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Strategies Used by Information Technology Business Managers for Improved Competitive Drive in Organizational Culture

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Kenechukwu Laura Mukaila-Lawal

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2026

Abstract

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Competitive Drive in Organizational Culture

by

Kenechukwu Laura Mukaila-Lawal

MBA, Walden University, 2015

BSc, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, 2008

Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

January 2026

Abstract

Poorly managed organizational culture changes can weaken competitive drive in information technology business organizations, limiting their ability to respond effectively to rapid technological advancements. This problem affects information technology business leaders, employees, and organizations operating in competitive markets, as a misaligned culture reduces innovation, employee engagement, and long-term sustainability. Grounded in organizational culture theory, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry project was to explore effective strategies that information technology business managers use to improve competitive drive in organizational culture in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. The participants were seven information technology business leaders who devised and implemented strategies to enhance competitive drive through organizational culture across industries, including technology (fintechs), education, finance, and manufacturing. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and a review of relevant public documents. Through thematic analysis, seven themes were identified: (a) leadership and role modeling, (b) organizational culture and values, (c) employee engagement and empowerment, (d) dynamic capabilities and sustainability, (e) customer centricity and innovation, (f) continuous training and development, and (g) adaptability and resilience. A key recommendation is for information technology business leaders to intentionally integrate these strategies into organizational culture initiatives to strengthen competitive drive. The implications for positive social change include the potential to enhance employee retention and support the development of a resilient and competitive local workforce.

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Dedication

This research project is dedicated to all business leaders who consistently devise healthy and positive business strategies to navigate the challenges posed by rapidly advancing technology, which can cause a loss of human touch and connectivity among employees and the business at large due to its intense pressure. May this project serve as an encouragement and a testament to your tireless commitments, a great reminder that your intentional and conscious leadership in maintaining a healthy working environment is deeply appreciated, as you strive to meet the dynamic tastes and preferences of your customers.

To my husband, Olakunle, thank you for your love, support, encouragement when I felt weak, and your sustained confidence in me throughout every challenge of this journey. You stood beside me during the weighty moments and celebrated each victory, especially when this project was finally approved. Without your support, the journey would have been impossible.

To my children, Joshua and Deborah, may you always know that greatness lies within you. May you never know a greater yesterday. Let this work serve as proof that perseverance, determination in the face of all odds, purpose, and vision can open doors and change futures. May God's light guide you always, causing you to excel greater than I in all realms.

To all the working mothers of this generation and the generations to come, rise up and never settle for less. Be deliberate about your home and life. Lead the pace and transform your world. The future is yours to shape.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Project

Background of the Problem

With the advent of artificial intelligence, big data importance, and the overarching persistence of technological advancements, business managers are faced with the challenge of identifying the right strategies to improve organizational competitive culture. These rapid changes interfere with and modify work modalities, systems processes, organizational culture, leadership styles, and organizational performance toward its competitiveness (Zen et al., 2023). Several businesses have lost their competitiveness due to the inability of their managers to devise effective strategies for organizational culture improvement (Azeem et al., 2021). Similarly, Tidor and Morar (2022) noted that omission of strategies for improved organizational competitive culture amounts to negligence that leads to no acknowledgment of the ethical norms in business operations and structure, poor maintenance and improvement of interpersonal relations and communications, incongruent sustenance of teamwork and positive organizational traditions, distorted sharing of age-long built convictions (values).

However, to achieve the desired improvement in the organizational culture's competitive drive, having exemplary leadership to champion and drive the task is an invaluable intangible resource that supports organizational performance and its competitiveness - competitive strategic relevance (Sindakis et al., 2024). In that vein, organizational leaders should identify rapid advancements within their business environments and devise strategies to leverage the opportunities presented towards retaining a competitive organizational culture.

Business Problem Focus and Project Purpose

The specific business problem is that some information technology business managers lack strategies to improve the competitive drive in the organizational culture. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry is to explore effective strategies that information technology business managers use to improve competitive drive in organizational culture.

The targeted population consists of information technology business leaders and technology business managers who meet the following criteria:

- is a business leader,
- has leadership experience in devising strategies that information technology business leaders can leverage toward improving the competitive drive in the organizational culture
- operates in industries like technology (Fintechs inclusive), education, financial, and manufacturing, and
- resides in the Southwestern region of Nigeria.

