenerational workplace strategies that leaders used to sustain their businesses. I also collected the company documents and searched company websites, including their management strategies, profit reports, and cash flow statements, to show how they can maintain a competitive advantage and gain profits.

I used member checking to enhance the data collection instrument's validity and reliability and ensured that my research study findings aligned with participants' intentions. Member checking is a technique for establishing credibility in a study (Caretta & Pérez, 2019; Miller & Andrew, 2020). Member checking is a form of validation to seek participants' views on the accuracy of data gathered, descriptions, or even interpretations (Brear, 2019). To enhance the credibility of this study, participants had the opportunity to confirm responses they shared during the interview process through member checking to ensure data collected accuracy. Each participant received an email interpretation of the transcript and was given a week to request any changes.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers can use multiple techniques for qualitative data collection, such as observation, website visits, semistructured interviews, documents, and archival data collection (Hennessey & Rehman, 2020; Richter et al., 2020; Rostami et al., 2018). The data collection techniques for this study included conducting in-person semistructured interviews, company website visits, documentation reviews, archival records, and Skype as an optional interview method. Using multiple methods for data collection can provide researchers with numerous data sources and provide for methodological triangulation, creating a convergence of evidence (Green et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). Researchers can use multiple sources of a systematic data collection technique to collect and examine data from various perspectives and ensure validity and rigor (Hodayuni et al., 2021; Yin, 2018).

The interview setting, including a convenient location, date, and time, was the choice of participants. The interview occurs in the participants' workplaces (Canét-Wittkamp et al., 2020; Lindgren et al., 2011). For this study, I made phone calls once I obtained participants' contact information on my list by researching the internet through LinkedIn platforms. I also emailed an invitation letter and a consent form to recruit potential participants at the five small auto dealerships in Sacramento, California, that met the established criteria to participate in the study. Three small auto dealerships, including owners and managers, replied and agreed to participate in the interviews. Once the participant consented, I emailed to confirm each small auto dealership owner's

interview location, date, and time before the scheduled interviews. All my interviews had done in the participants' private offices at their workplaces.

Before the interviews begin, researchers should give a brief introduction explaining the general conditions of the research study, the voluntary participation, content, and aim of the study, the permission to record the interview for the transcript, and the anonymity of stored data (Wendt et al., 2021). The data collection process for this study began with introductions to explain the purpose of the study, clarify the study procedures, explain the withdrawal process through phone calls, and offer an opportunity for participants to ask questions. I asked participants who met the established criteria and agreed to participate in the study to sign and return a consent form by replaying "I consent" as an electronic signature through email. Interviewees must sign and return the consent form before conducting the interviews (Bergen & Labonté, 2020; Tessema et al., 2021). The consent form included the purpose study, stating that the researcher did not compromise the participant's identity and confidentiality. Participation in the study was voluntary, and I did not offer any incentives to participants. Researchers should not offer participants an incentive; participants are asked to voluntarily provide their experiences and perspectives (Thomas et al., 2021).

For this study process, I attempted three interviews with six participants, including owners and managers at the three small auto dealerships. I conducted each interview, including a sales manager and an owner of each small auto dealership, to participate in the interview process. Each interview did not last longer than 20 minutes with a digital Searick voice recorder. I preferred to use a digital Searick voice recorder

instead other devices because of the quality of the voice recording, and the dynamic noise cancellation microphone was crystal clear audio. Each interview began with an introduction and study purpose, followed by approval from the participants to be recorded. The introduction included questions regarding personal background and education, and I then moved to the interview questions. The introductory questions linked to the primary questions of the interview process (Scribner & Harris, 2020). The interview questions were asked about business strategies, capabilities, and knowledge they used for business sustainability in the competitive environment. Following the interview, participants asked questions and replied with personal reflections.

In the qualitative case study design, researchers determine the most effective approach and method to gather data from the study participants using semistructured interviews (Anselmi et al., 2018; Viergever, 2019). The semistructured interview method was the most appropriate for the qualitative research study. Viergever (2019) gained insight into researching the study using the semistructured interviews method.

Researchers should use the semistructured interviews method to encourage participants and expand the interview into new topics (Barbic et al., 2019; Jimenez et al., 2019). For this study, the data collection technique included conducting in-person semistructured interviews with six participants, including managers and owners from the three small business auto dealerships in Sacramento, California. I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions and documentary evidence regarding the participants' views of business experience with an interview protocol (see Appendix A). The documentary evidence included multigenerational workplace strategies, yearly

company income, and cash flow statements provided by small business auto dealership owners to support my study findings. The collected information applied to the study findings how small business auto dealership owners used business strategies to gain profits, achieve business performance, and sustain their organizations in the competitive environment. An interview protocol is a practical guide to direct one question to another through the interview process (Lum, 2017; Saddour, 2020). Cho et al. (2017) conducted individual, semistructured interviews to understand interviewees' perspectives and experiences related to the study following the interview protocol.

While in-person semistructured interviews are often the preferred method for interviewing because of observing physical and verbal cues and establishing personal rapport and comfort in familiar surroundings, many researchers stated that using data collection techniques such as Skype is equally valuable as an alternative to telephonic means (Crusoe & Ahlin, 2019; Krouwel et al., 2019). Using Skype can provide researchers with the limited ability to observe physical and verbal cues while allowing both researcher and participant to remain in comfortable surroundings (Krouwel et al., 2019; Reñosa et al., 2021). Skype is an alternative option for researchers when in-person semistructured interviews cannot be used because of time and travel constraints (Krouwel et al., 2019; Pasquini et al., 2021; Reñosa et al., 2021). Skype was the optional data collection method that I could use instead of in-person semistructured interviews for this qualitative study because of the pandemic. In the pandemic situation, in-person semistructured interviews are not considered necessary. Taba et al. (2020) identified that Skype interviews afford researchers a degree of safety during the pandemic, compared

with meeting the participant in person. Giannakopoulos et al. (2021) indicated that Skype allows both parties to stay safe and not invade each other's personal space. Consequently, I conducted only semistructured face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions instead of Skype interviews for this study. I established and facilitated a collaborative environment to ensure the participants that I engaged and listened to them while still maintaining the researcher's role in collecting data. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) to manage the interview direction, and the data collection supported my research efforts.

Researchers can review the firm's relevant organizational documentation (Miller & Andrew, 2020). Organizational documentation includes business strategies, firm resources, profit and loss reports, and cash flow statements (Miller & Andrew, 2020). For this study, I emailed participants requesting access to the documents that I wanted to review, explained how I planned to use the information, how I would safeguard the documents during the research, and how I would handle the disposal of the documents once I extract the data. The documentation of small business auto dealerships that I needed to review were documents about multigenerational workplace strategies, yearly company income, and cash flow statements. I also reviewed various corporate documents of participants' websites, the websites themselves, and archival records by using the information as data collection and affirmation. Supporting documents about multigenerational workplace strategies is significant for researchers in the study (Coventry & Hays, 2021). The documentation should consist of human resource

practices, firm resources, and standard operating procedure strategies that leaders use in a multigenerational workplace (Miller & Andrew, 2020; Schatz, 2009).

I conducted documentary evidence to explore strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain business operations beyond 5 years. Qualitative researchers can use the data collection techniques to explore the strategies firms use to remain profitable in the competitive market (Wiseman et al., 2019). The document reviews regarding multigenerational workplace strategies and archival records are excellent sources of information that researchers can use to support the result findings (Coventry & Hays, 2021; Nkholezeni, 2020). My primary focus was to collect data through in-person semistructured interviews, documents, archival records, and internet sources. I reassured participants that all information was confidential and discussed how the information was relevant to my data collection. The collected information, including the interview data, documentation, and internet sources, applied to the concept of the RBV theory of how small business auto dealership owners used business strategies to achieve business performance and sustain competitive advantages.

Researchers maintain journals to record observations during the interview process that a recording does not record, such as nonverbal cues and body posture (Annink, 2017). I used a journal to record observations from the interview in the unlikely event that the recording failed or demonstrated poor quality. Journaling provides researchers with additional means for data collection methods to increase interview and research accuracy (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018).

The advantage of using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions as the data collection technique may allow me to (a) identify participants' beliefs, attitudes, and habits; (b) gain a deeper understanding of the strategies of the small business owner; and (c) gain more clarity regarding a particular response to the follow-up questions (see Davies et al., 2020). An additional advantage of using open-ended questions may allow me to ask further questions and assist participants in expressing thoughts freely during the interview process (Cardullo et al., 2021). Reviewing the company documentation about multigenerational workplace strategies, yearly company income, and cash flow statements was another source of information that provided me with additional accuracy and may strengthen the study's validity. Conversely, the disadvantage of using semistructured interviews included (a) interviews require more time, (b) less information collected during each interview, and (c) participants may have less interest in discussing the topics or the interview questions (Miguel et al., 2021; Zarhin, 2018). Another disadvantage of requesting documentation about multigenerational workplace strategies, yearly company income, and cash flow statements was that participants might be unwilling to share the information.

