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Leadership Strategies for Sustainable Organizational Performance in Small and Medium Healthcare Businesses

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Leadership Strategies for Sustainable Organizational Performance in Small and Medium

Healthcare Businesses

by

Hauwa Abdulmalik Nuru

MS, Business Administration, Ahmadu Bello University Nigeria, 1995

BS, Business Administration, Ahmadu Bello University Nigeria, 1987

Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2024

Abstract

Sustainable organizational performance in small and medium healthcare businesses is crucial, given their essential role in delivering accessible healthcare services. However, these businesses often face significant sustainability and overall performance challenges. Grounded in the social exchange theory, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to explore leadership strategies that contribute to sustainable organizational performance. The participants were five healthcare leaders from Nigeria's small and medium healthcare businesses. Data were collected using semistructured interviews. Through thematic analysis, the following themes emerged: effective reward, financial incentives, recognition, patient-centric care, continuous training, and fostering innovation and adaptability. A significant recommendation is the integration of these strategies to drive sustainable performance. The implications for social change include the potential for better healthcare delivery, enhanced community well-being, and a more equitable, high-performing healthcare sector. Small and medium healthcare businesses can achieve remarkable success and contribute meaningfully to societal well-being by cultivating a motivated, competent, and innovative workforce.

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Dedication

This research project is dedicated to my beloved family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my constant source of strength throughout this journey. To my parents, who instilled in me the values of perseverance, hard work, and unwavering belief in my abilities. Also, to my daughter Maryam Nuru for your steadfast presence, support and encouragement that means the world to me. And to all the healthcare professionals who tirelessly strive to improve the lives of others, inspiring this research. Finally, to the future leaders in healthcare, may this work serve as a guide and inspiration to achieve excellence and drive meaningful change in our communities.

Acknowledgments

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Section 1: Foundation of the Project

The foundation of the project lies in recognizing the critical role of leadership in driving sustainable organizational performance within healthcare businesses. By focusing on leadership strategies tailored specifically for the healthcare sector, the project aimed to address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by healthcare organizations in achieving long-term success. Through a comprehensive examination of various leadership approaches and practices, and their impact on organizational performance indicators, I strived to identify effective strategies that inspire innovation, foster collaboration, and enhance employee engagement. The project aimed to provide valuable insights and actionable recommendations to healthcare leaders, enabling them to navigate the complexities of the healthcare landscape and create a culture of excellence that promotes sustainable organizational performance and improves patient outcomes.

Background of the Problem

In the landscape of small and medium-sized healthcare businesses (SMHBs), leaders face a distinct challenge in devising robust strategies that guarantee sustained success. Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering quality service delivery across both private and public sectors (Baum & Aburmishan 2022). Private and public entities often operate within a complex ecosystem of regulatory changes, evolving customer needs, employee retention, and competitive pressures. Yet, despite their crucial role in providing essential services, many of these leaders grapple with the absence of tailored, effective strategies to navigate these intricacies and achieve enduring business success. Research

suggests that while leaders acknowledge the necessity for strategic planning, many struggle to develop and implement effective strategies tailored to their specific contexts (Lee et al., 2019). The absence of tailored strategies often leads to difficulties in adapting to market changes, optimizing operational efficiency, and sustaining long-term growth and viability.

While recognizing the importance of strategic planning, leaders often lack the frameworks or expertise to formulate and execute tailored strategies that suit their specific operational contexts. Leadership serves as the vital operational core of any organization, functioning as its nerve center for existence, functionality, progression, and prosperity (Tedla & Hamid 2022). The study of leadership strategically harnesses human and material resources with wisdom and efficacy, enabling the organization's sustenance and growth. The deficit in executing strategic planning directly impacts the ability of healthcare leadership to adapt, innovate, and grow within the competitive healthcare landscape. In essence, the absence of effective strategies tailored to the unique challenges faced by SMHBs impedes their ability to thrive and achieve sustained success in an industry marked by rapid changes and demanding requirements.

Business Problem Focus and Project Purpose

The specific business problem is that leaders in SMHBs lack effective strategies to ensure business success. The purpose of this study was to explore effective strategies for healthcare leaders in SMHBs, to ensure business success. The research method is qualitative, and the design is a pragmatic inquiry. For this research design, I gathered data

by employing recording devices during semistructured interviews with healthcare leaders. To determine the success of strategies implemented in SMHBs, several indicators were considered. The key indicators that can signal the strategy effectiveness based on the gathered data include financial performance, operational efficiency, employee satisfaction, employee retention rates, quality of care and outcomes, patient satisfaction, return on investment, and benchmarking against industry standards. By analyzing data gathered through semistructured interviews with healthcare leaders against these indicators, a comprehensive understanding of the success of implemented strategies in SMHBs was developed. Opting for semistructured interviews, featuring open-ended questions, was pertinent as doing so enables the researcher to get comprehensive and detailed responses to better inform the research study (Agazu et al., 2022). Access to participants was facilitated through social media platforms and by leveraging connections within my network. Following the interviews, the recorded conversations were transcribed, and the resultant information will be securely stored for a duration of 5 years. The qualitative research process is described in more detail in Section 3.

The target population for this study is leaders of SMHBs operating in Nigeria who have successfully developed and implemented leadership strategies to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. The sampling method was purposive sampling, where participants were selected from 15 to 20 healthcare businesses based on specific criteria. The eligibility criteria included leaders in SMHBs in Nigeria, in business for a minimum of 5 years, registered as a legal business, possessing successful experience obtaining

outside resources designed to increase profitability, and having an employee headcount of 20 to 50 employees. The data for this study were primarily collected through in-depth interviews with the business leaders who met the specified eligibility criteria. Additionally, I used relevant documentary sources such as business records, financial reports, and documented leadership practices to complement the insights obtained from the interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of the sustained success and leadership strategies employed by these businesses.

The conceptual framework for this study is the social exchange theory (SET). The theorists associated with this theory include Blau (1964), Emerson (1976), and Ahmed et al. (2023). While Blau is often associated with the formalization and presentation of the SET, it is essential to recognize that the theory's evolution involved the contributions of multiple scholars over an extended period. A tenet of SET states that individuals engage in interactions based on the principle of reciprocity, expecting mutual benefits and outcomes.

Research Question

What effective strategies do healthcare leaders employ for success in small to medium-sized healthcare businesses in Nigeria?

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

Assumptions in research refer to foundational beliefs or presuppositions that underlie a study's design, methodology, or interpretation of findings (Saunders et al.,

2019). Assumptions are the fundamental principles or ideas that are accepted as true without empirical evidence or proof within the context of the research (Grodal et al., 2021). Assumptions in pragmatic inquiry research form the foundation for studies and, guide decisions and interpretations.

This study operates on several key assumptions. Firstly, I assumed that individuals respond consistently, allowing for generalizations, even when faced with variable and context-dependent human behavior. Secondly, there was an assumption regarding the reliability and validity of measurement instruments, acknowledging, however, that context and interpretation differences may present challenges to their universality. Thirdly, it was assumed that participants possess a shared understanding of the research problem, recognizing the potential challenges arising from diverse perspectives. Lastly, the study assumed causation when observing variable associations, understanding the difficulties in establishing direct cause–effect relationships due to confounding factors. These assumptions, inherent in pragmatic inquiry research, are acknowledged as potentially fallible, aiding researchers in addressing biases and study limitations.

Limitations

Limitations are constraints on the research design or process that may impact the interpretation of the findings (Agazu et al., 2022). Limitations in research denote the constraints or shortcomings within a study that might impact its scope, applicability, or

validity. They represent factors that hinder the research process or may affect the interpretation or generalization of findings.

The first limitation was that due to resource constraints and the specific focus on SMHBs, the sample size of five participants may have limited overall data collection. This limitation could impact the generalizability of the study's findings to larger healthcare organizations or other industries. Another limitation was that the study focused on a specific geographic area or region, potentially limiting the applicability of the findings to healthcare businesses in other locations with different contextual factors or cultural norms. Also, time limitations may have restricted the duration of data collection or the depth of analysis, potentially impacting the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the study's findings. Additionally, limited access to internal organizational data, such as financial records or performance metrics, may have constrained the depth of analysis and the ability to assess the impact of leadership strategies on organizational performance. Addressing and acknowledging these limitations is essential for ensuring transparency and rigor in the research process, as well as for providing a comprehensive understanding of the study's findings and their implications.

Transition

In summary, this project emphasizes the pivotal role of leadership in driving sustainable organizational performance within healthcare businesses. The business problem identified is the lack of effective strategies among leaders in SMHBs to ensure business success. Section 1 outlined the purpose of the study, which was to explore these

effective strategies through qualitative research using pragmatic inquiry design. However, limitations such as sample size constraints and limited access to internal organizational data may have impacted the study's scope. Section 2 presents a comprehensive literature review focusing on different strategies for success and challenges faced by SMHBs. The focus for Section 3 is on the role of the researcher, the nature of the study, and methodological aspects such as data collection and analysis techniques. Lastly, in Section 4, I present the research findings, business contributions, professional practice recommendations, and implications for social change.

Section 2: The Literature Review

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this qualitative pragmatic inquiry, I explored the leadership strategies crucial for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs in Nigeria. As the need for leaders to adopt effective leadership strategies in healthcare sustainability increases, the challenges become more evident. In the SMHB segment, leaders often lack a comprehensive understanding of the strategies required to sustain performance beyond 5 years and enhance productivity. The issue of business sustainability in healthcare is a global concern, leading to substantial revenue losses, staff retention problems, reduced productivity, and dissatisfaction among employees and patients. Unfortunately, a clear resolution remains elusive.

In this study, I focused on the realm of leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in these businesses. The literature review encompass scholarly articles retrieved from sources such as PubMed, MEDLINE, SAGE Premier, PsycINFO, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, CINAHL, and EBSCO. Keywords such as organizational performance, employee satisfaction, leadership strategy, sustainable performance, healthcare businesses, strategic management, and leadership effectiveness guided the search. The synthesis of this academic literature addressed the research objective related to leadership strategy for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs.

Application of the Applied Business Problem

The purpose of the project was to explore and develop leadership strategies tailored specifically for sustainable organizational performance within small and medium healthcare enterprises. These enterprises face unique challenges due to their size, resource constraints, and the dynamic nature of the healthcare industry. Therefore, in this project, I aimed to address these challenges by identifying and implementing effective leadership approaches that promote long-term viability, resilience, and success in the face of evolving healthcare landscapes. Through this endeavor, the project contributes to the enhancement of organizational performance and the provision of quality healthcare services within small and medium-sized healthcare organizations.

Conceptual Framework

Social Exchange Theory

I employed the SET as the conceptual framework for my study. SET posits that individuals engage in interactions based on the principle of reciprocity, expecting mutual benefits and outcomes (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Ahmed et al., 2023). This framework is relevant to my study as employee and customer satisfaction may be influenced by interactions within social exchanges. Blau (1964, see also Ahmed et al., 2023) posited in the SET that individuals engage in social interactions based on a rational calculation of the costs and benefits involved. People seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs in their interactions with others.

SET suggests that social interactions between individuals or groups involve more than just monetary transactions. SET is a non-monetary interaction fostering trust and engagement between parties (Blau, 1964). SET theory emphasizes the importance of trust and engagement in social relationships and highlights how individuals weigh the costs and benefits of their interactions with others to maximize their outcomes. A key distinction between monetary and social exchange lies in commitments between parties within social exchanges (Thomas & Gupta, 2021). It suggests that social interactions between individuals or groups involve more than just monetary transactions. Instead, they involve a non-monetary exchange of resources, such as trust, support, information, and cooperation.

SET was suitable for my study as healthcare and organizational leaders stand to enhance employee and customer satisfaction by maximizing the benefits derived from social exchange interactions. SET is a sociological concept that revolves around the idea of social relationships, where individuals or groups engage in exchanges with the expectation of mutual benefit (Ahmed et al., 2023). Applying SET to my study, leadership strategy for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs offers a unique perspective on how leadership strategies influence the social exchanges within organizations, impacting sustainability.

Tenets of Social Exchange Theory

Reciprocity in Leadership. SET, supported by Thomas and Gupta (2021), suggests that individuals engage in exchanges expecting equitable returns. SET posits

that individuals engage in exchanges expecting a fair return (Thomas & Gupta, 2021). In the context of leadership, this involves leaders providing support, guidance, and resources to employees with the expectation of improved performance and commitment. I investigated how leadership strategies, rooted in reciprocity, contribute to sustainable organizational performance by fostering positive social exchanges between leaders and employees in SMHBs.

Trust and Commitment. Trust is the glue of life as it is the most essential ingredient in effective communication. SET emphasizes the role of trust in social exchanges for organization performance (Fairhurst et al., 2022). This implies that trust is crucial for building strong relationships and commitment within an organization. In my research study, I explored how leadership strategies that prioritize trust-building contribute to sustained commitment among healthcare professionals, enhancing organizational performance.

Cost–Benefit Analysis. In the context of SET, cost–benefit analysis refers to the cognitive process individuals engage in when making decisions about their social interactions. SET involves individuals weighing the costs and benefits of engaging in social exchanges (Scandura & Meuser, 2022). This analysis involves weighing the perceived costs and benefits associated with engaging in a particular social exchange or relationship. Social exchange costs can include anything perceived as negative or undesirable (Thomas & Gupta, 2021). The cost could be time, effort, resources, or emotional investment. In contrast, benefits are the positive outcomes or rewards

individuals expect to receive from the interaction, such as companionship, support, reciprocity, or tangible rewards.

The decision to engage in a social exchange is based on the comparison between the perceived costs and benefits. According to SET, individuals are more likely to engage in exchanges or relationships where the benefits outweigh the costs (Alwadani & Ndubisi, 2022). By considering the perceived costs and benefits, individuals aim to maximize their rewards while minimizing their costs in social interactions. Conversely, if the costs are perceived to exceed the benefits, individuals may be less inclined to participate or may seek to terminate the exchange or relationship. I analyzed how leadership strategies impact the perceived costs and benefits of employees in SMHBs, influencing their commitment and contribution to sustainable performance.