As part of the population sample selection process, a purposeful sampling was applied to select seven participants who met the above criteria and had a strategy to improve the competitive drive in organizational culture. Purposeful sampling, according to Stratton (2024), involves identifying research participants or project subjects based on their representative attributes of a population of interest while offering insights into the research question. Access to the participants was gained through personal and social networks, as well as professional associations, given their requisite demonstrated

experience and in alignment with the qualitative pragmatic inquiry requirements (Walden University, 2021). Data were collected through semistructured interviews and publicly disseminated reports. The organizational culture theory, written by Schein (1992), is the conceptual framework that grounded this project.

Research Question

What strategies do information technology business managers use to improve competitive drive in organizational culture?

Assumptions and Limitations

Every research methodology has its specific assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. These assumptions are the guiding philosophical principles that the researcher encounters, and we are expected to prove if they are true or false (Walden University, 2021). Similarly, limitations and delimitations allow the researcher to express possible hindrances, known and unknown to the researcher, that challenge the successful completion and reliability of the research alongside all possible forms of testable predictions. Furthermore, Alkadash and Aljileedi (2020) stated that assumptions are not part of what is being tested in a research project; rather, they are beliefs or inferences taken as fact without proof.

Assumptions

Assumptions are philosophical fundamentals that underline and determine the researcher's methodological choices, which can be either objective assumptions or subjective assumptions (AbuRaya & Gomaa, 2020). Pilcher and Cortazzi (2024) further noted that for clear articulation of any research project, these assumptions must be

considered as they are requisite paradigms that outline scientific theories and research methodologies for attaining rigor and clarity. Qualitative research carries some level of assumptions relating to the data collection, analysis, design, and research methodology that threaten the research process. These assumptions are a crucial part of the research process that requires extra caution and attention from the researcher in arriving at reliable and valid research findings (Hu & Plonsky, 2021). For this pragmatic inquiry project, some assumptions made were: (a) that interviewees would provide objective and honest answers to the interview's open-ended questions while using member-checking to review and interpret the project results, (b) that interviewees would be truthful in their responses and share experiences in improving competitive drive in organizational culture, and finally, (c) that interviewees would have the knowledge of the strategies required to improve competitive drive in organizational culture.

Limitations

Limitations are relevant conceptual terms (variables) that challenge the validity and reliability of the research findings, methodologies, and designs (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Limitations refer to potential external threats beyond the researcher's control, possibly hindering the project's reliability and validity. Due to the inherent limitations that pose constraints to the project's methodology and design, and are beyond the researcher's control, conscious and intentional attention must be paid to them to avoid potentially impacting the generalizability, outcomes, and validity of the project (Galvan, 2023). The limitation of any project stems from the possible assumptions made by the researcher. For this project, the three major limitations envisaged were: (a) the

willingness of the technology business leaders from various industries to objectively share their organizational experience in improving competitive drive for organizational culture strategies, (b) the ability to obtain information that ensures an accurate and unbiased representation of their leadership efforts to improve competitive drive in organizational culture for stability and relevance, and finally, (c) time constraints on the availability and accessibility of the interviewees and organizational policies which might likely lead to difficulties in generalizing the project results due to its uniqueness to the business organization.

Transition

In Section 1, the background of the problem, business problem focus, and project purpose, as well as the assumptions and limitations, were discussed. In Section 2, professional and academic literature are analyzed and discussed in detail. Conversations on project ethics, the nature of the project, data collection and analysis activities, reliability, and validity are addressed in Section 3, and finally, the findings and the implications for business practice, social change, and further research are discussed in Section 4.