Qualitative researchers can enhance the accuracy of data collected from participants by using member checking of the data interpretation (Candela, 2019; Iivari, 2018). Using member checking can assist researchers in decreasing the incidence of incorrect data by supporting participants to approve particular aspects of the interpretation of the original findings (Brear, 2019; Candela, 2019; Iivari, 2018). Member checking is a participant validation technique for improving the information's accuracy

and the study's credibility (Leask et al., 2019; Rose & Johnson, 2020). For this study, member checking provided participants with a one page summary of transcripts to verify that my interpretations of their responses were accurate and relevant. Participants would be asked to review the transcripts, provide feedback, and make corrections to the transcriptions. Member checking is the most suitable, appropriate, and effective way of eliminating the possibility of misrepresentation (Leask et al., 2019).

Data Organization Technique

Researchers use data organization techniques to track and identify data collected for the study (Campion et al., 2018). Researchers use data organization techniques to reduce the risk of misinterpreting data collected from each participant (Zhai et al., 2020). Clark et al. (2017) noted that researchers must use an appropriate data storage strategy to maintain the transcribed interviews, notes, and audio recordings. I used an electronic filing system to store all the information from the study. Clark et al. (2017) identified that researchers could use an electronic filing system to manage and store digital files, including photographs and documents. I also used a labeling system to organize all the electronic data and hard copies of data to ensure the accuracy of the information and data alignment with the correct participants. Gallaway and Hines (2012) stated that librarians use labeling systems and spine labels to organize and identify library resources by call number to help patrons locate general subject areas, specific fiction, non-fiction, reference, audiovisual, and other items. As a part of my organization technique, I used a label heading containing individual participants' numbers (i.e., PSAD1, PSAD2, and PSAD3). Creating labels could help me reference a particular part of an interview without

locating the data collected. Zhai et al. (2020) indicated that personal information should be secured by password protection. All electronic data from the study, including emails, consent forms, notes, audio recordings, and transcribed interviews, would be stored on my personal computer's hard drive, protected with a security password. A flash drive with password protection would be an additional storage device. The use of password protection helps ensure the confidentiality of all information (Salles-Loustau et al., 2018). All the study information, including the electronic data on the computer's hard drive, external flash drive, and hard copies, would be stored safely in my office for 5 years.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research involves systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts and observation notes that the researcher accumulates to increase the understanding of the phenomenon (M. Ruel et al., 2020; Shafiq et al., 2021). Analyzing qualitative data involves organizing the data into themes by coding, condensing the codes, and making sense of the information through figures and tables (Zhai et al., 2020). Researchers should interpret and analyze data to generate relevant information and meaningful findings (Allen et al., 2019). In this qualitative study, methodological triangulation was the primary method to interpret and analyze data. Abdalla et al. (2018) suggested four types of triangulation for qualitative researchers to enhance reliability and validity. The four types of triangulation included data, theoretical, researcher, and methodological triangulation (Abdalla et al., 2018). Methodological triangulation refers to using multiple methods to obtain detailed data about the phenomenon (Abdalla et al., 2018). Researchers use methodological triangulation to

overcome the flaws of an investigation, correlate data from multiple data collection methods, and explore different theoretical perspectives and points of the same phenomenon (Cao, 2012; Cárdenas et al., 2018). I used methodological triangulation for this study to collect data and validate the results obtained with individual methods, ensuring a deeper understanding of the investigated phenomenon (Cárdenas et al., 2018). I conducted face-to-face interviews using semistructured interview research questions, documentary evidence, audio recordings, and note-takings to enhance the reliability and validity of the study findings.

Data collection and analysis should coincide as one part cannot be strictly separated from the other (Mahlamäki & Nieminen, 2020). Qualitative data analysis is a form of knowledge management that manages analytical processes to transform data into information, and information into knowledge, and knowledge into wisdom (Chenail, 2015; Taboada & Han, 2020). Researchers should interpret and analyze data systematically by providing a detailed explanation of the data analysis process (Zennaro et al., 2018). The process of data analysis should start immediacy after researchers conduct the first interview, perform the second interview, and continue until data saturation has been reached (Zennaro et al., 2018). Researchers should capture the rich insights of qualitative interview data and make sense of the relevant data to the research question (Taboada & Han, 2020). In the data analysis process, I analyzed the data collected from the interview by reading the data collection to reflect on what I have read to grasp the general themes from the transcripts. I transcribed every interview information and organized the data by using NVivo software 12th version. Qualitative

researchers can use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), like NVivo, as tools to store, manage, code, and interact with the data (Barros, 2020; Maher et al., 2018). Researchers must use familiar software to manage the entire original data as researchers perform as the primary analytical instrument (Barros, 2020; Chenail, 2015). I read the transcripts of data collected and notes to become familiar while identifying codes and linking significant segments to appropriate themes. I used member checking to review themes with each participant and adjust the themes based on the participant's responses and feedback. Researchers conduct member checking with the participants to ensure an accurate understanding of the data collected to address the dependency of the research results (Candela, 2019).

I transcribed and analyzed the data immediately after collecting all primary and secondary data from interviews, organizational documents, company websites, and observational notes. In the next phase of the data analysis process, I reviewed the collected data transcripts and applied codes to the transcripts as concepts became apparent. Data analysis can perform through open coding (Leeson et al., 2019; Zeldenryk et al., 2014). Open coding is where raw data are analyzed through a detailed line-by-line review of the transcripts to identify themes or phenomena of interest and then ascribe codes (Leeson et al., 2019; Zeldenryk et al., 2014). Codes for common themes are generated, allowing themes across transcripts to be collated (Feng & Behar-Horenstein, 2019; Zeldenryk et al., 2014). I combined related concepts into categories and common themes. Researchers can combine related concepts into categories and common themes to condense participants' key ideas and experiences (Skolarus et al., 2019). After coding

narrative fragments into themes, I followed up with participants via email to check for discrepancies in the data collected to ensure validity and validate the key concepts and themes emerging from the open coding. Researchers can create meaning from the data collected by interpreting and analyzing the data (Skolarus et al., 2019). Mutlu (2019) proposed that theme building, rival theme perspectives, pattern matching, and logical models are appropriate to ensure validity in the data analysis process. I sent my transcripts to each participant to adjust the themes based on the participant's responses and feedback to ensure validity through member checking by email. Researchers can use member checking to confirm the research findings' accuracy and validity (Candela, 2019). Using member checking ensures that the proper interpretations of the data and word choice are transcribed in the interview data (Candela, 2019). I made sure to exercise precautions of using member checking in my data analysis to reduce bias from affecting the data analysis process. Last, I concluded the results of this qualitative case study.

Researchers use computer software to analyze data (Xu et al., 2021). Qualitative researchers can use data analysis software to facilitate and analyze the data collected (Liang et al., 2018; Wang, 2021). Qualitative data analysis software is significant for researchers to bring consistency to the data analysis process. I used a qualitative data analysis software program to help with the coding and organizing of data analysis. The data analysis software can support qualitative researchers in systematically coding, organizing data, and managing the development of categories and themes (Wang, 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). Qualitative data analysis software includes NVivo, SPSS, Sphinx, Dedoose, ATLAS.ti, and others (Baharuddin et al., 2021; Mozzato et al., 2016; Tapera et

al., 2021). Some qualitative researchers can use Dedoose or ATLAS.ti to organize and analyze data. For example, Kingsbury and Chatfield (2019) used Dedoose qualitative data analysis software to manage the process of extracting and condensing data from primary sources of pregnancy among resettled refugee women. Afriansyah et al. (2019) used ATLAS.ti software as a tool for data analysis, which assisted researchers in managing all various data of the problem-posing skill of prospective teachers regarding their teaching and learning process.

In my personal experience, I preferred to use NVivo software to analyze data in this qualitative study. Researchers use NVivo software to analyze, store, manage, and code data to make qualitative data analysis more efficient (Herranz & Machado, 2019). The NVivo software is user-friendly, so researchers can use it to collect, organize, and analyze different data types for patterns and themes (Maher et al., 2018). Using the NVivo software is important for simplifying the process of identifying themes and pattern recognition as part of a repetitive data analysis process (Palmer & Baker, 2021). I used NVivo software 12th version to organize, manage, and analyze the qualitative data after the interview. I chose to use Nvivo software 12th version over other software because it was a familiar tool for organizing data. I had experience using it to manage, collect, and analyze data for personal services regarding business proposals and financial consultants. NVivo software can assist researchers in interpreting and coding the text, organizing the data, and performing keyword searches (Palmer & Baker, 2021). Using the NVivo program, researchers can code the data by tagging and naming text selections within each data item (Dalkin et al., 2021). I identified codes throughout the analysis until no new

unique codes were identified. Joubert and Van der Merwe (2020) indicated that researchers should work systematically through the whole data set. Researchers should give full and equal attention to each data item and identify exciting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of repeated patterns (themes) across the data set (Lien & Harvie, 2018).