Employee Voice and Participation. Using SET as a conceptual framework in the study of leadership strategies in SMHBs provides a lens through which to understand the dynamics of social exchanges within the organizational context. SET suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in exchanges when they have a voice and participation in decision-making (Gul et al., 2021). It explores how leadership strategies influence reciprocal relationships, trust, commitment, and the overall social fabric of the organization, all of which contribute to sustainable organizational performance. I explored how leadership strategies promoting employee voice and participation contribute to a positive social exchange, enhancing the sustainability of organizational performance in healthcare businesses.

Alternate Frameworks

Leader–Member Exchange vs. Social Exchange Theory. Leader–member exchange (LMX) theory focuses on the relationship between leaders and individual followers within an organization. LMX theory posits that leaders form unique exchanges or relationships with each of their followers, resulting in in-group and out-group categorizations (Scandura & Meuser, 2022). In-group members receive higher levels of attention, support, and resources from their leaders, leading to greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. Out-group members, in contrast, have more formal, transactional relationships with their leaders, resulting in lower levels of trust and satisfaction.

SET is a broader theoretical framework that examines social interactions in terms of costs and rewards (Ahmed et al., 2023). According to SET, individuals engage in social exchanges based on rational calculations of the benefits they receive compared to the costs they incur. SET emphasizes the importance of trust, reciprocity, and mutual obligations in shaping social interactions and relationships (Scandura & Meuser, 2022). Relationships are characterized by reciprocity, where individuals seek to maximize rewards while minimizing costs.

Although both LMX and SET focus on social interactions and relationships within organizations, they differ in their scope and emphasis. LMX theory specifically examines the relationships between leaders and followers, categorizing them into in-group and out-group members based on the quality of exchanges (Scandura & Meuser,

2022). In contrast, SET provides a broader framework for understanding social exchanges across various contexts, including leader-follower relationships but also encompassing interactions among peers, teams, and organizations.

Transactional Leadership Theory vs. Social Exchange Theory. Transactional leadership theory emphasizes the exchange relationship between leaders and followers, where leaders provide rewards or punishments in exchange for followers' compliance with directives (Sayyadi, 2021). Transactional leaders focus on clarifying roles and tasks, establishing clear expectations, and providing contingent rewards or corrective actions based on followers' performance. This approach relies on a transactional approach to leadership, where exchanges are based on a system of rewards and punishments.

SET, as previously described, posits that individuals engage in social exchanges based on rational calculations of costs and rewards. Relationships are characterized by reciprocity, where individuals seek to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. Trust, mutual obligations, and reciprocity are central concepts in SET, influencing the nature and outcomes of social exchanges.

Preference for Social Exchange Theory in my Research Study

For my research study on leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs, SET was preferred over transactional leadership theory for several reasons. SET provides a broader and more comprehensive framework for understanding social exchanges and relationships within organizations (Ahmad et al. 2023). It allows for the examination of various types of exchanges, not just those between

leaders and followers, which is particularly relevant in the context of healthcare businesses where interactions among healthcare professionals, patients, and other stakeholders are critical.

SET's focus on maximizing benefits while minimizing costs aligns well with the goal of sustainable organizational performance. SET places a strong emphasis on trust, reciprocity, and mutual obligations, which are essential for building and maintaining effective relationships in healthcare settings (Thomas & Gupta, 2021). Trust and reciprocity are particularly crucial in healthcare, where collaboration, teamwork, and patient care depend on effective communication and cooperation among various stakeholders. By understanding the factors that influence social exchanges and relationships, healthcare leaders can develop strategies to foster positive exchanges, enhance employee engagement, and improve organizational outcomes over the long term.

SET is the preferred choice for the conceptual framework for my study for several reasons. SET focuses on reciprocity and mutual benefit, aligning well with the idea of leaders and employees engaging in mutually beneficial exchanges for sustainable performance (Ahmad et al. 2023). SET provides a flexible framework that can accommodate various aspects of social exchanges within organizations, making it adaptable to the complex and dynamic nature of SMHBs. SET places a strong emphasis on relationships, which is particularly relevant in healthcare where strong collaborative relationships between leaders and healthcare professionals are vital for sustainable performance (Meira & Hancer, 2021). SET is inherently social, making it well-suited for

studying leadership strategies in healthcare organizations where social interactions play a crucial role in shaping organizational dynamics.

Another advantage is that the emphasis on trust and commitment in SET aligns with the foundational elements required for sustainable organizational performance in healthcare businesses. In conclusion, while other theories provide valuable insights, SET is the preferred choice for its emphasis on reciprocal relationships, flexibility, applicability to social contexts, and alignment with the core elements necessary for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs. Overall, SET offers a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on social interactions and relationships within organizations, making it well-suited for examining leadership strategies and their impact on sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs.

Leadership Strategies

Effective leadership strategies are fundamental for driving sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs, including those in the healthcare sector. Insights from the reviewed literature underscore the importance of aligning organizational goals with societal needs, recognizing the impact of small wins on employee engagement, and fostering community connections for long-term success. The enhancement of healthcare professionals' skills and attitudes is contingent upon crucial teamwork and collaboration (Bornman & Louw, 2023). This aligns seamlessly with the central theme of the proposed study, which focuses on effective leadership for sustainable organizational performance within smaller healthcare entities.

Leaders in SMHBs can draw upon different strategies to navigate challenges, build a positive workplace culture, and contribute meaningfully to both the business and the broader community. Bornman and Louw (2023) study offers valuable insights into effective strategies for enhancing leadership capabilities, promoting teamwork, and maximizing organizational outcomes, particularly within smaller healthcare settings. Their research lays the groundwork for developing customized leadership approaches that are conducive to sustainability in the ever-changing landscape of SMHBs. The authors identified in their findings several leadership strategies that could potentially be combined to contribute to sustainable organizational performance in SMHB including (a) collective leadership, (b) transformational leadership, (c) servant leadership, (d) adaptive leadership, and (e) strategic leadership.

Collectivistic Leadership

Collectivistic leadership is increasingly recognized as a factor in promoting collaboration, teamwork, and sustainable organizational performance, particularly in the context of SMHBs. The exploration of interventions for developing collectivistic leadership in healthcare focuses on collaborative and shared leadership practices within a team (Silva et al., 2022). These interventions encompassed training programs, workshops, and organizational initiatives that targeted the development of collectivistic leadership. Collectivistic leadership is significant with practical implications for enhancing sustainable performance in healthcare settings.

Developing collectivistic leadership in SMHBs can enhance teamwork, communication, and organizational performance. Collectivistic leadership emphasizes collaboration, teamwork, and innovation, prioritizing the collective goals and well-being of the team over individual interests (De Brún et al., 2019). De Brún et al.'s (2019) study is relevant to my research on leadership strategies for organizational performance in SMHBs as it provides qualitative insights into the practical implications of collectivistic leadership, supporting the need for shared responsibility and collaboration in healthcare teams. Collectivistic leadership systematic review offers evidence-based insights into effective interventions for cultivating a collectivistic leadership approach in healthcare, providing practical guidance for my research study. The employment of collectivistic leadership by SMHB leaders contributes to fostering a culture of innovation in healthcare organizations (De Brún et al., 2019). This suggests that the utilization of collectivistic leadership style by leaders in SMHBs plays a significant role in promoting a culture of innovation within healthcare organizations.

As healthcare organizations face the challenges of delivering high-quality care in dynamic environments, the adoption of a collective leadership framework appears to be an effective strategy to improve teamwork, enhance communication, and boost overall organizational performance, thereby contributing to long-term organizational success. Silva et al. (2022) conducted a study that provided compelling evidence supporting the positive influence of collective leadership on professional practice, healthcare outcomes, and staff well-being. The authors' research highlighted the benefits that healthcare

organizations might experience from implementing collective leadership models. The finding by the authors serves as a critical foundation for understanding the specific interventions, resultant outcomes, and wider implications of adopting a collective leadership approach within healthcare settings.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership style encourages a culture of innovation and creativity, crucial for addressing challenges and improving organizational performance. Leaders who adopt the transformational leadership approach often focus on fostering innovation, encouraging creativity, and developing a shared vision within the organization (Sayyadi, 2021). Innovative leaders foster a culture of creativity and continuous improvement, encouraging new ideas and solutions. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that inspires and motivates followers to achieve exceptional performance and exceed their expectations. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees, leading to higher levels of commitment and job satisfaction (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). Transformational leaders invest in the development of their team members, fostering a sense of personal and professional growth.

Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their teams, encouraging innovation and fostering a shared vision for the future. Transformational leadership is associated with inspiring and motivating employees during change (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). This strategy involves inspiring and motivating team members to achieve higher levels of performance and exceed their expectations. Transformational leadership

principles align with collectivistic leadership, emphasizing inspiration, motivation, and shared vision, which provides a theoretical framework linking transformational and collectivistic leadership, emphasizing their potential synergies for fostering innovation in healthcare teams.

However, overreliance on a transformational leader may lead to challenges when the leader is not present or when transitioning to a new leadership structure. With transformational leadership, some individuals may resist the radical changes advocated by transformational leaders, potentially leading to conflicts (Sayyadi, 2021). While such resistance can pose challenges, it can also provide an opportunity for transformational leaders to strengthen their influence by engaging with dissenting perspectives and fostering an inclusive environment. But the emphasis on building strong relationships and inspiring change can be time-consuming, affecting the pace of decision-making.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership revolves around the leader's commitment to serving the needs of their team. Servant leaders prioritize the well-being of their followers, focusing on their personal and professional development (Schowalter & Volmer, 2023). Prioritizing the well-being of employees can contribute to a positive work environment. Servant leadership is recognized as a viable leadership theory that benefits organizations and individuals (Pawar et al., 2020). Employees tend to trust and remain loyal to leaders who genuinely care about their development and success. Servant leaders foster long-term commitment from employees, contributing to organizational stability. Pawar et al (2020)

research contributes to the development of servant leadership theory and its practical application. Additionally, it enhances the method for conducting systematic literature reviews in the management field, providing an efficient approach to thematically map and comprehensively examine new research topics. The study concludes by offering suggestions for future research in the realm of servant leadership.

A major setback is that in certain situations, employees may take advantage of a servant leader's focus on serving others, potentially leading to exploitation. The consensus-driven approach of servant leadership may slow down decision-making processes (Schowalter & Volmer, 2023). This often results in more inclusive and well-considered outcomes, which can enhance team cohesion and long-term organizational stability. Additionally, servant leadership may not suit every organizational context or crisis scenario. The best leaders are those most interested in surrounding themselves with assistants and associates smarter than they are (Schowalter & Volmer, 2023). Servant leaders prioritize the needs of their team members, focusing on their well-being, development, and success, contributing to the organization's sustainability. Servant leaders focus on the welfare and growth of their team members, fostering a culture of empathy and support.

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership centers around navigating change and addressing challenges that are complex, uncertain, and require innovative solutions. Unlike traditional leadership models that focus on maintaining stability, adaptive leadership is geared

towards helping organizations and individuals adapt and thrive in the face of rapidly changing environments (Ali et al., 2020). Adaptive leaders keenly observe their environment, seeking to understand the complexities and dynamics of the challenges they face. Adaptive leaders recognize that change and challenge can create stress and discomfort (Dunn, 2020). They diagnose the root causes of challenges, distinguishing between technical problems (which have known solutions) and adaptive challenges (which require new approaches and learning). They manage this distress effectively, avoiding overwhelming their team but ensuring there is enough tension to drive change.

Adaptive leaders continuously adapt to changes, fostering an organizational culture that is resilient and can effectively navigate uncertainties. Adaptive leaders navigate uncertainty and change, promoting flexibility and resilience within the organization (Dunn, 2020). It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change. For adaptive leadership, the measure of intelligence is the ability to change. Adaptive leaders are change agents who thrive in dynamic and uncertain environments (Ali et al., 2020). They focus not only on solving immediate problems but on building the ability of the organization to tackle future challenges proactively.

Strategic Leadership

This involves aligning organizational goals with strategic plans, ensuring that the business moves forward with a clear vision and purpose. Strategic leaders align organizational goals with long-term plans, ensuring that day-to-day activities contribute

to the overall vision (Obuba, 2022). Strategy is not the consequence of planning, but the starting point. This implies that a good strategy today is better than a perfect strategy tomorrow. Incorporating these diverse leadership strategies can contribute to the sustainable organizational performance of SMHBs, addressing challenges and fostering long-term success.

The reviewed literature underscores the importance of leadership strategies in healthcare organizations for achieving sustainable performance. Collectivistic, servant, authentic leadership principles, transformational leadership, and adaptive leadership provide valuable insights applicable to SMHBs. By adopting these strategies, leaders can foster positive organizational climates, improve patient outcomes, and guide their organizations toward sustainable practices. The literature serves as a foundation for developing leadership approaches tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities in SMHBs.

Employee Burnout

The intersection of burnout and leadership styles in behavioral health care is a critical area of research, given the unique challenges faced by healthcare professionals dealing with mental and behavioral health issues. The study by, Bakker and de Vries (2021) highlight the critical roles of time and self-regulation in understanding job burnout. They propose a multilevel model that integrates self-regulation perspectives into the job demands-resources (JD-R) theory to explain how acute job strain can lead to enduring burnout. When job strain rises, employees are less likely to employ adaptive

self-regulation strategies like job stress recovery and job crafting (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). The study emphasizes the importance of stable organizational and personal resources, such as human resource practices, healthy leadership, emotional intelligence, and proactive personality, in mitigating short-term fatigue and preventing enduring burnout. The literature review explored existing studies and the complex interplay between leadership styles and burnout, emphasizing their impact on workers well-being. This study is crucial for my research study, as it highlights the pivotal role of leadership styles in addressing burnout and promoting sustainable performance in healthcare.