Section 2: The Literature Review

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The literature review for this project included the analysis of strategies used by information technology business managers for improved competitive drive in organizational culture. Therefore, the purpose of this literature review is to identify and deepen one's understanding of the research problem, guide in research question formulation, and gain foundational knowledge from previous researchers' findings through constructive scholarly analysis (Buchholz & Dickins, 2022; Hart, 1998). A literature review is a fundamental research process that helps with prior knowledge synthesis and provides an insightful guide into the subject matter field of project (Farrukh & Sajjad, 2023). Similarly, Dodgson (2021) noted that the literature review process involves detailed deconstruction, critical analysis, and reconstruction of the data variables as they align and answer the research question. Simply put, a literature review process requires a deep and rooted understanding of the scholarly resources used by the researcher for the project, identifying relevant contributory data and areas, assessing and appreciating the rigorous process of the review that adds value and flavor to the qualitative process, and finally, seeking new insights into the existing body of knowledge. Hidalgo et al. (2025) further suggested that the literature review also involves identifying specific scholarly resources that relate to the research question, the strengths and weaknesses of these resources, any missing or deficient aspects of the project, and any gaps for future projects, building the base of evidence. I applied the same value-based and rigorous process of literature review to understand information technology

business managers' strategies in improving the competitive drive in organizational culture.

With the pace of technological advancements and heavy reliance on its immeasurable business value, there is a heightened importance placed on understanding business managers' strategies used to improve competitive drive in organizational culture. To establish urgent leadership strategy needs, E. P. (2022) identified a dynamic shift in the business mode of operations and a deep emphasis on understanding the strategies business managers use to improve the competitive drive in organizational culture by connecting the dots that exist among organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and employee engagement. Understanding the strategies used by business managers to improve competitive drive in organizational culture requires top management support as champions of a healthy working environment and culture (O'Reilly et al., 2023), a communal sense of belonging among the employees to ensure adequate engagement and opportunity to share feedback (E. P., 2022); and an autonomy that encourages objective and free decision-making that establishes accountability and responsibility among the employees (Abduraimi et al., 2023). In the same vein, Febrianti and Jufri (2022) noted that understanding strategies to improve competitive drive in organizational culture requires the sustained application of a transformational leadership style, where business organizations enjoy improved organizational performance with positive culture as a pivotal driver to excellence.

Sustained application of transformational leadership is a prerequisite strategy for improving competitive drive in organizational culture. Bagga et al. (2023) noted the

mediating role of transformational leadership in helping leaders achieve improved management of virtual teams toward effective change management in the Indian information technology sector. Improving virtual teams' management through the application of transformational leadership helps business organizations to build and foster an involvement culture where employees demonstrate commitment, enjoy the flexibility to share values, support, lead, and manage change with a strong sense of feeling and ownership of the organizational values. Corroborating Bagga et al. (2023), Nguyen et al. (2023) further suggested that the impact of organizational culture and performance is largely influenced by the level of transformational leadership inherent in the organization, using about 903 qualified respondents from the Vietnamese manufacturing sector to validate their project. Therefore, information technology business managers could benefit from research that explores strategies to improve the competitive drive in organizational culture.

The review includes the use of 168 peer-reviewed research works, of which 85% are published within the last 5 years (2021–2025) and it involves exploring current and historical studies which are organized to include the following subheadings: (a) Organizational Culture Theory, (b) Successful Business Strategies, (c) Organizational Culture Impact, (d) Leadership Strategies and Influence, (e) Knowledge Sharing and Management, (f) Employee Engagement, (g) Conducive Business Environment and Dynamic Capabilities, and (h) Organizational Innovation Drive and Communication. These subheadings facilitate and support a better understanding and insight into the research question. My primary data search points were the Walden library databases,

such as Business Source Complete, Sage Journal, ScienceDirect, IEEE Explore Digital Journal, ProQuest, and Google Scholar, to find academic journals and articles for my project. To ensure adequate recency regarding empirical studies and diverse perspectives, a rigorous quality research assurance process for articles was used, as well as Ulrich's Periodical Directory to verify that articles are peer-reviewed. Some of the keywords used for the search were *organizational culture, leadership strategies, leadership influence, business innovation, communication, improved employee engagement, dynamic capabilities, knowledge sharing and management, innovation drive, business performance, and sustainable innovation*. The 168 references used for the literature review comprise 125 or 85% peer-reviewed articles published within 5 years of my anticipated project completion date. The review also included 21 books (see Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of Literature Review Sources

Sources	< 5year	>5years	% < 5 years	Total
Peer-reviewed journal articles	125	22	85	147
Scholarly books	7	14	33	21
Non-peer reviewed	0	0		0
Total	132	36		168

Organizational Culture Theory

The social theorist's view of organizational culture theory by Schein (1992) served as the conceptual framework to ground this project. A conceptual framework is required to promote, harness, and build on empirical studies toward novel knowledge generation (Luft et al., 2022; Lynch et al., 2020), guiding and facilitating an in-depth viewing and understanding of one's research project's topic through a specific lens.