The process of identifying themes includes using the NVivo program helps to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings (Brynne et al., 2019). Themes are the confirmations of observable patterns identifiable by analyzing transcribed interview data elements (Raffing et al., 2017). According to Yin (2016), researchers use coding to discover themes contained within transcripts and include data to reach saturation to ensure reliability, validity, and creditability. I also used visual representations by writing the name of each code on a separate piece of paper to aid in sorting the different codes into themes. Alexander et al. (2021) identified that researchers could use visual representations to help sorting the other codes into themes by using tables or writing the name of each code on a separate piece of paper and organize into theme piles. During the data analysis process, I carefully analyzed the data sequentially and logically to identify the findings, interpreted the data to produce the conclusions relating to the overarching research question, and concluded the research study.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are important concepts in research and demonstrate the accuracy of research processes and the trustworthiness of research findings (Norin et al., 2019). Wong-Riff et al. (2017) indicated that validity and reliability are common

concepts in qualitative research that researchers use when discussing data collected.

Researchers use the validity and reliability of the study to achieve the highest quality of research, and peers perceive the findings as trustworthy (Rose & Johnson, 2020). In the qualitative study, the most commonly used to establish the trustworthiness of the results and determine reliability and validity are included dependability, credibility, transferability, and conformability (Connolly et al., 2019). Validity and reliability are the two significant concepts that measure bias and distortion (Rose & Johnson, 2020).

Researchers use validity to address the degree of accuracy to which a measurement measures what is intended, whereas reliability addresses the consistency of measurement in the study (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Researchers can use member checking in the research process to manage, achieve, and establish the reliability and validity of study findings (Candela, 2019). Therefore, I used member checking to develop self-confidence and establish reliability and validity in the study findings.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

In qualitative research, the term reliability is synonymous with dependability. Dependability is the established process in the research study's findings as consistent and repeatable (Holstein et al., 2019). For this study, I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to conduct the interviews and collect company documents from each participant in the same manner. After completing an interview, I transcribed the data collected from my notes and the audio recording of the interviews. I conducted member checking with each participant by emailing interview transcripts to review to ensure the

data collected are accurate and consent to check for discrepancies or errors. Connolly et al. (2019) indicated that researchers benefit from the data analysis process of the research study through member checking to strengthen the study's dependability. I also used the NVivo data analysis software to enhance the study's reliability.

Validity

Credibility Credibility is a significant aspect in establishing trustworthiness and linking the study's findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the results (Pjesivac et al., 2018). Credibility is the degree to provide interview transcripts to participants and receive feedback; therefore, researchers can add credibility and validity to study findings (Tremayne et al., 2021). Tremayne et al. (2021) indicated that member checking is the most appropriate way to ensure credibility in a study. To enhance the credibility of this study, I used member checking to improve the credibility of the research findings. I sent interview transcripts to each participant and adjusted the themes based on participant responses and feedback. Each participant received the interview transcripts through email. Participants reviewed the interview transcripts from the interpretations of data collected to ensure credibility and accuracy.

Transferability represents the degree to the findings that generalize into different contexts, circumstances, situations, and settings (Dobrow et al., 2017). Research findings are transferable to a new context when other researchers perceive and realize that the results are practical and have usefulness, empirical applicability, and theoretical generalizability (Rose & Johnson, 2020; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Employees, vendors, customers, and stakeholders can use the research findings of this study because they

would be affected by small businesses that lack sustainable strategies. This study's individuals and readers can apply the research findings to small companies to strengthen their strategies for sustainability. Transferability is an important matter of circumstance because individuals and readers who are not part of the study can gain a meaningful study through the research findings. For instance, other vendors, such as small auto part business owners who lack business sustainability strategies, may use the research findings from this study to sustain their organizations. Future researchers may use this study as an instrument and tool to build upon further research to explore business strategies uncovered in a similar topic.

Confirmability is the degree to which others can confirm the study results (Naz et al., 2019). Confirmability is similar to dependability in that it refers to the neutrality and accuracy of the data in the study findings (Soroush et al., 2018). The findings are based on participants' responses rather than potential researchers' biases (Wassermann et al., 2018). To eliminate bias, I implemented member checking with each participant to confirm the findings from the interpretations of data collected were accurate.

To ensure data saturation, I continued interviewing participants until they could no longer provide new information on the topic. Data saturation is the process of gathering data until no more patterns or themes emerge from the data (Fofana et al., 2020). In this study, conducting a sample size of six participants and member checking helped to ensure data saturation and improve the credibility of the research study.

Transition and Summary

The objective of this qualitative case study was to explore business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain their business in a competitive environment. Section 2 included a description of (a) the purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) the selected participants, (d) the research method and design, (e) the population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection, (h), data analysis technique, and (i) the reliability and validity. Section 3 will include a presentation of the findings, a discussion of their application to professional practice, and implications for social change, my recommendations for action and further research, reflections, and a conclusion.

Section 3

Application for Professional Practice and Implications for Social Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain organizations beyond 5 years. The population for this study was three small auto dealerships including owners and managers in Sacramento, California who used strategies to sustain business operations beyond 5 years. Through an analysis of data collected through interviews, company website visits, documentation reviews, and field notes, five main themes emerged. The five main themes were internet marketing, customer satisfaction, effective supervision, business knowledge, and human capital. This section includes a comprehensive presentation of findings as well as applications to professional practice. In

this section, I also discuss the study's implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and reflections ending with a conclusion.

Presentation of Findings

The overarching research question of this qualitative study was the following: What business strategies do small business auto dealership owners use to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years? To answer this overarching research question, I used semistructured interviews to gain insight into business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to maintain their organizations. Participants in this study were three small business auto dealership owners (PSAD1, PSAD2, and PSAD3) who had been in business for more than 5 years in Sacramento, California.

Data collection included semistructured interviews, company website visits, documentation reviews, and field notes. Each semistructured interview consisted of five interview questions and lasted no more than 20 minutes with audio recording. After completing the interviews with the participants, I organized the data collected into thematic groups. I used NVivo software to analyze, manage, and organize themes. Researchers identify themes by using the NVivo program to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings (Brynne et al., 2019). I identified emergent themes from each interview and their relationships to form central themes. I used NVivo software to code narrative segments into themes and presented a one page summary of transcripts from data collection of each interview, including key points and themes, through email to participants to validate themes through member checking. A researcher can email

interpretation of the data to participants to confirm the accuracy and validity of the research findings through member checking (Candela, 2019). Lastly, I revised my interpretation of the themes based on remarks from each participant to ensure accuracy. Then, I proceeded to a final review of the findings of this qualitative study.

The conceptual framework for this qualitative multiple case study was the RBV theory developed in 1991 by Barney. The RBV theory created a lens for interpreting data collected from participants and further supported the development of themes. I developed themes from the interview transcripts, company websites, documentation reviews, and field notes. The themes indicated business strategies that small business owners and managers used to sustain their business operations beyond 5 years. Using NVivo software to code narrative segments, the research findings of themes included customer satisfaction, internet marketing, business knowledge, human capital, and effective supervision. As shown in Table 2 to Table 6, five themes emerged from the content analysis process of the data. Table 2 shows emergent theme, subthemes, number of responses, and percentage of respondents.

Table 2

Customer Satisfaction

Theme and subthemes	Number of responses	% of respondent agreement
Customer satisfaction	8	36.36%
• Quality customer service	6	27.27%
• Customer relationship	3	13.63%
• Customer loyalty	3	13.64%

• Customer retention	2	9.09%
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Emergent Theme: Customer Satisfaction

Responses for customer satisfaction originated from most interview questions, which explored the strategies that contributed to the success of small business auto dealership owners. During the interview, all participants indicated that customer satisfaction is essential for small business auto dealership owners to sustain operations and profits. Small business owners can maintain their business operations and profitability by providing quality customer service and products in an exceptional manner that surpasses customer needs, leads to increased customer satisfaction, develops customer loyalty, and enhances competitiveness (Ullah et al., 2020). Participants acknowledged the significance of building relationships with customers, improving customer retention, and delivering superior customer service and products to increase customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and sales, thereby maximizing profits and sustaining businesses in a competitive advantage. Small business owners with a large pool of satisfied customers tend to have a long-term competitive advantage and are more likely to maintain their profitability over a more extended period (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019).