When assessing how leadership practices affect staff well-being and burnout, implementing effective strategies becomes essential for mitigating burnout within organizations. Kelly and Hearld (2020) study highlighted the importance of leadership practices in influencing staff well-being and burnout outcomes and found that leadership styles that foster a supportive and inclusive work environment can mitigate burnout. Leadership strategies that prioritize supportive, transformational, and emotionally intelligent approaches are crucial for mitigating burnout and promoting sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs (Hussain & Khayat, 2021). Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration and intellectual stimulation, is associated with lower burnout rates particularly in the context of behavioral health. Future research should focus deeper on specific leadership interventions that effectively address burnout in this specialized field.

Organizational change is a pervasive reality in the dynamic landscape of healthcare. Leadership styles are crucial within healthcare change management, focusing on their effects on employee responses and the overall success of the organization. Leaders play a pivotal role in navigating and facilitating change processes (Mansaray, 2019). This literature review examines key insights into leadership styles in organizational change management, emphasizing their impact on employee reactions and overall organizational success. The author provided valuable perspectives on the impact of leadership styles on change initiatives and contribute to understanding effective strategies for sustainable organizational performance.

Given the critical role of job satisfaction in retaining healthcare professionals, comprehending how leadership styles impact satisfaction levels become instrumental in formulating strategies for sustainable performance within SMHBs. The research conducted by Specchia et al. (2021) sheds light on the significant relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among healthcare professionals, particularly emphasizing the positive impact of transformational and empowering leadership styles on enhancing job satisfaction levels. The authors found a noteworthy correlation between leadership styles and job satisfaction and noted that transformational and empowering leadership styles demonstrated a positive association with elevated levels of job satisfaction. The findings identify the pivotal role of leadership behaviors in molding the work environment and shaping employees' overall job satisfaction.

Understanding the role of leadership styles in change management is crucial for healthcare leaders aiming to implement sustainable practices. Fostering a positive organizational culture during changes, aligns with the goal of sustainable performance in SMHBs (Sancak, 2023). This study is essential for the proposed research study, because it provides insights into leadership approaches that facilitate smooth transitions and foster positive organizational culture during changes for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs. The selected works offer valuable insights into diverse aspects of leadership, contributing to a nuanced understanding of effective approaches in the healthcare context.

Effective Leadership

Leadership effectiveness is a critical aspect of organizational success, particularly in the healthcare sector, where effective leadership practices can significantly impact sustainable organizational performance. Effective leadership necessitates ongoing collaboration between leaders and followers, as well as among individuals and systems, in order to continuously adapt to challenges and ensure sustainable organizational performance (Luedi, 2022). This literature review examines several studies that contribute to our understanding of leadership effectiveness and its relevance to SMHBs. By synthesizing findings from various peer-reviewed articles, this review aims to provide insights into leadership strategies tailored to enhance sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs.

In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, effective leadership strategies play a crucial role in ensuring sustainable organizational performance,

particularly in SMHBs. Teame et al. (2022) study explored various leadership strategies and their effectiveness in enhancing organizational performance within the healthcare sector. Teame et al. conducted a study focusing on healthcare leadership effectiveness among managers in public health institutions in Addis Ababa, Central Ethiopia. The research highlights variations in leadership effectiveness among healthcare managers and identifies key factors such as leadership practices, communication, and decision-making that significantly influence leadership effectiveness. This study underscores the importance of effective leadership practices in shaping organizational outcomes within the healthcare context. The findings offer valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement in healthcare leadership effectiveness, which can inform strategies for enhancing leadership in similar settings.

Understanding the nuances of leadership dynamics in the public health context is essential for developing tailored strategies. Teame et al.'s (2022) study holds significant implications for SMHBs seeking to improve sustainable organizational performance. By emphasizing the critical importance of leadership practices, communication, and decision-making, the study underscores the foundational elements of effective leadership in healthcare settings.

Leadership practices that foster collaboration, innovation, and employee well-being can positively impact job satisfaction and performance. Leadership practices significantly influence job satisfaction and performance, as leaders play a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture and motivating employees (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). They

emphasized the importance of motivational leadership practices in fostering a positive organizational culture conducive to employee satisfaction and enhanced performance. The authors examined the impact of motivation, leadership, and organizational culture on employee satisfaction and performance. They found that effective leadership positively influences both employee satisfaction and performance.

Organizational servant leadership is one of the most commonly used effective strategies for improved organizational performance. Organizational servant leadership promotes employee engagement, satisfaction, and commitment, leading to enhanced organizational performance (Pawar et al., 2020). The authors highlighted the significance of servant leadership in promoting a culture of service and empowerment within healthcare organizations. Their study underscored the importance of leaders prioritizing the needs of their team members, which leads to increased employee engagement and performance.

Servant leadership emphasizes empathy, humility, and service to others. Servant leadership fosters a culture of trust, empowerment, and mutual respect within organizations (Pawar et al., 2020). The authors investigated organizational servant leadership and its implications for organizational effectiveness. While acknowledging the growing popularity of servant leadership, researchers raised questions about its effectiveness and called for more rigorous research to establish causal relationships. Further research is needed to establish the causal effects of servant leadership on organizational performance through longitudinal studies and experimental designs

(Schowalter & Volmer, 2023). Their study highlighted the need for empirical evidence to validate the impact of servant leadership on sustainable organizational performance.

Career development opportunities and organizational commitment significantly influences employee performance, with job satisfaction acting as a moderator in this relationship. Putra et al. (2020) investigated the influence of career development and organizational commitment on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a moderating variable. They found that employees who perceive greater opportunities for career development and exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment tend to perform better. Job satisfaction emerged as a key factor moderating the relationship between career development, organizational commitment, and employee performance.

Shared leadership promotes team creativity by encouraging collaboration, information sharing, and collective decision-making. Ali et al. (2020) conducted an empirical analysis to explore the relationship between shared leadership promotion and team creativity from an adaptive leadership perspective. Their study highlighted the importance of promoting shared leadership behaviors, such as collaboration and empowerment, in fostering team creativity and innovation. An adaptive leadership perspective emphasizes the importance of flexible leadership approaches that empower team members and adapt to changing circumstances (Ali et al., 2020). This enhances team creativity, performance and fostering an environment conducive to innovation. They emphasized the role of adaptive leadership in enabling teams to adapt to changing circumstances and drive sustainable performance.

Effective leadership practices, communication, decision-making, career development, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational culture are important in shaping sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs. Leadership styles characterized by ethical behavior, employee empowerment, and long-term vision contribute to organizational sustainability and performance (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). The authors identified various leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, and authentic leadership, and their impact on organizational sustainability. Different leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, and authentic leadership, have varying effects on sustainable organizational performance, with ethical leadership styles demonstrating positive impacts (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). The finding suggested that leadership styles characterized by ethical behavior, employee empowerment, and long-term vision contribute to sustainable organizational performance. By understanding and leveraging these factors, leaders in SMHBs can enhance employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance, ultimately contributing to organizational success in the healthcare sector.

Client Satisfaction

Total quality management (TQM) tools and techniques can be used to improve service quality and client satisfaction in healthcare. The findings of Grossu-Leibovica and Kalkis (2023) revealed that process improvement and patient engagement, are linked to improved service quality and client satisfaction. This aligns with my research focus, providing insights into TQM integration within leadership strategies for sustainable

performance in healthcare. TQM, when integrated into leadership strategies, proves to be a valuable approach for enhancing sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs.

The interconnection between TQM, organizational culture, and broader sustainability outcomes offers a holistic perspective for SMHBs seeking to align their leadership strategies with sustainable practices. Grossu-Leibovica and Kalkis (2023) conducted a qualitative systematic review focusing on TQM tools and techniques in healthcare. The authors aimed to understand how TQM can improve service quality and client satisfaction in healthcare environments. These included methods for process improvement, patient engagement, and quality monitoring. The authors found that the implementation of TQM principles contributed to improved service quality and increased satisfaction among clients. Grossu-Leibovica and Kalkis (2023) provided valuable insights into the application of TQM in healthcare settings, highlighting its potential to enhance service quality and client satisfaction. However, the effectiveness of TQM implementation may vary depending on contextual factors such as organizational culture, leadership commitment, and resource availability.

Patient satisfaction is a crucial aspect of healthcare delivery, reflecting the quality of care provided by healthcare organizations. Alshrbaji et al. (2022) study explored the impact of TQM and perceived service quality on patient satisfaction in the context of SMHBs. The study aimed to elucidate the role of leadership strategies in enhancing patient satisfaction and sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs. Alshrbaji et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review examining the impact of TQM and perceived

service quality on patient satisfaction in healthcare settings. While the primary focus of the study is on patient satisfaction, the review indirectly underscores the role of healthcare leadership in implementing TQM practices to enhance service quality. Effective leadership in SMHBs plays a pivotal role in driving the adoption of TQM strategies aimed at improving patient care quality. By ensuring adherence to quality standards and promoting a culture of continuous improvement, healthcare leaders contribute to enhancing service quality and ultimately patient satisfaction.

Within the context of SMHBs, effective leadership strategies that prioritize quality management initiatives can positively influence patient satisfaction outcomes. Alshrbaji et al. (2022) found that the interconnectedness between TQM, perceived service quality, and patient satisfaction. By fostering a patient-centered approach and promoting a culture of excellence, healthcare leaders can create environments conducive to delivering high-quality care and meeting patient expectations. Also, the study underscored the importance of aligning organizational goals with patient needs and preferences. Healthcare leaders in SMHBs must possess the vision and strategic acumen to guide their organizations towards sustainable performance while prioritizing patient satisfaction. By championing TQM principles and emphasizing the importance of service quality, leaders can drive continuous improvement efforts that enhance patient experiences and contribute to organizational success.

SMHB leaders can benefit from implementing TQM practices and fostering a culture of excellence to improve patient satisfaction and ensure sustainable organizational

performance. Alshrbaji et al. (2022) found that the relationship between TQM, perceived service quality, and patient satisfaction in healthcare settings was essential in overall performance of an organization. Effective leadership strategies that prioritize quality management initiatives can serve as catalysts for enhancing patient experiences and driving organizational success in the healthcare sector. Eniola et al. (2019) conducted research to investigate the influence of organizational culture on the implementation of TQM in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. The study targets owners-managers of SMEs in the south-western region of Nigeria, aiming to understand how specific cultural attributes within these organizations impact the adoption, effectiveness, and sustainability of TQM practices. Implementation of TQM by healthcare leaders could enhance organizational performance and competitiveness. Development of an organizational culture role aligned to TQM based strategies could enable effective use of TQM as a business strategy.

The relevance of Eniola et al. (2019) to my research topic leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs lies in its exploration of how organizational culture influences management practices, particularly in the context of SMEs. While the study does not directly focus on healthcare businesses, its findings can offer valuable insights applicable to healthcare SMEs. Understanding the challenges, opportunities and how organizational culture shapes the success of TQM initiatives can inform leadership strategies aimed at promoting sustainable organizational performance in healthcare SMEs.

Sustaining Organizational Performance

Sustaining organizational performance refers to the ability of an organization to maintain high levels of performance over a prolonged period, despite facing changes in the market, competition, internal dynamics, and external pressures. This concept involves adapting strategies, structures, and processes to ensure long-term health, profitability, and growth. Sustainability performance analysis for SMEs involves not only evaluating financial outcomes but also assessing how well these enterprises manage their social and environmental responsibilities, which are integral to sustaining long-term organizational performance (Malesios et al., 2021). This underlines the multifaceted nature of sustainability in organizational performance, emphasizing that true sustainability extends beyond mere economic success to include social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

Leaders in SMHBs should articulate a vision that integrates sustainability into the core values of the organization. Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the behaviors, values, and practices within an organization. In the context of sustainability, fostering a culture that aligns with sustainable principles is crucial for long-term success (Eustachio et al., 2023). This literature review explores sustainability organizational culture models and their connection to leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs.

Leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs should fundamentally begin with a clear and integrative vision of sustainability. This

vision should weave sustainable practices into the very fabric of the organization's values and foundational assumptions (Lennox et al., 2020). Leaders within SMHBs are tasked with the development of a vision that embeds sustainability within the organization's core values, resonating with Eustachio et al.'s (2023) emphasis on nurturing long-term organizational values conducive to sustainable performance. The integration of sustainability into the organizational culture of SMHBs requires a nuanced balance between upholding core values and promoting essential attributes such as collaboration, innovation, market responsiveness, and efficiency (Assoratgoon & Kantabutra, 2023). Achieving this balance necessitates cultivating a workplace culture where employees are not only encouraged but are active participants in sustainability efforts. This approach ensures that the organization remains agile and capable of adapting to shifts in the sustainability landscape while consistently maintaining sustainable practices.

In healthcare, particularly within SMHBs, this strategic approach translates into blending the nurturing and collaborative nature of Clan culture with the dynamic, innovative traits of an adhocracy. Such a hybrid cultural framework supports healthcare organizations in staying at the forefront of sustainable practices while fostering an environment that values care and innovation equally (Braithwaite et al., 2020). This cultural alignment is crucial for sustaining organizational performance as it leverages the inherent strengths of the healthcare sector which is care and collaboration with the necessary drive for innovation and adaptability in a changing healthcare environment.

Leadership for sustainability is particularly pertinent to SMHBs as they operate at the crossroads of ecological viability, social equity, and economic prosperity. This form of leadership emphasizes the role of every individual within the organization in initiating and sustaining change (McKim & Goodwin, 2021). It advocates for a decentralized approach where leadership is not confined to formal managerial roles but is a shared responsibility that encourages continuous learning, system disruption for positive change, and the building of resilient relationships. McKim and Goodwin (2021) offer a compelling insight into how complexity theory can inform leadership practices to foster sustainability in such dynamic systems. Their study underscores the need for leadership that not only understands but actively engages with the complexities of modern business environments to drive sustainable performance.