The organizational culture theory, as the foundational conceptual framework for this project, is pivotal in demonstrating effective strategies, innovative work behavior, leadership support, employee engagement, and overall business performance improvement. The organizational culture theory was developed by Schein (1992), a social theorist (Nanayakkara & Wilkinson, 2021; Schein, 1992). The organizational culture framework from Schein's (1992) perspective explained the trend of elementary but mutual conventions that a particular set of people learn over time in their bid to solve some internal and external environmental integration and adaptation issues that have consistently worked for them and are expected to be passed down to new members as reliable methods of problem-solving. The fundamental constructs of organizational culture theory are: (a) artifacts—the office layout and architectural designs, (b) espoused values—guiding principles and rules, and (c) elementary conventions—behavioral methodologies and assertions about certain things (Nanayakkara & Wilkinson, 2021; Schein, 1992).

The tenets of any organizational culture are enshrined in its mission statement, which provides adequate responses to critical questions around its essence of existence—who they are, their modus operandi—what they do, and their outlook—where they are headed (Nanayakkara & Wilkinson, 2021). Nanayakkara and Wilkinson's (2021) work complemented Hofstede et al.'s (2010) research on organizational culture, which defined it as the core values of a company's philosophical beliefs, ethical guidelines, pathways, and predetermined destination. In further consideration of Schein's (1992) social theorist's work on the organizational culture framework on the three significant

constructs, Martin (1992) added that management practice should be the fourth construct, which deals with understanding the relevant organizational environment, working practices, performance assessment, reward, hiring, and training. These constructs facilitate a better understanding and application of the conceptual framework by information technology business managers for improved organizational culture. Despite the additional construct by Martin, there are other competing dimensions and conceptual frameworks of this same organizational culture, enriching its diverse application and relevance. These applications include the works of Cameron and Quinn (2006, 2011), which noted that organizational culture comprises four dimensions—hierarchy culture, clan culture, market culture, and adhocracy culture; Harrison and Stokes (1992)—power-oriented culture, role culture, achievement-oriented culture, and support and person-oriented culture; and finally, Rodriguez and Gomez's (2009) paradigm—pessimistic paradigm, optimistic paradigm, and pragmatic paradigm.

Several other scholarly works and peer-reviewed resources illustrate how business organizations and researchers have applied the organizational culture framework in demonstrating strategies for improved organizational culture. Dennison (1990) simply suggested that organizational culture involves the various values, fundamental attitudes, and beliefs that are infused into the organizational behavioral patterns and fabrics as seen in the actions and behaviors of its members. Researchers in business, healthcare, academic, manufacturing, information technology, and supply chain businesses have researched the application of the organizational culture conceptual framework as the foundational framework for improved organizational culture, organizational performance,

trust, and knowledge sharing (Rajamani et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021; Wanto, 2021). Scholars such as Aggarwal and Agarwala (2021), Bagga et al. (2023), Lam et al. (2021), Park et al. (2023), Rajamani et al. (2022), stated business organizations apply various conceptual frameworks that illustrated the leadership styles and strategies used by business leaders, educational experts, business professionals, and technology experts to facilitate business performance, business growth, innovation, competitive drive and advantage, sustainability, and improve organizational culture.

Furthermore, the positive competitive drive in organizational culture impacts the health and internal operating environment of the business as reflected in its employees. Gheorghe and Muntean (2024) reported that organizational culture and leadership research extension to the tourism and hospitality industry showed that a positive and healthy organizational culture is reflected in the employees' behaviors, working environment, the inclusive and diversity programs anchored, and operational within the organization, in turn reflecting on the positive and happy customer experience. This project explored the strategies used by information technology business managers to improve the competitive drive in organizational culture. Therefore, I selected the organizational culture theory as the foundational conceptual framework for the project. Most of the articles, journals, and books used for this project support the organizational culture framework and other available conceptual frameworks, as they impact strategies used by information technology business managers to drive improved competition in organizational culture within the last 5 years.