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept by recognizing customer satisfaction, including services and capabilities, as an essential intangible resource and products as a valuable tangible resource to gain a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners can achieve a competitive advantage by using customer satisfaction as a resource to compete on having the best customer service, capabilities,

and quality products of automobiles to increase customer relationships, satisfaction, and loyalty. Customer satisfaction themes included quality customer service, customer relationship, customer loyalty, and customer retention.

Subtheme 1: Quality Customer Service

Small business auto dealership owners can differentiate themselves from competitors by having the best quality customer service. Small businesses can achieve a competitive advantage by investing in products and services that offer unique qualities desirable to their customers (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019). Firms can promote and reward employees and train their staff to provide exceptional quality services to customers (Ullah et al., 2020). For example, PSAD3 stated,

The manufacturer provides metrics for sales and customer satisfaction. We provide the metrics for employee satisfaction through surveys. We train employees, and then the manufacturer and our company constantly offer that training for employees to improve customer service. We manage the percentage of customer issues resolved to customer satisfaction and a way to measure progress throughout customer surveys.

Participants noted that small business auto dealership owners should provide a convenient service to customers to maintain their business. PSAD2 stated,

In the early part of the market, earlier parts of last year when the supply chain got tight, we just tried to get people out of leases early so that we would have some used inventory to sell when there was no inventory work well.

The findings supported the RBV concept by indicating the use of quality customer service as an essential intangible resource to gain a competitive advantage. Leaders can achieve a competitive advantage to sustain their organization in the competitive environment by using quality customer service as a resource to provide efficient, quick, and friendly service to customers and build strong relationships with customers (Ullah et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should respond to customers' issues in time and handle any complaints from their customers swiftly. Small business auto dealership owners also promote free quality services to their customers to increase customer satisfaction, relationships, and loyalty, such as free car inspection services and oil changes to satisfy existing customers and attract new customers.

Subtheme 2: Customer Relationships

Participants also noted that leaders currently build customer relationships and manage customer retention through communication technology outlets. Managing customer relationships on a personal level and managing the organization toward a more efficient response to their needs can be achieved using information communication technology (ElFarmawi, 2020). For example, PSAD1 stated,

We evaluate the number of phone calls that remain daily by specific cells clientele to see what kind of answers are getting as far as appointments, whether they have service appointments or vehicle sales appointments. Phone, email, text, or video marketing are what we are doing to communicate and build a relationship with our customers. Video marketing is more proven and very effective than email or text. More people will watch a video versus reading an email. Therefore, the

video has worked very well because it is authentic; it is not commercial audio or video.

PSAD1 and PSAD3 explained that small business auto dealership owners should be presentable, and each staff member should be focused on helping customers find answers to questions to increase customer relationships. For example, PSAD3 stated,

We are not just going to sell you one car or service your car wants. We are going to be here for anything that you may need, whether it's parts, service, your next vehicle, or a car for the family.

The findings supported the RBV concept by recognizing customer relationships as an essential intangible resource that small business auto dealership owners can use to gain a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners can achieve a competitive advantage by using customer relationships as a resource to build trust and loyalty with their customers. Leaders can also promote free quality services to their customers, such as free car inspection services and oil changes, to increase customer relationships and loyalty.

Subtheme 3: Customer Loyalty

Participants indicated that small business auto dealership owners should provide quality services and products to their existing and potential new customers by focusing on customers' needs and preferences to increase customer loyalty. Firms can benefit from long-term relationships with their customers by putting customers' needs first, thereby improving customer loyalty and future sales (Majukwa et al., 2020). Participants revealed that when small business auto dealership owners focus on customer satisfaction and

provide exceptional customer service, they can increase customer loyalty and a positive reputation as a competitive advantage. A business strategy that focuses on providing exceptional customer service is essential for firms to retain existing customers, attract new customers, and gain a competitive advantage over rivals (Ullah et al., 2020).

Participants acknowledged the importance of receiving customer feedback through surveys and encouraging effective communication within the organization and with customers. Leaders can encourage new customers to buy cars while enriching their long-term relationships with existing customers (Majukwa et al., 2020). Participants also noted that effective communication is essential to provide excellent customer service to increase customer loyalty.

The findings supported the RBV concept by identifying customer loyalty, including quality brand products and values of automobiles, as an essential tangible resource to gain a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners can achieve a competitive advantage by using customer loyalty as a resource to build a positive relationship, promote their brand products to customers, and send relevant campaigns to increase retention for purchasing. Customer loyalty is the intention of continuing the relationship and repeating their purchase of the company brand products and services that they are familiar with (Majukwa et al., 2020). Customers who are loyal to a specific brand are willing to pay more if they get the same quality product or service (Ullah et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should strive to improve customer loyalty to keep clients purchasing and make customers promote the company's brand products and services to new audiences.

Subtheme 4: Customer Retention

For small business owners, retaining customers in highly competitive environments is significant for a firm's survival (Majukwa et al., 2020). Customer retention is a process in which small business auto dealership owners can manage activities and interactions related to customer purchases in a manner designed to minimize attrition (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019). Customer retention involves business leaders seeking to retain existing and new customers by establishing, maintaining, and maximizing mutual long-term benefits that strengthen and extend the cooperative relationship between two parties (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019). Small business auto dealership owners can develop ad-hoc capabilities that integrate their knowledge and business skills with one emerging through consumer interactions to create and implement new customized services. By providing quality car sales and services, leaders should improve customer satisfaction, increase customer retention, build customer trust, and create loyalty (Majukwa et al., 2020). Small businesses' key to long-term profitability and survival is anchored in building long-term relationships, increasing customer satisfaction, and managing successful customer retention (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019).

Participants stated that small business auto dealership owners should focus on customer satisfaction, retention, and relationships to improve company growth. PSAD2 and PSAD1 emphasized the significance of building customer relationships, customer loyalty, and a positive reputation for their companies. For example, PSAD2 explained,

First, you should get to know your customers. If you keep your customers happy, they will tell others, and then that is the best way to grow your work. Nowadays,

word of mouth is the best way to grow your business because there are many places to go. However, if you have decent experience, you will share that with your friends and families. Referrals are worth, and repeat businesses are worth more than new businesses. Overall sales, growth, and customer satisfaction are three important things. I will tell you that you are doing what you need to be doing to help your customers.

Two participants indicated that small business auto dealership owners should maintain customer communication to promote their products and services to increase sales. For example, PSAD1 indicated,

We use a customer retention management tool called "solutions." We keep track of all outgoing, incoming emails, text messages, and phone calls. We provide guest service and treatment, respecting the fact that they come to visit you.

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept by classifying customer retention as an essential intangible resource that leaders can use to manage activities and interactions related to customer purchases to gain a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners can achieve a competitive advantage by using customer retention as a resource to deliver promotional advertising, including brand names and pricing on cars, to increase customers' intention to purchase their vehicles.

Table 3

Internet Marketing

Theme and subthemes	Number of responses	% of respondent agreement
Internet marketing	5	50%

• Digital technology	2	20%
• Social network	3	30%

Emergent Theme: Internet Marketing

The theme of internet marketing emerged from the answers to most interview questions, particularly Questions 1, 3, and 5, on participants' insights about strategies for sustainability required by small business auto dealership owners for success and sustenance. Participants acknowledged that using the internet is essential to market products, advertise vehicles, increase market outreach, and meet new customers. Participants indicated that small business auto dealership owners use internet marketing for advertising vehicles by using technological capabilities, such as online tools, newspapers, and exhibitions, to enhance access to potential buyers. Every business depends on the level of internet marketing to build a relationship with customers and conduct attractive promotions to increase sales (Nasution et al., 2020). Participants disclosed that internet marketing had become a trend in implementing marketing strategies to encourage their customers. Internet marketing can promote vehicles and services through social media and networks such as YouTube, Facebook, and websites, facilitating access between buyer and seller (Yau & Tang, 2018). Internet marketing is the key to firms reaching many customers and increasing market share (Yau & Tang, 2018). Participants noted that small business auto dealership owners use internet marketing as a tool for their business activities. It became a transitional power from traditional to modern business and simplified promotion, sales, and payment (Nasution et al., 2020). PSAD1 stated that small business auto dealership owners use internet

marketing to attract consumers' interest to do transactions and communications. PSAD1 explained,

We used marketing strategies for business sustainability through internet marketing and direct phone calls to current clients. You can call it cold calling, but we do not see it that way because there are people who have already done business with us, whether it is in service or they have bought vehicles from us.

Our website has new and used cars from which they can choose to buy. We also offer services, parts, and financing options that make it convenient for them.

PSAD1 and PSAD2 acknowledged that small business auto dealership owners should understand how to focus marketing toward particular groups of buyers and give them the information they want to increase sales. For instance, PSAD2 stated,

We use internet marketing to deliver promotional messages to our customers. We quickly respond to help customers to find what they need.