Every action and interaction within these systems presents an opportunity for disruption, which can lead to positive change and new equilibria. The concept of sustainability in leadership, as detailed by McKim and Goodwin (2021) revolves around the dynamic interactions within social and socio-ecological systems. For leaders in SMHBs, this means cultivating an environment where every team member feels empowered to act and innovate in ways that contribute to the sustainability of the organization. In SMHBs, where resources may be more limited compared to larger enterprises, leveraging every employee's potential to initiate change is crucial. This involves training and empowering employees to think and act sustainably, thereby embedding these practices into the organizational culture.

Leadership for sustainability also emphasizes the need for continuous learning and adaptation. The study by McKim and Goodwin (2021) suggests that the future of leadership in SMHBs should focus on creating frameworks that support sustainability through systemic thinking and inclusive practices. This includes developing strategies that integrate economic, social, and environmental considerations into the core operational and strategic decisions of the organization. The insights from McKim and Goodwin are instrumental for SMHBs aiming to achieve sustainable organizational performance. By adopting leadership strategies grounded in complexity theory and focused on sustainability, leaders can better navigate the uncertainties of the modern business environment. Such strategies ensure that SMHBs are not only resilient and adaptable in the face of challenges but also aligned with broader sustainability goals, leading to long-term success and viability.

Corporate governance systems play a crucial role in shaping sustainability outcomes through sustainable corporate governance rules and practices. Lăzăroiu et al. (2020) study investigated the relationship between sustainability management and performance in the urban corporate economy. The study highlighted the importance of participative decision-making in advancing organizations toward superior phases of environmental management development for achieving corporate sustainability. The relevance of this study to my research topic leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs lies in its exploration of sustainability management practices and their impact on organizational performance. By emphasizing

the role of corporate governance systems in shaping operational sustainability indicators, the study provides insights into how leadership strategies can influence sustainability outcomes.

The research underscores the importance of measurement tools, metrics, and approaches in evaluating sustainability performance, highlighting the need for effective leadership strategies to drive sustainable organizational development. Additionally, the study emphasizes the significance of strategy in sustainable organizational development, indicating the relevance of strategic leadership in driving sustainability initiatives. The findings from Lăzăroiu et al. (2020) offer a foundation for understanding the impact of sustainable practices on organizational performance, thereby informing leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs.

In healthcare settings, effective leadership can optimize sustainable organizational performance by establishing and executing sustainable practices. These practices not only foster long-term organizational success but also endorse environmental stewardship and social responsibility. The research by Piwowar-Sulej and Iqbal (2023) analyzed the influence of leadership styles on sustainable organizational performance, focusing on insights relevant to the healthcare sector. The research focused on understanding how leadership styles specifically impact sustainable performance. Transformational leadership is often associated with higher levels of employee engagement and commitment to organizational sustainability goals (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). The authors identification of sustainable and transformational leadership as key drivers offers

an important insight for healthcare organizations aiming to enhance their sustainable practices. Organizations with a strong sustainability culture exhibit higher levels of employee engagement, innovation, and resilience, leading to enhanced sustainable performance outcomes (Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2022). Healthcare leaders can leverage insights from these studies to address specific barriers to sustainability and cultivate an organizational culture that supports and enhances sustainable practices.

Resource Management

In SMHBs, resource efficiency is often critical. Sustainability organizational culture models guide leaders in implementing practices that optimize resource use, reduce waste, and contribute to environmental and social responsibility. A culture that emphasizes sustainability is not only beneficial for the environment but also for employee well-being (Lennox et al., 2020). Sustainable leadership fosters a positive work environment, which, in turn, positively impacts patient care in healthcare settings. In the dynamic healthcare landscape, sustainability culture models aid in building resilient organizations (Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2022) Leaders can employ strategies that future-proof their businesses by anticipating and adapting to changes in environmental regulations, patient expectations, and societal demands.

Leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance, offer practical insights for leaders aiming to navigate the unique challenges of sustainability in healthcare settings. Ketprapakorn and Kantabutra (2022) study findings revealed that sustainability organizational culture models provide a comprehensive framework for

leaders in SMHBs. A sustainability organizational culture underpins sustainable organizational performance by embedding sustainability in the organization's values and practices, thereby influencing all decision-making processes (Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2022). By embedding sustainability into the core of organizational culture, leaders can contribute to long-term success, resource efficiency, employee well-being, and resilience in the ever-evolving healthcare industry.

Understanding the methods and outcomes of sustainability leaders, can apply leadership strategies aimed at promoting sustainable organizational performance in healthcare settings. Leadership styles play a significant role in shaping organizational culture and it affects the organization's sustainable performance outcomes (Tan et al., 2020). This suggests that the styles of leadership adopted within an organization have a substantial influence on its organizational culture. This influence underscores the importance of leadership in not only driving performance but also in cultivating a positive and productive organizational culture. Tan et al. (2020) conducted a study on sustainable practices in the sustainability leadership of international contractors, aiming to address the global need for sustainable development and resource management. The relevance of this study to the research topic leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs lies in its exploration of sustainable practices and leadership strategies in the context of international contractors.

By identifying key methods of resources management and outcomes of sustainability leaders in the construction sector, Tan et al. (2020) provides valuable

guidance for international contractors. The study's systematic approach, comprehensive analysis, and focus on sustainability leadership align with the proposed study on leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs. It offers insights into practices that can be adapted and improved upon to enhance sustainability strategies in healthcare settings, contributing to the overall goal of promoting sustainable organizational performance.

Relevance to the Research Topic

Both transformational and servant leadership styles have implications for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs. Transformational leadership can drive innovation and motivation, crucial for adapting to the dynamic healthcare landscape (Ashfaq et al., 2023). This style of leadership emphasizes inspiring and empowering followers, fostering a culture of creativity and adaptability, which is essential for navigating the ever-evolving healthcare landscape.

In contrast, servant leaders prioritize the needs of their team members, cultivating an environment of trust, collaboration, and support. Servant leadership can contribute to a positive organizational culture and employee well-being, fostering long-term commitment (Zarei et al., 2024). This emphasis on employee satisfaction and fulfillment can lead to higher levels of engagement and long-term commitment among staff members. The choice between these styles may vary depending on the specific context and challenges faced by the healthcare organization. While transformational leadership may be more suitable for driving innovation and change initiatives, servant leadership

may be preferred for nurturing a supportive and cohesive work environment. However, integrating elements of both styles can offer a comprehensive and balanced approach to leadership, addressing the diverse needs of the organization and its employees.

Possible Research Impact

The research topic leadership strategy for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs impact includes the identification of effective leadership strategies, contributing to improved overall organizational performance in SMHBs. Effective leadership strategies may positively influence employee satisfaction and engagement (Luedi, 2022). This implies a more motivated and committed workforce. The research can contribute to fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability within healthcare organizations, allowing them to thrive in a dynamic environment. Additionally, leadership strategies emphasizing patient-centric care can enhance the quality of healthcare services, leading to improved patient outcomes and satisfaction.

Identification and implementation of sustainable leadership strategies can contribute to the long-term sustainability and resilience of SMHBs. Effective leadership can positively influence relationships with stakeholders, including employees, patients, partners, and the community (Teame et al., 2022). This could enhance strategic decision-making, allowing healthcare organizations to navigate challenges effectively. Another impact is that leadership strategies that promote collaboration can lead to the establishment of meaningful partnerships within the healthcare ecosystem (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). The research can highlight the importance of leadership strategies

in fostering employee development and creating a culture of continuous learning. Finally, the research findings can contribute valuable insights to the broader healthcare industry, guiding future research and informing best practices in leadership for sustainable organizational performance.

In conclusion, the impact of research on leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs extends beyond individual organizations, potentially influencing the industry as a whole and contributing to the well-being of employees, patients, and stakeholders. The literature reviewed underscores the importance of leadership strategies in healthcare organizations for achieving sustainable performance. Authentic leadership principles, transformational leadership in nursing, and change management for sustainability provide valuable insights applicable to SMHBs. By adopting these strategies, leaders can foster positive organizational climates, improve patient outcomes, and guide their organizations toward sustainable practices. The literature serves as a foundation for developing leadership approaches tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities in SMHBs.

Transition

Section 2 critically reviewed key studies, each contributing valuable insights related to healthcare leadership, organizational sustainability, and process-oriented indicators. It also examined challenges across global health contexts, focused on sustainability in healthcare improvement programs, and investigated motivation, leadership, and organizational culture on job satisfaction and employee performance.

Section 3 focuses on the researcher's role in data collection, emphasizing a peer-reviewed source. The section highlights my relationship with the research area and introduces the qualitative, pragmatic inquiry methodology. Areas covered include population, sampling, participants, data collection, organization, analysis techniques, and considerations of reliability and validity. Section 4 then summarizes key findings, emphasizing business contributions and professional practice recommendations. Section 4 also explores implications for social change and concludes with recommendations for future research, providing a comprehensive overview of the study's outcomes and potential impacts.

Section 3: Research Project Methodology

The objective of this study was to investigate the strategies employed by healthcare leaders in SMHBs to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. Researchers choose methodologies based on their study goals, with options including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Saunders et al., 2019). Research is a systematic and methodical exploration for knowledge acquisition to illustrate and anticipate a phenomenon. Qualitative studies are chosen when the emphasis is on interpreting phenomena in natural settings and exploring complexities through participant experiences (Atmowardoyo, 2018). In my research study, I utilized a pragmatic inquiry approach, employing qualitative methodology to investigate the strategies employed by healthcare leaders in small and medium enterprises to ensure business sustainability beyond a 5-year period. This approach aligns with qualitative research features outlined by Pyo et al. (2023) and allows for the exploration of real-world phenomena, direct views from participants, understanding interrelated conditions, explanation of existing practices, and the use of multiple instruments for diverse evidence. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to gain insight into the phenomenon, emphasizing an understanding that qualitative research does not involve examining data variables to determine relationships.

Quantitative methodology, centered on hypothesis testing, was not used as this study does not involve testing hypotheses. Similarly, a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data, was not employed due to the exclusive focus of this study on qualitative data collection. Research design is a guiding strategy for

the research process and details how the study will be conducted from purpose to outcome (Ramanadhan et al., 2021). In my research study, a pragmatic inquiry project research design was chosen to explore the strategies healthcare leaders use in small and medium enterprises to sustain businesses beyond 5 years. This design is considered appropriate for identifying these strategies effectively.

Project Ethics

As the researcher, I mitigated risks to the participants and enhance ethical conduct. Upholding ethical standards is imperative, necessitating researchers to address ethical considerations consistently (Guo, 2022). This entails minimizing harm, securing informed consent, and implementing member checking. Researchers adhere to three essential guidelines that includes recognizing ethical challenges, assessing ethical approaches aligned with personal principles, and maintaining flexibility during the research process (Guo, 2022). My duties as the researcher include identifying participants, conducting ethical data collection, performing analysis, and presenting thematic insights. In qualitative research, the researcher assumes the roles of a reflective practitioner and participant safeguard (Saunders et al., 2019). My responsibilities as a researcher encompassed interview guide development, participant selection, data analysis, and theme presentation, focusing on healthcare leadership strategies for small and medium business sustainability.

Nature of the Project

Qualitative research methodology is a systematic approach (see Figure 1) used to understand complex phenomena by exploring individuals' experiences, perspectives, and behaviors in-depth. Qualitative researchers collect data through open-ended interviews, observations, or open-ended survey questions, allowing participants to express their views freely and providing rich, detailed responses (Agazu et al., 2022). Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research emphasizes gathering rich, descriptive data through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. In qualitative research, researchers seek to gain insights into the meaning people attach to their experiences, the social contexts in which these experiences occur, and the processes underlying human behavior (Ramanadhan et al., 2021). This approach allows for the exploration of nuances, variability, and context-specific factors that quantitative methods may overlook.

Figure 1.

Qualitative Research Process
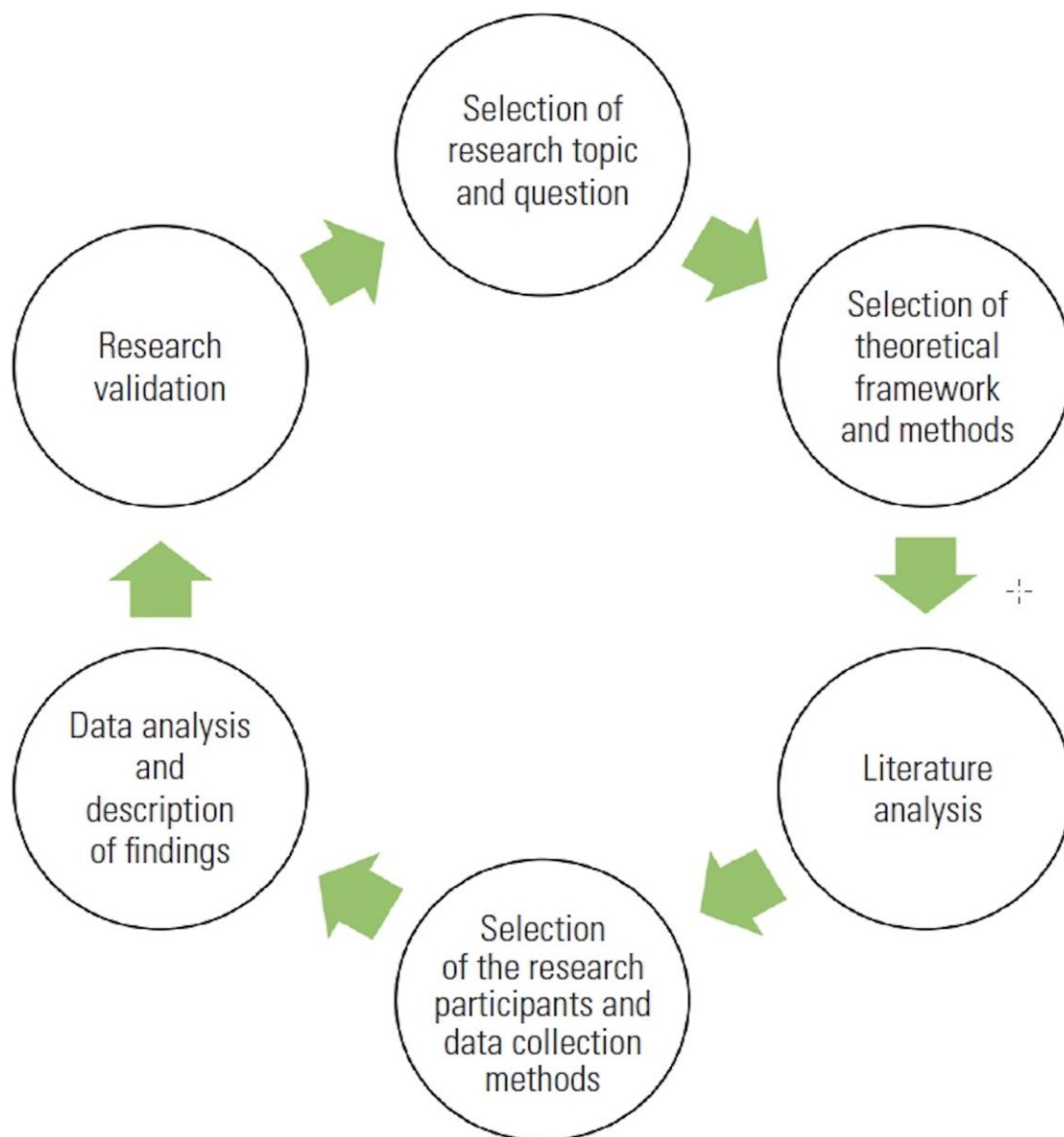
To address the research question in this qualitative study, the specific research design is pragmatic inquiry. Pragmatic inquiry was chosen for its iterative, participatory, and action-oriented approach, which aligns with the aim of engaging stakeholders and achieving tangible outcomes. Pragmatic inquiry approach allows for flexibility in data collection methods, enabling the use of interviews, observations, and document analysis to gather comprehensive data about leaders' strategies and their outcomes (Ramanadhan et al., 2021). Qualitative pragmatic inquiry approach excels in offering depth, context, and a nuanced understanding of complex phenomena, making it the most suitable choice for this study. However, other research methods were considered and excluded for various reasons.