Successful Business Strategies

Potential successful business strategies in the form of themes and phenomena were identified from previous research works and analyzed to understand the doctoral project topic deeply and leverage these findings to ground the project. In furtherance of the identification and analysis of the successful business strategies, a critical analysis and synthesis of scholarly works (journals and articles) was performed and built on these themes for reflection on the current state. Some of the identified successful business strategies that are discussed are organizational culture, leadership strategies and influence, knowledge sharing and management, employee engagement, conducive business environment and dynamic capabilities, organizational innovation drive, and communication.

Organizational Culture Impact

First, understanding the role that organizational culture plays in an organization's competitive drive is key to understanding how information technology business leaders can leverage the various opportunities that come with it. Though Wanto's (2021) descriptive analysis of the correlation between organizational culture, organizational learning, competitive strategy, and company performance among small and medium-scale enterprise (SME) business owners in East Java, showed that there is no direct significant relationship between organizational culture and competitive advantage as small business owners do not feel connected to their workforce, hence no support to employees and their wellbeing. Wanto (2021) further demonstrated the critical leadership and strategy interplay that information business managers can leverage to harness the

organization's dynamic capabilities toward improving organizational learning, climate, and performance by equipping employees with the appropriate and relevant organizational knowledge for an improved mindset.

In a like manner, the organizational culture's impact must show an improved mindset in the organization's employees. Sindakis et al. (2024) posited that organizational culture is an instrumental influence on every facet of a business organization, ranging from its objectives to strategies, performance, market presence, and technology acceptance, as driven by the organizational business managers for sustainable operations even in new terrains through a promoted culture that encourages engagement, knowledge sharing, and personnel development. Demonstrating their results from their case study, Sindakis et al. employed the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) to measure the impact of organizational culture elements on performance while applying the competing value framework to clearly identify the various classes of organizational culture, which include clan, hierarchical, developmental, and rational cultures. The OCAI was used for ease of understanding and correlation among these cultures in conjunction with leadership strategic drivers for long-term organizational effectiveness and competitiveness in a new business subsidiary that opened in Colombia. Moreover, in Akpa et al.'s (2021) review, the researchers stated for an organizational culture to be an instrumental influencer on the organizational performance toward competitive advantage, it must be positively valuable, rare, and imperfectly imitable. Therefore, in relation to Akpa et al.'s findings and their reflections on current realities, organizational culture reflects the true behaviors, attributes, and peculiarities that define

an organization and its working environment. In other words, building an organizational culture reflects the organizational values, accepted and imbibed over time, which may be hard to copy.

Furthermore, an organizational culture is the defining fiber of the organization. According to Soni et al.(2022), an organizational culture refers to the core and basic set of values derived from a belief system that determines and guides the relevant practices, attitudes, and standards upheld within an organization as embedded in the fabric of the organization Each organization has its unique culture, influenced by best practices and regional and demographic factors, reflected in direct influence on employee engagement through a positive organizational culture of open and social communication (Soni et al., 2022). Leveraging Soni et al.'s organizational culture definition, Rajamani et al.'s (2022) causal-comparative study posited that variables such as leadership, employee engagement, learning climate, culture stress, efforts, and implementation readiness affect the pace of technology implementation within the healthcare sector. They also pointed out the role and importance of considering a positive and competitive organizational culture as a facilitator or a hindrance to effective technology implementation in the health sector. This simply means that the manner in which the organizational culture is built, imbued, and exemplified, even in the health sector, impacts the growth, working environment, and the effective implementation of positive information technology strategies and projects.

Similarly, to strengthen organizational culture, values, and leadership, consistent reassessment of the system and its supporting frameworks are necessary. Park and Joo

(2022) further stated that a wholesome system review and learning impact can be a viable business strategy that information technology business managers can harness to improve competitive drive in an organizational culture. Adinew's (2024) qualitative case study on the impact of motivational strategies, organizational culture, and climate in Ethiopian public and private institutions, suggested that an organizational culture, though elusive, intangible, and unspoken, can be seen and visible in the employees' behaviors, engagements, leadership, and every facet of the organizational growth, performance, and sustainability. In other words, every organization has a unique culture that guides its daily activities and business operations, but to maintain that competitive drive for improved performance, the organizational culture needs to be constantly and consistently nurtured and positively groomed.