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept by determining internet marketing as an essential valuable tangible resource to gain a competitive advantage. The findings also supported the social network theory that leaders can use to develop relationships with other individuals based on mutual interests, friendship, information, interdisciplinary, and other beneficial reasons (Sachpazidu-Wojcicka, 2021). Small business auto dealership owners can use internet marketing as a strategic resource to advertise the company products through technological capabilities, such as online tools and exhibitions, to promote their products increasing retention and enhancing access to potential buyers.

Subtheme 1: Digital Technology Marketing

Participants noted that digital technology provided a platform where they could efficiently market products and services and gather customer feedback. Participants acknowledged that internet marketing and other information technology outlets are more appropriate for targeting demographics and customer desires. The findings of this study supported the RBV concept of using digital technology as a valuable tangible resource to gain a competitive advantage. Marcinkowski and Gawin (2019) noted that information technology outlets could support customers' agility would enhance customers' community to gather feedback. Small businesses operating in competitive environments should have the ability to respond quickly to market changes, support customer needs, and share information effectively with customers by using information technology (Jiang et al., 2019). Participants indicated that small business auto dealership owners use the internet to create links, build customer relationships, and construct a relationship with other stakeholders by predicting customer preferences, thereby increasing their company's competitive power in the marketplace (Jiang et al., 2019). PSAD2 further stated,

We are just moving a little bit more digital than before. Our website is a fast and convenient way to find the right vehicle, so you can spend less time researching and more time enjoying your purchase. Whether looking for a new or used car, you can find it here at comparable prices. We know that customers are extremely well educated when researching their next vehicle. Nowadays, I tell you, internet marketing is working great.

Participants noted that small business auto dealership owners should go digital to educate and inform customers about their cars because customers buy cars online more than ever in traditional marketing. Small business owners can use digital factors in their marketing to reach customers to achieve a competitive advantage (Marcinkowski & Gawin, 2019). PSAD1 stated,

Most buyers who purchase a car likely see our dealership online because they conduct research online before buying a vehicle from us.

The findings supported the assertion of Hua et al. (2019) that small business auto dealership owners can enhance their network marketing capabilities by employing information technologies to achieve a more significant value chain for auto sales. Leaders can use their network marketing capabilities to increase the efficiency of marketing operations, maintain supply chain operations, and optimize the customer experience (Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020). In addition, leaders can introduce a greater variety of quality products and services to attract new customers with various tastes and encourage customers to switch from competitors (Hua et al., 2019).

Subtheme 2: Social Network

Participants highlighted the need to form alliances with other auto industry stakeholders, which can support the assertion of social network theory. Stakeholders of the auto industry include existing customers, potential new customers, suppliers, government and non-government agencies, regulatory bodies, advocacy groups, foundations, and the communities they operate (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). Small business auto dealership owners who have a secure network will be able to

obtain critical market information cost-effectively. Participants admitted that corporating with other stakeholders can help them increase access to auctions, advertising, market information, trade fairs, and product exhibitions (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022).

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept of using strategic network resources to gain a competitive advantage. The findings also supported the social network theory for small business auto dealership owners to cultivate relationships, create opportunities, and obtain critical information from stakeholders.

Table 4

Business Knowledge

Theme and subthemes	Number of responses	% of respondent agreement
Business knowledge	6	37.5%
• Sharing information	5	31.25%
• Management and Organizational culture	2	12.5%
• Customer needs and preferences	3	18.75%

Emergent Theme: Business Knowledge

The theme of business knowledge originated from Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, and mainly Question 5, in which I explored the participants' insight into improving skills to manage a small business industry in a competitive advantage. Business knowledge included tacit knowledge sharing, knowledge management, organizational culture, and

customer needs and preferences. During the interview, participants noted that having virtuous business knowledge in the auto industry was significant resource because business knowledge directly affects business performance. Business knowledge represents a significant resource to create value and sustain competitive advantages (Rua et al., 2018). Business knowledge is a firm's extensive reservoir of understanding of customer needs and preferences, business environments and dynamics, staff skills, experiences and potentials, and business overall foreseeable direction (Aureli et al., 2019). Participants expressed the need for small business auto dealership owners to understand the trends in the auto industry, including stakeholders, consumers, and customers trends to grow their business. Participants' responses supported the findings of Amelia and Syukmayettil (2021) noted that in the current knowledge-based economy, tacit knowledge sharing, knowledge management, intangible resources of knowledge, organizational culture, market analysis, and business efficiency are some of the most valuable and competitive resources.

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept by using business knowledge as an essential intangible resource to gain a competitive advantage. In the perspective of the RBV theory, the intangible resource of knowledge is a significant source of competitive advantage, increases firm performance, and can consequently create sustainable value (Rua et al., 2018). Participants highlighted that small business auto dealership owners could use the intangible resource of knowledge to gain from their experiences and skills to create value that is hard for competitors to imitate. Participants indicated that the most important resource that small business auto dealership owners use

as a source of sustainable competitive advantage is business knowledge of the automobile dealerships. PSAD3 identified,

We listen to our employees and customers, and they will provide the information that needs to be improved to meet their needs. We have business knowledge and experience managing the company, what cars we will buy from auctions, and what prices we can sell to customers. Nowadays, having business knowledge is the most important.

Participants noted that small business auto dealership owners could integrate knowledge management with their customer relationship management software and other business intelligence tools, like inventory management software used in the automotive sales industry, to manage customer needs. In-depth product knowledge of vehicle inventory and the services offered by the service department is an important factor in improving communications between the sales team and customers (Aureli et al., 2019). PSAD1 stated,

When train our sales team members to focus on what customers need in a vehicle; therefore, customers can pinpoint features and performance capacity from the right car that meets their current needs, budget, and lifestyle.

Subtheme 1: Sharing Information

Participants noted that with knowledge sharing information, leaders and employees could mutually benefit from each other's knowledge and expertise in daily business operations, leading to a more significant competitive advantage (Aureli et al., 2019). Participants highlighted that leaders should continue enriching employees' best

practices through knowledge sharing, resulting in better processes, increasing quality products and services, and improving the speedy realization of all business objectives. Leaders should offer incentives and rewards to employees and staff who supply practical market developments to enhance customer services to gain a competitive advantage (Shoaib & Baruch, 2019). Leaders should utilize market news to upgrade the current line of products and services or design new ones to respond to market demands and developments to increase competitive advantage (Shoaib & Baruch, 2019). For instance, PSAD1 stated,

We share information and experience with employees and customers through employees training and customer survey to improve management skills. You do not know how or what needs to be improved if you do not share information and experiences with your staff, employees, and customers.

PSAD2 and PSAD3 noted that small business auto dealership owners should share important information and experience of services to increase business achievement through employee training. Sharing information can be enhanced business performance and customer satisfaction (Aureli et al., 2019). PSAD3 stated,

We provide every member access to the same information through staff training to ensure everyone is on the same page.

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept by recognizing sharing information with employees as an essential intangible resource to gain business achievement. In the RBV theory, sharing information is a significant source of competitive advantage that includes creating a strong relationship with employees and

gaining knowledge for both managers and employees to support small businesses' sustainable competitive advantage and performance (Aureli et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners should build relationships, share knowledge through employee training, and offer incentives to their employees who supply practical market developments to enhance customer services to gain a competitive advantage.

Subtheme 2: Management and Organizational Culture

Knowledge management is the systemic and organizational process of acquiring, organizing, and communicating knowledge for firms to use more effectively and be productive (Aviv et al., 2021; Razzaq et al., 2019). Participants recognized that small business auto dealership owners should use knowledge management to improve quality customer services, decision-making, problem-solving, adaptability to change, and increased customer satisfaction (Aureli et al., 2019). Participants also expressed that leaders should understand the implementation of knowledge practices in different cultures. García-Fernández et al. (2018) stated that organizational culture strongly influences employees' behaviors beyond formal control systems. Small business auto dealership owners should be capable of shaping strong organizational culture to fit the effective anticipated strategies (Li-Fan et al., 2019). Once employees recognize the organizational culture, the work setting appears to be more pleasant, improving the employees' morale, teamwork, information sharing, and accepting fresh ideas (Colnar & Dimovski, 2020). Following the findings of this qualitative study, Zieba and Kończyński (2020) highlighted the importance of organizational culture, which presents employees as

strategic partners that can improve employees' effectiveness through human capital, communication, and teamwork. For example, PSAD3 stated,

We treat customers with respect, emphasize customer loyalty and experience, and then you know, we encourage employees and others to represent good dealership culture. We train them well on how they can implement dealership culture. We remind them of the values and attitudes they should hold when talking with prospective customers.