Quantitative methods, for instance, were not chosen due to their focus on numerical data and statistical analysis, which may not capture the rich, contextual insights sought in my qualitative research study. Additionally, mixed methods, while valuable for integrating qualitative and quantitative data, were deemed unnecessary as the qualitative approach alone was deemed sufficient for addressing the research question.

Regarding research design, the qualitative pragmatic inquiry project is dedicated to addressing real-world problems and devising practical solutions. Pragmatic inquiry, rooted in pragmatism, emphasizes action, experience, and consequences in knowledge pursuit (Grodal, et al., 2021). This methodology involves a continual process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, enabling continuous enhancement of leadership strategies. In the context of healthcare leaders' strategies for success in SMHBs,

pragmatic inquiry extends beyond comprehending leadership dynamics to actively identifying effective strategies and processes for business improvement. Alternative research designs, such as experimental or survey designs, were not chosen because they do not provide the depth of understanding and flexibility required to explore the complexities of leadership strategies in healthcare settings.

Population, Sampling, and Participants

I employed a purposive sampling method to identify potential participants. Purposive sampling is particularly useful when targeting key stakeholders with predefined criteria, as is often the case in studies involving experienced leaders (Denieffe, 2020). This sampling technique was chosen to align the sample with the specific goals and objectives of the research. Sampling method aids in managing the data collection process efficiently, ensuring that the information gathered is pertinent to the research objectives (Ames et al., 2019). This aligns with my research focus on gathering specific data from leaders of SMHBs in Nigeria who have successfully implemented strategies sustaining their businesses for at least 5 years. The chosen approach for this study aligns with these distinctive features to ensure a targeted and meaningful exploration of leadership strategies in the context of SMHBs in Nigeria.

In qualitative research, transparency is important specifically regarding the selection of sample size and the approach to achieving data saturation. Data saturation serves as the criterion for determining when to conclude data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2018). I gathered data through interviews until no new themes are found.

In line with these considerations, I purposefully selected five leaders from SMHBs in Nigeria who have successfully sustained their companies for over 5 years. To ensure data saturation, interviews were conducted with these leaders, continuing the data collection process until no new information or themes emerge. If I had not achieved data saturation with the first five participants, I would have continued to seek additional participants until no new themes emerged and I reached data saturation.

Data Collection Activities

To ensure robust research outcomes, researchers often employ multiple data sources. Qualitative research methodology is a systematic approach used to understand complex phenomena by exploring individuals' experiences, perspectives, and behaviors in-depth (Benedict et al., 2023). Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research emphasizes gathering rich, descriptive data through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. Qualitative studies utilize structured, unstructured, and semistructured interviews (Pyo et al., 2023). Employing the semistructured interview technique, I collected data from five participants, utilizing an interview protocol for precision. Semistructured in-depth interviews are instrumental in gathering open-ended data (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This involves focusing into participants' thoughts, feelings, experiences, and beliefs. My approach involves using open-ended questions to extract relevant data on the leadership strategies employed by healthcare leaders in small internet service provider businesses to sustain success beyond 5 years.

Semistructured interviews method is preferred for exploring phenomena due to its adaptability. However, challenges may arise as not all participants are equally cooperative, with some being difficult to engage or reluctant to share sensitive information. The success of semistructured interviews hinges on the interviewer's skill in posing probing and follow-up questions and willingness of the participants to share sensitive information (Agazu, et al., 2022). Quality data may be compromised if the interviewer fails to actively listen to participants' responses or participants are not cooperative.

Interview Questions

1. What practices do healthcare leaders use to ensure the success of small and medium-sized healthcare businesses (SMHBs)?

2. How do leadership strategies impact employee engagement within your healthcare organization, and how does this contribute to sustainability?

3. How does leadership encourage innovation and adaptability in response to the evolving healthcare landscape for sustained organizational performance?

4. How does leadership strategies prioritize employee development and training to enhance organizational performance?

5. How do leaders ensure a patient-centric approach in the delivery of healthcare services, and how does this contribute to organizational sustainability?

6. How does leadership strategies promote collaboration and partnerships within the healthcare ecosystem to enhance overall organizational performance?

7. How does leadership integrate technology and innovation into healthcare processes, and what impact does this have on organizational sustainability?

8. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of leadership strategies in achieving sustainable organizational performance within healthcare business?

9. What barriers or obstacles do healthcare leaders encounter in implementing and sustaining effective leadership strategies for organizational performance?

10. What information would you like to add that we have not covered on effective strategies that healthcare leaders employ for success in small to medium-sized healthcare businesses in Nigeria?

Data Organization and Analysis Techniques

In qualitative research, researchers seek to gain insights into the meaning people attach to their experiences, the social contexts in which these experiences occur, and the processes underlying human behavior. Qualitative researchers commonly employ a seven-step approach for thematic analysis, involving (a) data organization, (b) transcription, (c) data familiarization, (d) memos, (e) coding, (f) categorization into themes, and (g) transparent data analysis processes (Lester et al., 2020; see Figure 2). This approach allows for the exploration of nuances, variability, and context-specific factors that quantitative methods may overlook. The tools chosen for data organization must align with the analytical requirements and reporting of findings (Pyo et al., 2023). In my research study, I utilized voice recorders, research schedule logs, labeling systems, notebooks, word documents for audio transcription, and reflective journals to

meticulously organize the collected data from participants. The gathered data is securely stored in a lockable file and will be responsibly disposed of after 5 years.

Figure 2.

Qualitative Research Seven-Step Approach for Thematic Analysis
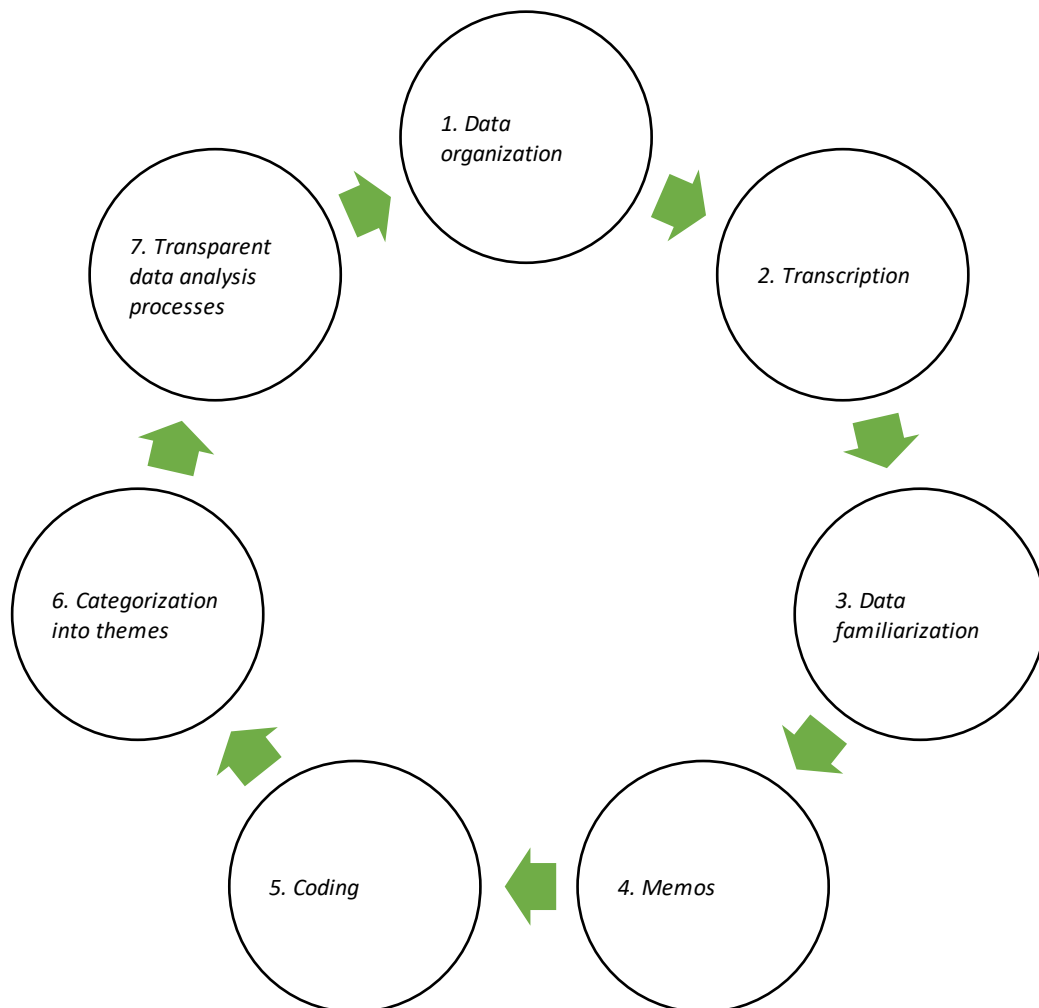
Note. Adapted from "Lester, J. N., Cho, Y., & Lochmiller, C. R. (2020). Learning to do qualitative data analysis: A starting point. *Human resource development review*, *19*(1), 94-106. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484320903890).

Qualitative researchers collect data through open-ended interviews, observations, or open-ended survey questions, allowing participants to express their views freely and providing rich, detailed responses. In qualitative research, data analysis involves systematically organizing, categorizing, and interpreting the data to identify patterns, themes, and meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The six crucial steps include familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Data analysis is an exploratory method aimed at transforming raw data to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within the collected data (Levitt et al., 2021). This involves a systematic and flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data, allowing researchers to uncover rich insights and understandings that contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability focuses on the consistency and stability of research processes and outcomes, while validity ensures that the study's findings accurately reflect the intended phenomenon under investigation. Both concepts are integral to maintaining the quality and integrity of qualitative research. Reliability refers to the consistency, stability, and repeatability of research findings (Facchinetti et al., 2021). In qualitative research, it means that the study's methods, procedures, and analyses should yield consistent results if they were to be replicated or repeated under similar conditions. Validity refers to the

extent to which a qualitative study accurately captures and represents the phenomenon it intends to investigate (Rose & Johnson, 2020). It ensures that the study measures what it claims to measure and that the findings are a true reflection of the researched reality. Researchers employ various strategies, such as member checks, triangulation, and prolonged engagement, to enhance the reliability and validity of their studies.

Reliability

Ensuring reliability in qualitative research is crucial for establishing the dependability and accuracy of the study. The objective of reliability is to minimize errors and biases within the study, providing insights into the trustworthiness and the absence of errors and biases (Pyo et al., 2023). Reliability minimizes the likelihood of errors or biases and enhances the consistency of the data collection and analysis processes. Reliability in qualitative research pertains to the soundness of the chosen research methods and their application throughout the research process (Rose & Johnson, 2020). It involves focusing on the reproducibility of research data generated by the instruments employed in the study.

Validity

Validity, in the context of qualitative research, denotes the extent to which a study accurately reflects its intended purpose, ensuring the integrity of research findings. Validity is essential for the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Rose & Johnson, 2020). It helps in confirming that the study's results are meaningful and relevant to the research questions, and it guards against potential biases or distortions in the

interpretation of data. The validity of a qualitative study is contingent on the design of questions, interviewing techniques, and the interpretative skills applied (Cian, 2021). The role of researchers has a significant impact on the validity of the study since they serve as the primary instruments for data collection in qualitative research.

Transition and Summary

In this section, the chosen research methodology and design for investigating healthcare leaders' strategies in SMHBs to sustain businesses beyond 5 years were discussed. The methodology selection process involves considerations of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, with qualitative research emerging as the most suitable approach. The pragmatic inquiry research design was selected for its iterative, participatory, and action-oriented nature, aligning well with the study's objectives to identify effective strategies successfully.