A small auto dealership with a strong culture can position itself to protect its existing market share against conquest and grow even in a flat sales marketplace through effective service (Zieba & Kończyński, 2020). Participants stated that the essential element of small auto dealership culture is giving sales team members the power, responsibility, and authority to do what needs to be done to help their customers. The sales team members can build trust with customers and help create an environment where they want to work because they're allowed to do good work (Zieba & Kończyński, 2020). Participants acknowledged that the sales team members are the top driver of buyer satisfaction with the dealership experience. PSAD2 stated,

We have a great culture because we have great people in my company. You know, one of the best ways to create a positive culture in the workplace is to listen to your employees.

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept by identifying management and organizational culture as essential inimitable resources to gain a competitive advantage, including the company brand products and services that obtain valuable and

rare resources that competitors cannot duplicate. Small business auto dealership owners must establish virtuous quality services for other firms seeking innovation, capabilities, and capacities for solutions to the challenges in the marketplace.

Subtheme 3: Customer Needs and Preferences

Participants also stated that small business auto dealership owners could use market analysis of business knowledge to expand the knowledge pool of small auto dealerships, improve business operations, and clarify the business' long-term objectives to increase customer needs and preferences. Leaders should understand current and potential customers' needs, wants, and purchasing tendencies will lead to a more accessible adaptation of products and services to ensure customer satisfaction (Zieba & Kończyński, 2020). For example, PSAD3 stated,

We use our internal measurements to decide what market strategies need to be enhanced and when they should be enhanced and with whom. There should be enhanced or just it, and that is done with market analysis.

Following the findings of this qualitative study, Aviv et al. (2021) explained that environment and dynamic strategies are other significant sources of business knowledge to gain a competitive advantage that includes developments in local and international politics and economy, technology, and society, affecting business goals and growth. Participants indicated that small business auto dealership owners could use dynamic business strategies to ensure that a business can respond appropriately to changes that may represent both potential opportunities and new threats to its effective operations (Tomé & Gromova, 2021). Leaders can create their business effectiveness strategies

accordingly by adjusting to their markets to remain dynamic and change their strategies as changes in their environment advantage (Aviv et al., 2021). Business efficiency is significant that business owners will be able to intensify and strengthen their business efficiency using their expertise as reflected in better business standards, processes, products, and services (Nurjaman et al., 2021; Tomé & Gromova, 2021).

PSAD2 explained that small business auto dealership owners should utilize their business knowledge to efficiently bring products and services closer to their customers and target market to increase sales and gain a competitive advantage. A firm needs to align its process, products, and services by building strong customer relationship management to increase sales (Ernawati et al., 2021). For example, PSAD2 stated,

Currently, with the way the market is, people are doing enormous markups and things like that; we're not doing any markups. We're just trying to basically be here for customers because we want them to come back to us in the future. We want them to be satisfied with our services in our dealership, and they get cars of their needs.

Mona and Asarian (2019) explained how important of small businesses to align their business knowledge resources with the changes that occur in the marketplace. PSAD1, PSAD2, and PSAD3 acknowledged that small business auto dealership owners should understand how to manage knowledge capabilities to deploy resources efficiently and grow their businesses in value. The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was the RBV theory, with the general systems theory and social network theory as alternative theories. Small auto dealership managers and owners can use these theories to

understand how to employ business knowledge resources effectively and how to use networks to obtain important market information cost-effectively to gain a competitive advantage and sustain their organizations.

The findings of this study supported the assertion of Harindranath et al. (2019) that small business auto dealership owners need the knowledge and skills of car salespersons as valuable resources to deliver quality customer services and increase market share. The findings also supported the RBV concept of using the knowledge and skills of car salespersons to present customized solutions to individual customers to gain a sustainable competitive advantage.

Table 5

Human Capital

Theme and subthemes	Number of responses	% of respondent agreement
Human capital: Hiring, training, and selling strategy	7	100%

Emergent Theme: Human Capital

The theme of human capital originated from Interview Questions 1, 2, 4, and mainly Questions 1 and 2, in which I explored the participants' insight about strategies and methods that small business auto dealership owners used for business sustainability in the competitive advantage. Human capital management is defined as a process in which small businesses hire the right employee who has the knowledge and capabilities to retain the organization for gaining profits and sustaining a competitive advantage (Popkova, 2021). Hiring the right employee for the proper position can lead to positive

organizational outcomes such as reducing employee turnover, achieving productivity, improving the cost-benefit ratio, and increasing customer satisfaction (Rabiei & Arias-Aranda, 2021). Participants recognized the importance of developing human capital that contributes to competitive advantage resulting from the quality of the knowledge and skills of car salespersons.

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept by using human capital as essential valuable resources to gain a competitive advantage, such as hiring the right employee who has capabilities to retain the organization for achieving profits and sustaining their organization in the competitive environment. Participants discussed how human capital management is an essential valuable resource in business activities and the value chain of small auto dealerships. Leaders should enlist the talents of the firm's human resources to develop and deploy a strategy for improving workforce productivity to drive higher value for the firms to become an important focus throughout the organization (Gruzina et al., 2021; Rabiei & Arias-Aranda, 2021). Participants stated that small business auto dealership owners should optimize their workforce through comprehensive human capital development to achieve business goals, long-term survival, and sustainability. To accomplish this undertaking, leaders need to invest human resources to ensure that employees have the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to work effectively in a rapidly changing and complex environment (Amaratunga et al., 2018).

Subtheme 1: Hiring, Training, and Selling

Participants identified that small business auto dealership owners should invest in human resources, including hiring the right employees, providing quality employee training, and sharing the experience of selling strategies with their employees.

Participants acknowledged that retaining the knowledge and skills of car salespersons in the automobile industry is important for firms to gain profits and maintain a competitive advantage. According to the RBV concept, knowledge and skills are central to small businesses' success that leaders use to sustain their organizations in the competitive environment and that leaders must acquire from the internal development of their employees (Amaratunga et al., 2018). For instance, PSAD3 stated,

First, we would start with hiring, then it would be training, and that it would be selling. The manufacturer and our company constantly provide that training to our staff and employees to ensure they receive good knowledge and skills results.

The findings of this study supported the assertion by Rabiei and Arias-Aranda (2021) that when the human resource is valuable, rare, non-imitable, and nonsubstitutable, the human capital pool of a firm may contribute to sustainable competitive advantage. Participants emphasized that small business auto dealership owners need to invest in human resources by improving staff and employee knowledge and skills through training. Employees are human resources in whom small business leaders invest through the knowledge and skills development by training to improve their abilities to perform tasks effectively, thereby adding value and enabling the firm to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Muhammad et al., 2018; Rabiei & Arias-

Aranda, 2021). Firms should implement service strategies for their employees by providing clear information and adequate training to ensure consistency in the delivery systems and enhance customer service (Stefaniuk, 2020).

The findings of this study contributed to RBV theory by highlighting the significance of human capital development as a relevant valuable resource and other business resources that can enhance firm performance and achieve a sustained competitive advantage (Hutahayan, 2020). Participants indicated that small business auto dealership owners should optimize access to human capital and have the ability to respond quickly to new opportunities. Participants also stated that small business auto dealership owners should provide online training courses for the sales team members or require them to participate in training meetings held by the auto manufacturers for inventory sold at the dealership. The sales team members should take training courses to improve their overall understanding of the workings of the dealership and apply that experience to enhancing product knowledge and recognizing their essential role as sales team members (Hutahayan, 2020). The sales team members should educate on vehicle performance capabilities, features, and tips to share with customers. PSAD2 stated,

Selling cars requires in-depth knowledge and understanding of the auto market.

We train our employees well with knowledge and skills on how to take care of customers, so they have the opportunity to grow the business. We want customers to be satisfied with our services and find the vehicle their needs. We do not want customers to see us as somebody is out for the quick buck. Customers want to come back only if you can make them feel comfortable and satisfied, where your

people are helpful, knowledgeable, and polite. If you are grumbling, unfriendly, and unwelcome, customers will certainly not return.

The findings of this study supported the assertion of Nguyen et al. (2018) that firms can create sustainable intangible values of the RBV theory by implementing human resources actions that develop human capital and improve business performance.

Participants highlighted the significant role of small business auto dealership owners in developing dynamic capabilities and implementing human resource development actions to align with organizational goals, thereby gaining a sustainable competitive advantage.

Table 6

Effective Supervision

Theme and subthemes	Number of responses	% of respondent agreement
Effective supervision	6	66.67%
• Employees loyalty and communication	3	33.33%

Emergent Theme: Effective Supervision

The theme of effective supervision originated from Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, and mainly Question 2 asked participants to provide the effectiveness of their strategies to improve business skills to maintain business operations. Participants acknowledged the importance of effective communication with customers to ensure employees have the knowledge and skills to serve customers well and provide them with pleasant car buying. The finding corroborated assertions by Rafi and Saeed (2019) that customers perceive car salespersons as not trustworthy and believe sellers routinely take advantage of customers.