Section 3 focused deeper into the research project methodology, covering aspects such as project ethics, the nature of the project, population sampling, and participants, data collection activities, and data organization and analysis techniques. The importance of reliability and validity in maintaining research quality is stressed. Reliability focuses on the consistency and stability of research processes, while validity ensures an accurate representation of the intended phenomenon. This comprehensive overview provided insight into the methodological framework guiding the study and the steps involved in executing the research project.

Section 4: Findings and Conclusions

Presentation of the Findings

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the leadership strategies that contribute to sustaining organizational performance in SMHBs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five healthcare leaders who had successfully sustained their businesses for over 5 years. To maintain confidentiality, each participant was assigned an alphanumeric participant code: L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5. After manually creating a codebook, I organized the collected data and conducted a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a widely used approach for systematically examining qualitative data from sources like interviews and focus group transcripts (Jowsey et al., 2021). This process involved importing the transcripts, reassigning codes, categorizing the transcripts, and identifying patterns and themes within similar contextual groups.

Description of the Coding Process

I began the coding process by thoroughly reading through the interview transcript to identify significant statements and phrases related to the research questions. Each statement was assigned an initial code that encapsulated its main idea. As the process continued, similar codes were grouped to form broader categories. These categories were then analyzed to identify overarching themes that represented the core concepts discussed in the interview. Researchers must clearly understand comprehensive themes, conclusions, and study analysis to identify and interpret themes effectively (Campbell et al., 2021). This iterative process ensured that the coding was comprehensive and captured

all relevant data. Following this guideline, five main themes emerged from my data analysis: (a) patient-centric care, (b) collaboration and partnership, (c) employee engagement and motivation, (d) innovation and adaptability, and (e) employee development and training. These findings are connected to the SET conceptual framework and literature from peer-reviewed studies.

Theme 1: Patient-Centric Care

Theme 1, patient-centric care, is a healthcare approach that prioritizes treating patients with respect, empathy, and attentiveness to their unique needs and preferences. This model aims to build strong patient-provider relationships and prioritize the overall well-being of patients. As a holistic approach, patient-centric care places patients at the core of healthcare delivery. Patient-centered care practices are associated with higher patient satisfaction and improved quality of care (Chibuke & Adele, 2024). By focusing on personalized care plans, involving patients in decision-making, practicing empathy, gathering feedback, and creating comfortable environments, healthcare providers can significantly improve patient experiences and outcomes. This approach aligns with effective healthcare delivery principles and is supported by extensive research, highlighting its importance in achieving sustainable and high-quality healthcare.

Participants L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5 all agreed and highlighted the importance of patient-centric care. L1 stressed the importance of centering care on patient feedback and satisfaction without compromising organizational policies. L1 stated, "It is important to treat each individual according to his or her needs. The needs of a patient who has

malaria are different from those of a patient who has tuberculosis." L2 highlighted the importance of training staff to serve the public and build a culture of customer service in the organization. L2 stated that "The staff needs to be trained on customer service, patient care, and the show of empathy to patients." L3 emphasized the importance of individualized care, stating, "it is important to treat each individual according to his or her needs for example the needs of a patient who has malaria are different from those of a patient who has tuberculosis." L4 stressed fairness and consistency in customer satisfaction, emphasizing that "patient dignity, involving families, and joint decision-making is important for patient care." L5 implemented a personalized appointment approach to ensure each of our clients received their undivided attention According to L5, "Because we value our time and our client's time, we implemented a personalized appointment approach to ensure each of our clients received their undivided attention." Vats (2024) highlighted the need for healthcare institutions to prioritize patient-centric care, embrace digital innovations, and effectively manage regulatory and ethical challenges.

These actions can improve patient outcomes, increase satisfaction, and foster innovation in the evolving healthcare environment. A positive physical environment can reduce patient anxiety and improve their overall experience (Chibuke & Adele, 2024). All participants agreed that the healthcare environment often determines a customer's experience, so they strive to create a safe, comfortable, welcoming, and professional

healthcare space. With patient-centric care two main strategies which include client-focused care and business ethics are notable.

Linking Patient-Centric Care with Social Exchange Theory

SET posits that social behavior is the result of an exchange process aiming to maximize benefits and minimize costs. In the context of healthcare, client-focused care embodies this theory by prioritizing the needs and preferences of patients to enhance their overall satisfaction and outcomes. Client-focused healthcare services that respect and address the needs of patients and caregivers are crucial for promoting positive care outcomes and perceptions of care quality, thereby fulfilling a key aspect of patient-centered care (Kwame & Petrucka, 2021). This aligns with SET by ensuring that patients feel valued and respected, leading to enhanced satisfaction and loyalty. By offering individualized care, healthcare providers create a reciprocal relationship where patients feel valued and respected, leading to increased loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.

Adhering to business ethics in healthcare also aligns with SET. Ethical practices build trust and credibility, which are essential for sustainable relationships with clients and the community. Upholding ethical standards in healthcare is crucial for building trust and credibility, which are essential components of SET. Trust acts as a key benefit in the exchange process, fostering long-term relationships with clients and the community (Schilke et al., 2021). This trust acts as a benefit in the social exchange, reinforcing positive interactions and loyalty. When healthcare organizations operate ethically, they foster an environment of trust and mutual respect, encouraging patients to continue using

their services and recommending them to others. By linking these principles to SET, healthcare leaders can better understand the importance of maintaining high ethical standards and focusing on the needs of their clients. This approach not only enhances patient satisfaction and loyalty but also contributes to the overall sustainability and success of healthcare organizations.

Theme 2: Collaboration and Partnership

The interviews with healthcare leaders revealed that all five participants consent that effective collaboration and partnership among healthcare professionals are critical for sustaining organizational performance. Inclusive leadership fosters a collaborative environment, which in turn enhances overall organizational performance (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022). This can be achieved through promoting good interpersonal and interprofessional relationships via seminars, conferences, and workshops. Effective collaboration in healthcare settings improves patient outcomes and increases job satisfaction among healthcare providers (Stokes, 2021). By prioritizing collaboration and partnership, healthcare organizations can create a supportive and efficient working environment that benefits both staff and patients, ultimately leading to sustained organizational success. Here are some detailed strategies based on the findings

Implementing One-System Technology

L1 highlighted the importance of implementing a one-system technology to share patient data across healthcare facilities. L1 stated, "We are working on a one-system technology to share patient data across healthcare facilities." Data-sharing platforms can

significantly enhance collaborative efforts in healthcare by providing a unified system for patient information (Vazquez et al., 2021). By adopting such integrated technologies, healthcare organizations can ensure seamless communication and coordination among different departments and facilities, ultimately improving patient care and operational efficiency. Prioritizing data-sharing innovations is essential for fostering a collaborative and efficient healthcare environment that benefits both providers and patients. This approach enhances collaboration by ensuring that all healthcare professionals have access to the same patient information, leading to more coordinated and efficient care.

Inclusive Involvement of All Healthcare Arms

L2 emphasized the importance of including every sector of the healthcare system in collaborative efforts. L2 said, "You have to carry every arm of the healthcare sector along in whatever you're doing." Engaging every arm of the healthcare sector ensures that all participants feel valued and involved, increasing their commitment and reducing resistance to change (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022). By fostering an inclusive environment where all healthcare professionals collaborate and contribute, organizations can enhance overall performance and patient outcomes. This means prioritizing comprehensive involvement in collaboration which ensures that all stakeholders are on the same page and can contribute to organizational goals.

Promoting Interpersonal and Interprofessional Relationships

L3 highlighted the importance of maintaining good relationships among different professions through organization of regular seminars, conferences, and workshops

involving various health professional bodies to promote collaboration. L3 stated, "To promote collaboration, maintain good interpersonal, inter-professional relationships among the different professions, through seminars, conferences, and organization of workshops involving various health professional bodies." Cross-departmental training programs enhance team cohesion and collaborative efforts in healthcare settings (Stokes, 2021). By prioritizing these regular interactions and training sessions, healthcare organizations can build stronger, more effective teams that work seamlessly together, ultimately improving patient care and organizational performance. These events facilitate knowledge sharing and teamwork.

Organizing Inclusive Training

L4 noted the effectiveness of organizing training sessions that include all departments. L4 said, "Organizing training that includes all departments ensures harmonious work towards organizational goals and emphasizes the community aspect of healthcare." Training sessions that include all departments help build a cohesive team that works towards common goals, maximizing the overall benefit to the organization (Zhang et al., 2024). This approach ensures that everyone works harmoniously towards the same organizational goals and fosters a sense of community within the healthcare setting. By applying these strategies, healthcare leaders can foster a collaborative environment that maximizes the benefits for both healthcare professionals and patients, in line with SET.

Linking Collaboration and Partnership with Social Exchange Theory

SET can explain how collaboration and partnership strategies enhance healthcare organizations. SET suggests that social behavior is a result of an exchange process to maximize benefits and minimize costs (Ahmad et al., 2023). In this context, sharing patient data creates a benefit for all parties involved by providing comprehensive patient information, thus enhancing the quality of care, and reducing redundant tests and procedures. To encourage the use of shared clinical data, platforms should enhance transparency, regularly update the availability of listed studies and supporting documents and ensure that research findings from data requests are widely disseminated. Regular seminars, conferences, and workshops facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills, benefiting all participants by broadening their expertise and improving job satisfaction. Professional development activities, such as seminars and workshops, play a crucial role in enhancing inter-professional collaboration (Spaulding et al., 2021). By fostering a culture of continuous learning and open communication, healthcare organizations can ensure that advancements in clinical data are effectively utilized, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes and higher quality of care.

Theme 3: Employee Engagement and Motivation

The interviews with healthcare leaders L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5 revealed several strategies to engage and motivate employees, critical for sustaining organizational performance. All participants noted that motivation is a vital element of organizational performance and sustainability. These strategies include good remuneration, financial

incentives, recognition, and the use of the carrot-and-stick approach. This is essential for sustaining organizational performance in SMHBs. As SET suggests, fostering a reciprocal relationship between the organization and its employees, where both parties benefit, is crucial for long-term success (Thomas & Gupta, 2021). Engaging and motivating employees not only improves their job satisfaction and performance but also contributes to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the organization.

Financial Incentives and Recognition

L1 emphasized the use of financial incentives and recognition to encourage employee engagement and dedication. As stated by L1, "We use financial incentives and recognitions ... to encourage employee engagement and dedication." Incorporating financial incentives and recognition into the organizational strategy not only rewards employees for their hard work but also creates a motivating environment that encourages continuous improvement and high performance (Argyropoulou et al., 2023). By valuing and recognizing their contributions, healthcare leaders can ensure that employees feel appreciated and motivated, which in turn, leads to better patient care and organizational performance. This approach is crucial in maintaining a dedicated and engaged workforce, essential for the long-term success of any healthcare organization. As healthcare organizations continue to navigate the challenges of the modern healthcare landscape, implementing effective incentive and recognition programs will remain a key strategy for fostering a committed and high-performing workforce.

Carrot and Stick Strategy

L2 highlighted the effectiveness of the carrot and stick strategy, which involves rewarding good performance while addressing poor performance through training, coaching, and counseling. L2 said, "What I use is the carrot and stick strategy where you reward good performance, and you also reprimand poor performance with training, coaching, and counseling." By using the carrot and stick approach managers identify individual employee needs, reward outstanding performance, and address weak performance with appropriate measures (Frangieh & Rusu, 2021). This balanced approach ensures that employees are motivated to excel while also receiving the support they need to improve. Managers use the carrot and stick approach to motivate employees toward achieving organizational goals.

Good Remuneration

L3 emphasized that paying staff competitive salaries significantly boosts motivation and performance. L3 stated, "Good remuneration of staff, thereby leading to motivation. Of course, when you pay your staff a good salary, they are motivated to work well and to perform better." Financial compensation is a key driver of employee motivation and productivity (Marczak & Yawson, 2021). Ensuring competitive pay not only enhances employee satisfaction but also promotes higher levels of commitment and overall performance, contributing to the long-term success of the organization.

Providing Necessary Tools and Additional Benefits

L4 mentioned some effective motivational strategies: "providing necessary tools, offering incentives, branding, promoting employees, giving end-of-year bonuses, and free healthcare facilities for employees and their families." According to L4, "These comprehensive benefits not only enhance job satisfaction but also foster a loyal and committed workforce. A study by Coco et al. (2023) found that employees who feel well-supported and adequately compensated are more likely to exhibit higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Ensuring that employees have the resources and support they need is crucial for maintaining a motivated and high-performing team, which ultimately contributes to the overall success and sustainability of the organization.

Consistent Use of Financial Incentives

L5 reiterated the importance of financial incentives and recognition for engaging and motivating employees. L5 said, "We use financial incentives and recognitions ... to encourage employee engagement and dedication." Consistent recognition and rewards are crucial for maintaining high levels of employee engagement and performance. Regular financial incentives and recognition programs lead to sustained employee motivation and improved job performance (Marczak & Yawson, 2021). By implementing these strategies, organizations can ensure a motivated workforce that is committed to achieving organizational goals, driving overall success and sustainability.

Implementing a combination of these strategies—carrot and stick, good remuneration, providing necessary tools and additional benefits, and consistent financial

incentives—ensures a well-rounded approach to employee engagement and motivation. By addressing both the rewards for good performance and the support needed for improvement, healthcare organizations can create a motivating and productive work environment. This holistic approach is essential for fostering a dedicated and high-performing workforce, leading to better patient care and organizational success.

Linking Employee Engagement and Motivation with Social Exchange Theory

SET suggests that social behavior results from an exchange process aimed at maximizing benefits and minimizing costs. Applying SET to employee engagement and motivation highlights the importance of reciprocal relationships where both employees and employers' benefit. Offering financial incentives and recognition enhances employees' perceived value within the organization, thereby increasing their commitment and performance. Incentives and recognition programs significantly impact employee motivation and engagement, fostering a sense of value and belonging (Argyropoulou et al., 2023). This approach aligns with SET by demonstrating that when employees feel valued and recognized, they are more likely to reciprocate with higher levels of dedication and productivity.