Participants discussed how being a professional and effective supervisor and leading by example is essential to motivate employees to work harder and treat customers with respect. Participants also stated that leaders need active supervisors who are effective facilitators to utilize interpersonal skills to encourage employees to achieve business goals and sustain a competitive advantage. Leaders should understand such a relationship and how they can work together with their employees because employees are considered a vital success for the organization (Geil & Greenwald, 2020).

Effective supervisory leadership and supervisors should have individual characteristics, such as problem-solving skills, fairness, production concentration, recognizing of other works, taking positive action, and giving feedback to employees (Geil & Greenwald, 2020). Participants stated that effective supervisors should be energetic, create new ideas, and be confident to help their employees, allowing them to perform the job well. Chatman et al. (2020) added that an effective leader encourages free and open communication and trains team members in the best possible way to guarantee effective performance. PSAD3 stated,

If you build loyalty with your employees, they will provide excellent customer service to customers and create a positive atmosphere at the dealership. They know what to do and what needs to be done and are willing to step up and do well to take care of customers, and then this can create customers loyalty and satisfaction.

Participants stated that small business auto dealership owners should motivate employees to treat customers with care and respect. PSAD2 stated,

We provide guest service and treatment and respect customers who visit our dealership. Therefore, we can build trust with customers and maintain a good relationship with our customers.

The findings of this study supported the RBV concept by identifying effective supervision as an essential valuable resource to gain a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners should use adequate supervision as a resource to build relationships with employees and how they can work together with their employees to encourage employees to achieve business goals and sustain a competitive advantage.

Subtheme 1: Employees Loyalty and Communication

Chatman et al. (2020) identified that an effective leader should be able to determine how to lead depending on their employees and the situation to improve business and gain a competitive advantage. Leaders should know how to react to the complex situational context that organizations face by having a sense of work, analyzing situations, and responding to them (Chatman et al., 2020). Participants explained that the success of small business auto dealership owners comes from motivated, committed, skilled employees with positive attitudes towards their organizations. Gupta and Sharma (2018) stated that effective supervisors should have capable skills by maintaining open communications with employees and employing management techniques, including fairness, honesty, supportiveness, and accessibility. For example, PSAD1 stated,

Employees are significant because how they are treated can directly affect business. If you want to encourage others and employees within the dealership to

grow the business, you must be positive behaviors, be able to take charge, and be effective in solving the problem.

Participants explained that small business auto dealership owners should encourage employees to communicate and provide feedback freely to improve work achievement. PSAD2 stated,

When we have any work-related issues with employees, I encourage them to freely communicate with me and address the problem.

The findings of this study supported the assertion of Ciftgul and Cetinkanat (2021) that the most significant responsibility of effective leadership is to play a decisive role in creating loyalty with employees, maintaining business issues, training employees well, and developing the culture in an organization. From the perspective of the RBV theory, participants' responses supported the findings by Umanto and Andreo (2018) that organizational culture is an intangible resource that leaders use to influence group members for achieving their goals to gain a competitive advantage and improve business performance. Participants acknowledged that the accountability of effective leadership is the ability to influence their employees and build customer loyalty. Small business auto dealership owners should understand the targeted audience, build a relationship with others, and present the content effectively in real-time to influence others (Ciftgul & Cetinkanat, 2021). Participants also described that when influential leaders encourage employees to communicate freely, that can increase employee commitment to work harder, translating to the quality of customer service. The findings of this study indicated that small business auto dealership owners benefit from creating lasting relationships

with their employees and building customers loyalty because customer and employee satisfaction will directly influence their business and future sales.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of this study are relevant to the professional practice of business that business leaders could potentially use the findings to improve sales and achieve competitive advantages. Participants provided additional information on small business auto dealership owners used business strategies to sustain organizations and gain competitive advantages. The specific business problem was that some small business auto dealership owners lack business strategies to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years. Small business leaders can respond to the challenges of the competitive market environment and customers to maintain competitiveness (Dunay & Nosratabadi, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners may consider the quality of customer service and business strategies to sustain their organization and gain competition in the marketplace (Fasika & Alemayehu, 2020). The findings may provide small business auto dealership owners with information on developing and implementing business strategies to safeguard firm resources and sustained profitability.

Small business auto dealership owners can focus on reducing costs, increasing productivity, creating employee loyalty, building customer relationships, and improving customer services to satisfy customers and other stakeholders (Fasika & Alemayehu, 2020). Leaders can optimize resource allocations that align with practical strategies, improve business performance, and integrate the volatility of the competitive market environment (Tzavlopoulos et al., 2019). The findings of this study concurred with the

RBV theory because small business auto dealership owners can use the theory to identify, evaluate, and manage the resources to maintain operations and sustain competitive advantages. Leaders can use the RBV theory to analyze significant resources as valuable sources of competitive advantages to maintain business and improve sales (Tzavlopoulos et al., 2019). The findings are relevant to professional practice, and small business leaders may obtain the information of results to employ resources efficiently in business to improve business performance, achieve a competitive advantage, and sustain business growth.

The findings of this study might serve as basic information for small business auto dealership owners to improve business practices, increase business performance, and sustain a competitive advantage. This study showed that customer satisfaction, internet marketing, business knowledge, influential leaders, and human capital resources are effective strategies for small auto dealerships to succeed in the competitive marketplace. The results of this study may assist small business auto dealership owners in using and identifying the resources to remain competitive advantages. This study is significant to professional business practice in that the results may provide leaders with knowledge management to assist them in managing their businesses better and enhancing business growth. The results could enable small business auto dealership owners to gain insights into successful strategies and practices that may improve the effectiveness of using tangible and intangible resources. Leaders may use the findings of this study to develop and implement strategies to reduce business failures, improve organizational practices, and increase profits.

Implications for Social Change

The results from this study could beneficially affect business individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies by adding to the strategies that small business auto dealership owners use to maintain a competitive advantage and sustain business growth. Small business auto dealership owners could increase their success rate and improve communities' economic well-being by developing and implementing value-added strategies. Small auto dealerships' successes could positively affect other small businesses in the community by increasing foot traffic, thereby attracting new customers and enabling enterprises to advertise to potential buyers. Increasing small auto dealerships' success rate may increase employment opportunities in their communities, thereby positively affecting individuals' employment. High success rates for small auto dealerships may create more jobs, achieve employment opportunities, and increase firm profitability. The findings of this study could enable small business leaders to recognize the importance of training, relationships, customer loyalty, and retaining experienced employees.

Some small auto dealerships could benefit from the findings of this study to adopt business cultures to encourage others with positive behaviors towards customers. Small business leaders manage, motivate, and encourage employees with positive behaviors that can be a significant competitive advantage of an enterprise (Hitka et al., 2019). Small business auto dealership owners might gain knowledge by implementing adaptive and agile customer strategies and behaviors to respond to market volatility and customer needs promptly. Small business leaders might acquire knowledge and learn the

experience of meeting varied customer requirements regarding prices, specification of models, quality of vehicles, and delivery. Encouraging employees and salespersons with positive behaviors might develop loyalty and trust in customers in the purchasing process, thereby enriching relationships with existing and potential customers. Positive behaviors of employees and salespersons will improve customer loyalty and increase business profitability (Langerud & Jordan, 2020). Therefore, small auto dealerships could expand employment opportunities, allowing local communities to grow through increased tax revenues and contributions to local nonprofit organizations.

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this study may provide small auto dealerships within highly competitive market environments with business strategies that increase small business success. Small auto dealerships may consider the information in the study's findings for maintaining an existing business, starting a new business, and increasing business productivity and sales. Using the information as resources by successful small business auto dealership owners may prove inspirational to entrepreneurial success. The participants provided valuable insights into their knowledge management processes, strategic resources, and business practices, including their perceptions regarding the significant capabilities needed for future business success. The recommendations from the study's findings are consistent with the RBV theory of the small business, meaning implementation is mindful of the business resources, strategic resources, and capabilities limitations of small business enterprises. The results from this study provided small business auto dealership owners' insights to determine business strategies to increase the

success rate of small businesses. With the study's findings, I recommended that small business auto dealership owners use the information of the study, including some significant intangible and tangible resources, to maintain their business operations and gain a competitive advantage. The following recommendations for business actions identified from the study's findings should benefit current and future small auto dealerships for business sustainability and future growth. The existing and aspiring small business auto dealership owners should focus on quality customer satisfaction, internet marketing, business knowledge, human capital, and effective supervision strategies.