The carrot and stick strategy balances positive reinforcement with constructive feedback, ensuring employees are motivated to maintain high performance while addressing areas for improvement. The carrot and stick strategy effectively manages employee performance by combining rewards and corrective actions (Frangieh & Rusu, 2021). This method exemplifies SET by rewarding desirable behaviors and providing

corrective measures for improvement, thereby optimizing overall performance. Also, competitive salaries are essential in attracting and retaining talent, which directly contributes to employee motivation and job satisfaction. Adequate remuneration is a key factor in employee retention and satisfaction, driving better performance (Sorn et al., 2023). This strategy supports SET by ensuring that employees perceive their compensation as equitable and fair, which in turn motivates them to perform at their best.

Ensuring employees have the necessary tools and additional benefits, such as healthcare and bonuses, fosters a supportive work environment, enhancing their motivation and loyalty. This approach aligns with SET by creating a workplace environment where employees feel supported and valued, leading to greater organizational commitment. Providing necessary resources and additional benefits boosts employee morale and loyalty (Thangaraja et al., 2024). By applying these strategies, healthcare leaders can enhance employee engagement and motivation, which is crucial for sustaining organizational performance in SMHBs. These methods not only improve employee satisfaction and productivity but also contribute to a positive organizational culture that supports long-term success.

Theme 4: Innovation and Adaptability

The interviews with healthcare leaders L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5 revealed various strategies to integrate innovation and adaptability into healthcare processes. These strategies are crucial for improving early diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. L1 emphasized the importance of staff feedback in making policy improvements and

adapting accordingly. L1 said, "Feedback from staff helps us make improvements on policies and adapt accordingly." L2 noted that leaders must demonstrate their ability to adapt to innovations, setting an example for their staff and that this adaptation should be a gradual process. L2 said, "Well, it's by, one leading with example, then the leader himself must be able to demonstrate that he or she can adapt to innovation ... this has to be a gradual process." L3 highlighted the integration of technology and innovation into healthcare processes through continuous training and retraining of staff on innovations in the healthcare field. L3 said, "Integration of technology and innovation into healthcare processes through training and retraining of existing staff on new innovations in health care field." L4 mentioned the use of technology to improve interactions between departments, enhancing service delivery and ensuring fast, reliable, and accurate processes. According to L4, "Using technology for interactions between departments, improving service delivery, and ensuring fast, reliable, and accurate processes." L5 emphasized the importance of integrating technology through the purchase of new equipment and reagents and equipping staff with the necessary knowledge for innovations. L5 stated, "Integration of technology ... through purchase of newly invented equipment and reagents and equipping the existing staff with the required knowledge for new innovations."

Linking Innovation and Adaptability with Social Exchange Theory

SET posits that social behavior results from an exchange process aimed at maximizing benefits and minimizing costs. Applying SET to innovation and adaptability

in healthcare includes encouraging staff feedback, training and retraining, technology for interdepartmental communication, and investment in new equipment. Leaders who demonstrate adaptability inspire their teams to embrace change, creating a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. Leaders who model adaptability inspire their teams to embrace change, fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Bevere & Faccilongo, 2024). By integrating these principles, healthcare organizations can enhance their ability to adapt and innovate, leading to better patient outcomes and organizational resilience.

Encouraging staff feedback creates a reciprocal relationship where employees feel valued and engaged, leading to higher morale and productivity. Encouraging feedback from staff fosters a sense of value and engagement, enhancing morale and productivity (Thangaraja et al., 2024). By prioritizing staff input, healthcare organizations can build a supportive and collaborative environment that drives continuous improvement and high performance. This approach not only boosts employee satisfaction but also contributes to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the organization.

Ongoing training and retraining ensure that staff remain competent and confident in using modern technologies, enhancing overall organizational performance. Continuous training and retraining of staff on new technologies are crucial for maintaining competence and confidence (Zhang et al., 2024). By investing in regular educational opportunities, healthcare organizations can maintain high standards of care and adaptability. This not only improves the quality of patient care but also strengthens the

organization's resilience in the face of technological advancements and industry changes, ultimately contributing to long-term success.

Utilizing technology to streamline inter-departmental communication improves efficiency and collaboration, leading to better patient outcomes. The use of technology to enhance inter-departmental communication improves efficiency and collaboration (Sakumoto & Khanna, 2022). By fostering seamless communication between departments, healthcare organizations can ensure that information is accurately and quickly shared, reducing errors, and enhancing patient care. This strategic use of technology not only optimizes internal processes but also supports a more integrated and effective healthcare delivery system, ultimately benefiting patients and healthcare providers alike.

Investing in new equipment and training equips staff with the tools and knowledge they need to perform their tasks effectively, reducing errors and improving patient care. Investing in new equipment and training ensures staff have the tools and knowledge necessary to perform effectively, reducing errors and improving patient care (Vats, 2024). By prioritizing these investments, healthcare organizations can enhance the competence and confidence of their staff, leading to higher quality care and better patient outcomes. This commitment to continuous improvement not only supports operational excellence but also fosters a culture of safety and reliability in healthcare delivery.

By adopting these strategies, healthcare leaders can significantly enhance innovation and adaptability within their organizations. This not only improves early

diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation but also ensures that healthcare providers can keep pace with technological advancements. These strategies lead to better patient outcomes and a more resilient healthcare system.

Theme 5: Employee Development and Training

The interviews with healthcare leaders L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5 revealed several strategies for employee development and training, with a particular focus on the professional growth of experienced and permanently appointed staff. L1 emphasized the importance of continuous training through daily rounds and sending staff to other hospitals for major training sessions. L1 stated, "Training is very key ... we do daily rounds and send staff to other hospitals for major trainings." This approach ensures that employees stay updated with the latest practices and skills. L2 highlighted the necessity of setting goals for employees and motivating them to achieve these goals through training. According to L2, "You have to give your employees a goal. You have to give them something to achieve ... then you motivate them to try to attain with the training." This strategy helps employees understand their career paths and work towards their professional objectives. L3 pointed out that employees are given priority for professional development courses and training if they express interest. L3 stated, "Employees are usually considered first for professional development courses and training, provided they indicate their interests." Investing in employee development is essential for maintaining a competent and motivated workforce in healthcare. Zhang et al. (2024) emphasized that investing in employee development is crucial for sustaining a skilled and motivated

workforce. By prioritizing professional growth, healthcare organizations can ensure their staff stay engaged and capable, leading to improved patient care and organizational success. This encourages a culture of continuous learning, staff motivation, and personal growth.

L4 mentioned the importance of increasing the workforce, providing necessary equipment, and discarding obsolete equipment to enhance staff training and development. L4 said, "Increasing the workforce, providing necessary equipment, discarding obsolete equipment, promoting staff." This ensures that employees have the tools they need to perform their jobs effectively. L5 stressed the importance of organizing continuous training that includes all departments, ensuring comprehensive staff development. As stated by L5 "Ensuring continuous training that involves all staff by organizing training that includes all departments." This approach fosters a collaborative environment where knowledge and skills are shared across the organization. By implementing these strategies, healthcare leaders can enhance their ability to achieve sustainable performance, improve employee satisfaction and engagement, foster innovation, and ensure high-quality patient care.

Linking Employee Development and Training with Social Exchange Theory

SET posits that social behavior is driven by the exchange process aimed at maximizing benefits while minimizing costs. This theory can be effectively applied to employee development and training in the healthcare sector to understand how investments in staff development can lead to enhanced organizational performance and

employee satisfaction. Continuous training opportunities enhance employees' sense of value and commitment, leading to improved performance (Day et al., 2021). Continuous training opportunities, such as daily rounds and sending staff to other hospitals for major training sessions, increase employees' perceived value within the organization. This enhances their commitment and performance by making them feel valued and invested.

Setting clear goals and providing the necessary training to achieve them aligns with SET by creating a reciprocal relationship. Goal setting combined with training fosters a supportive environment, motivating employees to excel (Marczak & Yawson, 2021). Employees feel supported and motivated, knowing that their efforts are recognized and rewarded. Also prioritizing employees for professional development courses and training demonstrates the organization's investment in their growth. Investing in employees' professional development promotes loyalty and job satisfaction (Thangaraja et al., 2024). This promotes loyalty and job satisfaction, as employees recognize the organization's commitment to their professional development.

Ensuring that employees have the necessary resources and equipment to perform their tasks effectively reflects the organization's commitment to their success. Providing necessary resources enhances employees' ability to perform effectively and demonstrates organizational support (Schilke et al., 2021). This support minimizes the costs associated with inadequate resources, thereby maximizing the benefits for both the employees and the organization. Organizing inclusive training programs that involve all departments fosters a sense of community and shared purpose. Inclusive training programs foster

community and collaboration, enhancing organizational performance (Coco et al., 2023). This enhances collaboration, which in turn improves overall organizational performance and aligns with the principles of SET by maximizing collective benefits.

By applying SET to employee development and training, healthcare organizations can create an environment where staff feel valued and supported. This leads to increased motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. Investing in continuous training, goal setting, professional development, necessary resources, and inclusive programs not only enhances the skills and capabilities of the staff but also builds a resilient and high-performing healthcare system that benefits both employees and patients.

Business Contributions and Recommendations for Professional Practice

Business Contributions

The research on leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs provides valuable insights into effective business practices that can drive success in this sector. By identifying key strategies such as effective remuneration, financial incentives, recognition, continuous training, and fostering innovation and adaptability, this study contributes significantly to the understanding of how leadership impacts organizational performance. These findings can help fill gaps in the current understanding and practice of business by offering evidence-based approaches that healthcare leaders can adopt to enhance their operations.

Effective Remuneration and Financial Incentives

Good remuneration and financial incentives are critical motivators for employees, directly impacting their engagement and performance. As L3 emphasized, good remuneration of their staff, thereby leading to motivation. By offering competitive salaries and financial rewards, businesses can attract and retain top talent, leading to improved organizational performance and reduced turnover rates. Ensuring that staff are adequately compensated is not just a matter of fairness but a strategic investment in the workforce that drives overall business success.

Recognition and Continuous Training

Recognition of outstanding work and continuous training are essential for maintaining a motivated and competent workforce. L1 highlighted that training is vital for healthcare employee's motivation and productivity. Regular acknowledgment of employee contributions and providing opportunities for professional development help build a positive organizational culture, fostering loyalty and commitment among staff. A culture of continuous learning and recognition not only enhances employee satisfaction but also promotes a proactive and innovative organizational environment.

Fostering Innovation and Adaptability

Promoting a culture of innovation and adaptability is crucial for staying competitive in the rapidly evolving healthcare sector. Leaders who demonstrate adaptability inspire their teams to embrace change, fostering a culture of continuous

improvement. Leaders who model adaptability inspire their teams to embrace change, fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Bevere & Faccilongo, 2024). By encouraging innovative thinking and flexible approaches, businesses can better respond to emerging challenges and opportunities, ensuring long-term sustainability. Cultivating an adaptive and innovative mindset within the organization is essential for achieving sustainable growth and maintaining a competitive edge.

Client-Focused Care

Healthcare leaders can enhance the sustainability of their businesses by providing exceptional services tailored to customers' specific preferences and needs. All five participants emphasized the importance of individualized care plans that involve developing care plans tailored to the specific needs of each patient. Personalized care plans and active patient involvement lead to more effective treatments and better health outcomes (Vats, 2024). This requires comprehensive initial assessments and ongoing adjustments based on patient feedback and progress.

Business Ethics

Upholding principles and maintaining ethical business practices contribute to building trust and credibility among clients and the local community. Adhering to ethical standards can help mitigate legal risks and protect the healthcare business's reputation. Participant L2 stated, "it is important to strive to create a structured business environment so that people view the business as one with high customer and ethical standards."

Participant L3 mentioned the importance of understanding healthcare industry's health and safety laws and regulations.

Recommendations for Professional Practice

To translate these findings into actionable strategies, the following recommendations are provided for healthcare business leaders:

Implement Competitive Compensation Packages

- **Action Steps:** Review and adjust salary structures to ensure they are competitive within the industry. Introduce performance-based bonuses and other financial incentives to reward high performers.

- **Who Should Act:** Human Resource departments and organizational leaders.

- **Dissemination:** Share findings and best practices through HR conferences, industry journals, and professional development workshops.

Develop Comprehensive Recognition Programs

- **Action Steps:** Create formal recognition programs that celebrate employee achievements regularly. Implement peer recognition systems to promote a culture of appreciation.

- **Who Should Act:** Managers and team leaders at all levels.

- **Dissemination:** Present at leadership seminars, and publish in organizational development magazines, and internal communications channels.

Enhance Training and Development Opportunities

- **Action Steps:** Invest in continuous professional development by providing access to training courses, workshops, and conferences. Develop internal training programs tailored to the organization's specific needs.

- **Who Should Act:** Training and development departments, senior management.

- **Dissemination:** Conduct training sessions, produce educational materials, and participate in industry-wide training forums.

Promote Innovation and Flexibility

- **Action Steps:** Encourage a culture of innovation by supporting experimental projects and new ideas. Provide platforms for employees to share suggestions and collaborate on problem-solving.

- **Who Should Act:** Organizational leaders, innovation teams.

- **Dissemination:** Host innovation fairs, contribute to industry innovation publications, and engage in cross-industry innovation networks.

Broaden Research Scope and Collaboration

- **Action Steps:** Engage in comparative studies across different organizational sizes and regions to understand the scalability of leadership strategies. Partner

with other healthcare organizations for collaborative research and shared learning.

- **Who Should Act:** Academic researchers, healthcare administrators.

- **Dissemination:** Publish findings in peer-reviewed journals, present at academic and industry conferences, and form collaborative research groups.

By implementing these recommendations, healthcare business leaders can significantly enhance their organizational performance and contribute to positive social change. These strategies will not only improve business outcomes but also foster a more motivated, competent, and innovative workforce, leading to better healthcare delivery and community well-being. The adoption of these leadership strategies and recommendations can transform healthcare organizations, driving sustainable growth and fostering a more equitable and high-performing healthcare sector. Through continuous improvement and strategic leadership, SMHBs can achieve remarkable success and contribute to the broader goal of societal well-being.