The findings of this study revealed that the theme of customer satisfaction was an essential valuable resource that leaders can use to gain a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners should provide exceptional quality customer services and products to customers and potential customers by focusing on their needs and preferences, which will enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and competitiveness. Quality customer service is vital to delivering a differentiating advantage to businesses and achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty (Slack & Singh, 2020). Some participants noted that providing quality services and products to customers enables small auto dealerships to experience increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and a positive reputation. Therefore, small business auto dealership owners should focus on a service strategy that delivers exceptional quality services to customers to retain existing customers, attract new customers, and gain a competitive advantage over the competitive market environment. Small business auto dealership owners should reward employees who provide exceptional quality services to customers and receive positive feedback.

Another relevant theme recommendation for business action identified from the study's findings was internet marketing of products and services. Internet marketing was an essential valuable tangible resource to gain a competitive advantage. The internet and technology have changed the way people shop to buy cars. Therefore, small business auto dealership owners should market their strategy of selling vehicles by using marketing tools, strategic networks, newspapers, and exhibitions to enhance access to potential buyers. Leaders should implement marketing strategies that include customer relationships, extensive marketing research, and market segmentation to identify premium target markets, selective distribution, and intensive advertising. Marketing strategy has always been an essential resource for a firm because it is closely related to solid product sales, market share, and future development (Wang et al., 2021). Using internet marketing to advertise products and services to reach new customers will enable small business auto dealerships to gain market share in a way that rivals cannot imitate easily. Small business auto dealership owners should form alliances with other stakeholders in the automobile industry to increase a strong network marketing that includes cultivating business relationships, creating opportunities, and obtaining critical information. Small business owners with a strong network will get essential information cost-effectively, thereby increasing access to auctions, market advertising and communication, trade fairs, product exhibitions, and online marketing.

The findings showed that the theme of business knowledge was an essential intangible resource to gain a competitive advantage that leaders can use to create value and sustain competitive advantages. Small business auto dealership owners should have

business knowledge in the automobile industry to maintain business operations and gain a competitive advantage. Knowledge intends to provide considerable impact to the organizations, mainly assisting in developing corporate strategy and business process engineering and attaining a competitive edge (Aviv et al., 2021; Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020). Small business auto dealership owners should understand the industry and consumer trends to grow their business in the competitive environment by using business knowledge to develop business strategies to achieve a competitive advantage. Small business auto dealership owners should align their business knowledge resources with the changes in the marketplace to create business value to gain effectiveness for their businesses. Small business auto dealership owners use business knowledge and experience to maintain existing customers and develop business strategies to attract new customers to compete with other competitors in the market. Small business auto dealership owners should use relevant information and skilled employees to deliver quality customer services to increase market share, improve customer relationships, and achieve customer loyalty. Small business auto dealership owners should use the knowledge and skills they gained from their experiences in the automobile industry as a strategic intangible resource to create customer value to increase profit and growth for their companies.

The findings indicated that the theme of human capital was an essential valuable resource to gain a competitive advantage that leaders can use for hiring employees who have the capabilities to achieve and sustain their organization in the competitive environment. Small business auto dealership owners should develop human capital by

providing and implementing mandatory employee training related to customer services, relationships, and loyalty. Implementing employee-training activities is another skill-enhancing human resource management practice that firms can promote to increase their capabilities and become more confident in their knowledge and skills to improve business performance to sustain a competitive advantage (Natalicchio et al., 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should treat their employees as human resources by investing in knowledge development and management training to improve their abilities to perform tasks effectively, thereby adding value and retaining experienced employees while competing with rivals. Small business auto dealership owners should develop and implement human resource development actions that align with their organizational goals to gain a sustainable competitive advantage.

The findings disclosed that the theme of effective supervision was an essential valuable resource to gain a competitive advantage that leaders can use to build relationships and work together with their employees to encourage employees to achieve business goals. Small business auto dealership owners should provide effective leadership in business to encourage employees to practice a corporate culture, improve customer loyalty and satisfaction, and promote open communication between employees and customers. Small business auto dealership owners should have individual characteristics, such as solving problem skills, creating employee loyalty, recognizing work, taking positive action, being confident to help their employees, and giving feedback to employees. Influential leaders should open communication between leaders and employees' feedback to improve business performance, and thereby employees can

deliver quality service to increase customer satisfaction (Gupta & Sharma, 2018). Small business auto dealership owners should provide the dealership culture to encourage employees to communicate freely, thereby increasing employee commitment to improving customer service quality that enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. Increasing customer loyalty, thereby building trust and reducing the negative reputation of car salespersons. Small business auto dealership owners should immediately address any negative feedback or complaints from customers and suppliers related to the unprofessional behaviors of car salespersons in the company to maintain the integrity and reputation of the organization. Small business auto dealership owners should encourage skilled employees with positive attitudes towards their organizations, create lasting relationships with their employees, and build customers loyalty because customer and employee satisfaction will directly influence business and future sales.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study indicated that some business strategies were essential to succeed in a competitive business environment. Researchers may use the findings of this study as a foundation for further research to explore other business strategies, resources, and knowledge management that are not covered in this study. The recommendation for further research is to explore the education level of small business owners affects the success of small businesses in the competitive environment. Participants in this study consisted of three small business auto dealership owners in Sacramento, California. The geographic location of the study is limited; therefore, the results of the study may not apply to other States. Thus, further research could expand to different geographical

locations in the United States of America and other countries. Subsequent researchers should analyze and consider the findings of this study to further research to gain knowledge of small business success to achieve performance, gain a competitive advantage, and sustain growth.

Reflections

My doctoral study at Walden University was a long journey, but I gained knowledge from my study in exploring strategies for completing the doctoral study process. I had an opportunity to interview small business auto dealership owners in business for more than five years in Sacramento. Conducting the study has increased my knowledge of small business auto dealership owners used to maintain the organizations and my understanding of the doctoral study. My initial attempt to recruit and obtain participants' commitment was seemingly challenging, even though I sent them my introductory letters and informed consent forms.

To mitigate the risk of bias in collecting and interpreting data, I was mindful of possible tendencies in every interview of my study and deliberated on strategies to minimize biases. I followed the interview protocol to ensure that I applied the same procedures to each participant and took some measures to reduce bias as the researcher of this study. As the interview progressed, I was comfortable with all participants who shared their business knowledge, experience, and success to sustain operations. The data collections for this study were through semistructured interviews with participants who have succeeded in business. From my discussions with the participants of this study, I realized how they spend so much time working hard to grow and succeed in business.

This study enhanced my understanding of how small auto dealerships can sustain their businesses and stimulated my interest in establishing a small auto dealership after graduation.

Conclusion

The specific business problem was that some small business auto dealership owners lacked business strategies to sustain their organizations beyond 5 years in a competitive environment. This qualitative multiple case study aimed to explore business strategies that small business auto dealership owners used to sustain organizations beyond 5 years. The conceptual framework for this study was the RBV theory created by Barney (1991). The data collection methods of this study were semistructured interviews, document reviews, field notes, and website visits.

The five main themes identified through data analysis included (a) customer satisfaction, (b) internet marketing, (c) business knowledge, (d) human capital, and (e) effective supervision. The study results may contribute to social change by reducing business failures and improving small business automobile industry organizational practices. Small business leaders may use the findings to create additional jobs for local communities, which could increase the economic well-being of communities through an increase in tax revenues by using and implementing a data-driven strategic plan for new auto dealerships startups. The findings from this study could help small business auto dealership owners to understand the importance of developing business resources and implementing strategies that safeguard to improve quality of customer service, increase market share, and gain competitiveness.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Date of Interview: _____ Code Assigned: _____

1. Introduce self to participant(s).
2. Introduce the research topic.
3. Thank the participant for taking the time to respond to the invitation to participate in the study.
4. Present consent form, go over contents, and answer questions and concerns of participant.
5. Give participant copy of consent form for review.
6. Turn on recording device.
7. Follow procedure to introduce participant(s) with pseudonym/coded identification; note the date and time.
8. Begin interview with question #1. The interview will span approximately 1 hour for responses to the interview questions, including any additional follow-up questions.
9. Remind the participant of the purpose of the proposal is to explore start-up strategies of microenterprise entrepreneurial business owners used to succeed in business beyond 5 years.
10. End interview sequence; discuss the follow up member checking process with each participant.
11. Thank the participant(s) for their part in the study. Reiterate contact numbers for follow up questions and concerns from participants.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Questions

1. What are the strategies you used for business sustainability in the competitive auto dealership market?
2. What methods did you use to assess the effectiveness of your strategies?
3. How, if at all, did you use the assessment data to change or enhance strategies for sustainability?
4. What were the adjustments, if any, made to achieve planned benchmarks?
5. What additional information would you like to provide to improve business skills to manage a small business through competitive advantage?