Implications for Social Change

The research findings hold significant potential for fostering social change across various levels. Emphasizing employee engagement and motivation through financial incentives, recognition, and effective training programs can lead to multiple tangible improvements affecting individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies. For instance, when healthcare organizations prioritize employee development, it not only enhances job satisfaction and retention but also improves the

quality of patient care and organizational efficiency. Employee motivation and engagement are critical factors in driving organizational success, leading to significant positive social outcomes (Susanto et al., 2023). By fostering a motivated and engaged workforce, organizations not only enhance their performance but also contribute to the broader social good. This underscores the importance of effective leadership and human resource practices in achieving both organizational and societal benefits. The positive impact on employees' lives extends beyond the workplace, promoting overall well-being and community development. Therefore, implementing these strategies in the healthcare sector can contribute to a more motivated and efficient workforce, ultimately benefiting the broader society by improving healthcare services and outcomes.

Individuals

Healthcare professionals benefit directly from improved motivation and engagement. Enhanced job satisfaction and professional development lead to higher morale and reduced burnout. As L3 noted, payment of good remuneration to staff leads to motivation to work well and to perform better. This sense of value and recognition positively impacts their personal lives, contributing to overall well-being. Fair compensation is a pivotal factor in boosting employee morale and overall satisfaction (Marczak & Yawson, 2021). Ensuring competitive salaries and benefits promotes a healthier work-life balance and personal fulfillment.

Communities

When healthcare workers are motivated and engaged, the quality of care they provide improves, leading to better patient outcomes. This, in turn, enhances the health and well-being of the community. Improved patient care fosters trust in healthcare institutions, promoting community health and resilience. Effective collaboration in healthcare settings improves patient outcomes and increases job satisfaction among healthcare providers (Spaulding et al., 2021). By enhancing patient care, healthcare professionals build stronger, healthier communities.

Organizations

Effective employee development and training programs ensure that healthcare organizations maintain a competent and motivated workforce. As highlighted by L1, training, and retaining is essential for healthcare sustainability. This continuous professional growth not only enhances organizational performance but also drives innovation and adaptability in healthcare practices. Continuous professional development is essential for maintaining a high-performing and innovative workforce (Pincus, 2023). Organizations that invest in their employees' growth foster a culture of excellence and adaptability.

Institutions

Healthcare institutions that prioritize employee engagement and development set benchmarks for the industry. By adopting strategies that align with SET, these institutions can create a culture of reciprocity and mutual benefit. Encouraging feedback from

employee fosters a sense of value and engagement, enhancing morale and productivity (Susanto et al., 2023). Such institutions lead by example, setting standards for best practices in healthcare. The commitment to continuous improvement and employee well-being can influence industry norms, encouraging other institutions to follow suit.

Cultures

A shift towards a more inclusive and supportive work culture within healthcare institutions can lead to broader cultural changes. As L2 emphasized, that collaboration is essential in the healthcare sector for organizational growth. This inclusivity promotes diversity, equity, and a collaborative spirit, which can permeate societal norms and values. Inclusive leadership fosters a collaborative environment, improving overall organizational performance (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022). By promoting inclusivity and collaboration, healthcare institutions can drive cultural transformation within and beyond the workplace.

Societies

At a societal level, improved healthcare practices contribute to overall societal well-being. Access to high-quality healthcare services enhances the population's health, productivity, and quality of life. This societal health is crucial for sustainable development and social stability. Societal health and well-being are foundational for sustainable development and social stability (Bevere & Faccilongo 2024). Societies that prioritize healthcare improvements foster environments where individuals can thrive, contributing to long-term social and economic development.

In conclusion, by implementing these strategies, healthcare organizations can drive significant social change. From enhancing individual well-being to fostering societal development, the positive impacts of employee engagement and motivation extend far beyond the workplace. This research underscores the importance of investing in healthcare professionals as a means to achieve broader social benefits.

Statement on Positive Social Change

Promoting the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, or societies through the findings of this research leads to significant positive social change. By adopting strategies that enhance employee engagement and motivation, healthcare institutions can create an environment where employees feel valued and empowered. Leaders who model adaptability inspire their teams to embrace change, fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Bevere & Faccilongo, 2024). By focusing on the worth and dignity of healthcare professionals, institutions can reduce burnout and increase job satisfaction. This approach not only benefits individuals but also enhances the quality of care provided to patients. Communities benefit from improved healthcare services, leading to better overall health outcomes and increased trust in healthcare systems. Organizations that prioritize employee development and recognition experience higher levels of innovation and efficiency, driving overall performance.

This research underscores the importance of recognizing and developing human potential within the healthcare sector. Employee development and good remuneration

significantly boost motivation and performance (Marczak & Yawson, 2021). By prioritizing professional development, offering competitive remuneration, and fostering inclusive leadership, healthcare organizations can contribute to the betterment of human and social conditions. This approach aligns with the principles of promoting dignity and worth, ultimately leading to a more equitable and compassionate society.

In conclusion, the implications of these research findings extend beyond the healthcare sector, influencing social behavior and contributing to the broader goal of social change. Encouraging feedback from employees fosters a sense of value and engagement, enhancing morale and productivity (Thangaraja et al., 2024). By enhancing the conditions within which healthcare professionals work, we can drive improvements in health outcomes, community well-being, and societal progress, thereby fulfilling the fundamental goals of positive social change. This research underscores the critical role of leadership in achieving sustainable and impactful social change.

Recommendations for Further Research

To build on the findings of this research and address the limitations encountered, future studies should consider several key recommendations. These include broadening the scope to include large healthcare businesses, increasing the sample size, expanding the geographic scope, extending the duration of data collection, enhancing access to internal organizational data, investigating employee perspectives, and exploring the role of technology in leadership strategies.

Broaden the Scope to Include Large Healthcare Businesses

Future research should expand beyond SMHBs to include large healthcare organizations. This broader scope would help determine if the identified leadership strategies are universally applicable or if they need to be adapted for larger institutions. Conducting comparative studies between small, medium, and large healthcare organizations can provide insights into the scalability and adaptability of leadership strategies. Comparative studies across various organizational sizes can highlight unique challenges and opportunities in leadership practices (Malesios et al., 2021). By including larger organizations, researchers can develop a more comprehensive understanding of effective leadership across the healthcare sector.

Increase Sample Size

The sample size of five participants in the current study is a limitation that may affect the robustness and generalizability of the findings. Future research should aim for a larger and more diverse sample size. Utilizing mixed methods, including surveys and focus groups, can help capture a wider range of insights and increase the validity of the results. A larger sample size enhances the reliability of research findings and provides a more representative view of the population studied (Terkenli et al., 2021). A more extensive and varied participant pool would enable deeper insights and more definitive conclusions.

Expand Geographic Scope

The current study's focus on a specific geographic area or region may limit the applicability of the findings to healthcare businesses in other locations with different contextual factors or cultural norms. Future research should conduct multi-regional or international studies to explore how leadership strategies may vary across different cultural and contextual settings. This can provide a more comprehensive understanding of effective leadership practices in diverse environments. Cross-regional studies help identify culturally specific leadership practices and promote a broader application of research findings (Mylonas & Tudor, 2021). Such studies can illuminate the nuances of leadership in various contexts, contributing to more globally applicable strategies.

Extend Duration of Data Collection

Time limitations may restrict the depth and duration of data collection, potentially impacting the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the study's findings. Future studies should allow for extended data collection periods to enable longitudinal analysis. This approach can provide deeper insights into the long-term effectiveness of leadership strategies and their impact on organizational performance. Extended data collection periods facilitate a more detailed understanding of organizational dynamics and the sustainability of leadership interventions (Pyo et al., 2023). Longer-term studies can capture the evolving nature of leadership impacts and organizational changes over time.

Enhance Access to Internal Organizational Data

Limited access to internal organizational data, such as financial records or performance metrics, may constrain the depth of analysis and the ability to assess the impact of leadership strategies. Future research should establish partnerships with healthcare organizations to gain better access to internal data. This can facilitate a more detailed analysis of how leadership strategies affect organizational performance metrics such as financial outcomes, patient satisfaction, and employee retention. Access to comprehensive internal data is crucial for evaluating the true impact of leadership strategies on a particular organizational performance (Bevere & Faccilongo, 2024). Collaborations with healthcare providers can provide richer data sets for more thorough analyses.

Utilize Advanced Analytical Techniques

Employing advanced analytical techniques can enhance the depth and rigor of the analysis. Future research should incorporate quantitative methods such as regression analysis or structural equation modeling to statistically validate the impact of leadership strategies on organizational performance. Qualitative data can be analyzed using thematic analysis software to uncover deeper patterns and themes. Advanced analytical methods provide robust frameworks for testing hypotheses and drawing meaningful conclusions from complex data sets (Zhang et al., 2024). Utilizing these techniques can significantly strengthen the study's findings and implications.

Explore the Role of Technology in Leadership Strategies

Investigate how the integration of technology influences leadership effectiveness and organizational performance. Future research should examine the impact of digital tools and technologies, such as telemedicine, electronic health records, and AI-driven decision-making, on leadership strategies and organizational outcomes. Technological advancements are reshaping leadership practices and organizational efficiency in healthcare (Coco et al., 2023). Understanding the role of technology can help leaders leverage digital innovations to enhance their strategic impact.

Investigate Employee Perspectives

Understanding employee perspectives on leadership strategies can provide valuable insights into their effectiveness. Future studies should include employee feedback on leadership practices through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. This can help validate leadership strategies and identify areas for improvement from the employee's viewpoint. Employee feedback is essential for tailoring leadership strategies to meet the workforce's needs and expectations (Marczak & Yawson, 2021). Incorporating the perspectives of those directly affected by leadership decisions ensures that strategies are both effective and inclusive. By addressing these recommendations, future research can build on the current findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership strategies that drive sustainable organizational performance in the healthcare sector.

Conclusion

The research on leadership strategies for sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs has revealed critical insights into the practices that drive success in this sector. Through interviews with healthcare leaders (L1, L2, L3, L4, and L5), several key strategies emerged, including effective remuneration, financial incentives, recognition, continuous training, and fostering innovation and adaptability. Good remuneration and financial incentives were highlighted as powerful motivators that significantly boost employee engagement and performance. Recognition of outstanding work further reinforces a positive organizational culture, encouraging employees to strive for excellence. Recognizing outstanding work further reinforces a positive organizational culture, encouraging employees to strive for excellence and improved job performance (Marczak & Yawson, 2021). This underscores the importance of financial compensation in enhancing employee motivation and productivity. The importance of continuous training and development cannot be overstated, as it ensures that staff remain competent and confident, ready to embrace new technologies and methodologies. Additionally, promoting a culture of innovation and adaptability is crucial for staying competitive and delivering high-quality patient care.

SET provides a valuable framework for understanding these dynamics, illustrating how reciprocal relationships and perceived value within the organization enhance employee commitment and productivity. Leaders who demonstrate adaptability and encourage feedback create a culture of continuous improvement, fostering both

individual and organizational growth. Encouraging feedback from staff fosters a sense of value and engagement, enhancing morale and productivity (Argyropoulou et al., 2023). This approach fosters both individual and organizational growth, leading to sustainable performance.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations, including the small sample size, geographic focus, and limited access to internal organizational data. Future research should aim to address these limitations by expanding the scope, increasing sample sizes, and utilizing advanced analytical techniques to validate and extend the findings. In conclusion, the research underscores the importance of strategic leadership in achieving sustainable organizational performance in SMHBs. By implementing the identified strategies and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, healthcare leaders can enhance employee motivation, improve patient outcomes, and ensure long-term organizational success. The findings serve as a roadmap for healthcare organizations seeking to navigate the complexities of the modern healthcare landscape, emphasizing the critical role of effective leadership in driving positive social change and improving the overall quality of care.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Subject line:

Interviewing leaders in small to medium healthcare business

Email message:

There is a new study about the effective strategies that leaders in small to medium healthcare businesses use to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years that could help business leaders better understand how to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. For this study, you are invited to describe the effective strategies used to sustain your business beyond 5 years.

About the study:

- One 30–60-minute phone interview that will be audio recorded (no video recording)
- To protect your privacy, the published study will not share any names or details that identify you.

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- Leader in small to medium healthcare business in Nigeria.
- Legally registered healthcare business.
- Have an employee headcount of 20 to 50 employees.
- Must have successfully sustained healthcare business for a minimum of 5 years

This interview is part of the doctoral study for <u>Hauwa Nuru</u>, a DBA student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during <u>July and August</u>.

Please reach out via XXXXX@XXXXX to let the researcher know of your interest. You are welcome to forward it to others who might be interested.

Voluntary Participation in the Study

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the freedom to accept or decline the invitation. Even if you choose to participate now, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study whenever you wish.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Q1. What practices do healthcare leaders use to ensure the success of small and medium-sized healthcare businesses (SMHBs)?

Q2. How do leadership strategies impact employee engagement within your healthcare organization, and how does this contribute to sustainability?

Q3. How does leadership encourage innovation and adaptability in response to the evolving healthcare landscape for sustained organizational performance?

Q4. How does leadership strategies prioritize employee development and training to enhance organizational performance?

Q5. How do leaders ensure a patient-centric approach in the delivery of healthcare services, and how does this contribute to organizational sustainability?

Q6. How does leadership strategies promote collaboration and partnerships within the healthcare ecosystem to enhance overall organizational performance?

Q7. How does leadership integrate technology and innovation into healthcare processes, and what impact does this have on organizational sustainability?

Q8. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of leadership strategies in achieving sustainable organizational performance within healthcare business?

Q9. What barriers or obstacles do healthcare leaders encounter in implementing and sustaining effective leadership strategies for organizational performance?

Q10. What information would you like to add that we have not covered on effective

strategies that healthcare leaders employ for success in small to medium-sized

healthcare businesses in Nigeria?