Leadership Strategies and Influence

An organizational competitive drive in culture improvement is significantly impacted by the inherent strategies and level of influence demonstrated by the leaders and managers of the business. Dahleez and Abdelmuniem Abdelfattah (2022) discovered through their deductive quantitative design on 259 employees at the OMANI SMEs, that various business leaders have different leadership styles and strategies that, when applied, work for them to improve organizational competitive drive and performance. These leadership styles and strategies, according to Dahleez and Abdelmuniem Abdelfattah's deductive design, command the basis of their organizational influence, wherein the organizational intangible attributes and resources are prioritized and enhanced, as demonstrated in their behavioral attributes, internally or externally, and in the shared

vision that empowers organizational achievements. In other words, the leadership behavioral attributes exhibited by a transformational leader will differ from the attributes shown by the transactional, laissez-faire, and autocratic leaders and in this unique difference lies the power of the impact.

One of the prevalent and most applied leadership styles is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of inspiring and motivating employees personally and wholeheartedly toward the achievement of personal development goals and organizational objectives (Dahleez & Abdelmuniem Abdelfattah, 2022). In support of the transformational leadership style as the most advocated style whose strategies and influence encompass the improvement of competitive drive organizational culture, Bortolotti et al. (2024) suggested that transformational leadership sets the tone of the organizational culture that builds and binds an improved competitive culture drive where employees are inspired, motivated, and committed to getting involved in the organizational change processes and improvement. Bortolotti et al. suggested that firms can enjoy competitive drive and advantage through an intentional and moderated collaboration among the four identified organizational culture types, namely: group, developmental, rational, and hierarchical; and stakeholders' integration (internal and external) for proactive environmental practices. Unified identification and development of the organization's unique capabilities, which are rarely imitable externally but can be sustained internally, are also among the devisable strategies available to business leaders. Simply put, with the identification, selection, and implementation of any of the four organizational culture types, business organizations are

well positioned to benefit from the prevailing opportunities within their business environment, which differentiates them and gives a great advantage (competitive edge).

Rare external immutability and deliberate internal sustenance are some of the key aspects of organizational culture, hinged on the adoption of the transformational leadership style. Juliana et al. (2021) argued that though transactional leaders encourage a tight, restricted, and policy-driven organizational culture that achieves cost differentiation, transformational leaders achieve more as they build a flexible, organizationally competitive culture. Transformational leaders inspire employee commitment and citizenship behavior, which is reflected in the employee's performance and organizational success. A flexible organization promotes innovative ideas and initiatives, encourages risk-taking, and has the ability to effectively manage opportunities and challenges, ultimately leading to unique product differentiation. Juliana et al. (2021) noted that gaining the optimal benefits that arise from business strategy alignment, positive competitive drive in organizational culture, and improved organizational performance stems from understanding and applying the appropriate leadership style (transactional or transformational leadership style). Similarly, Budur and Demir (2022) conducted a sampling of SMEs in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and found that the transformational leadership style and its four vital constructs facilitate, guide, enhance, and promote improved employee engagement, positive competitive drive in organizational culture, and increase leadership awareness of their employees' attitudes and behaviors toward organizational performance and improvement. To obtain the best from the employees, despite the work challenges and consistent operating environmental

changes, information technology business leaders can leverage idealized influence and inspirational motivation to help the employees look beyond the temporary discomfort associated with the personal and organizational goal achievement.

Likewise, business leaders with transformational leadership styles and frameworks tend to achieve more and instill an improved competitive drive in organizational culture through the exemplification of their intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation, which in turn shapes the organizational performance, size, and industry position. On the contrary, Alavi et al. (2022) noted that though transformational leadership offers beautiful rewards and attributes that are worthy of emulation, at times, it shows some level of incompetence in times of crisis, using the COVID-19 pandemic and the several business recovery struggles that had a negative impact on businesses, their sales, and performance. Alavi et al. further noted that due to the need for business survival and sustenance during emergencies and crises, the application of transactional leadership appears to achieve more as business leaders, especially the sales managers and business development leaders, are saddled with the responsibility for quick consequence evaluation, providing clear and detailed behavioral guidance with contingent rewards and punishments. However, Cumar et al. (2025) suggested otherwise in their quantitative study of 266 qualified respondents. Findings from their study showed that leadership styles inherent within any organizational outfit or institution (whichever type of leadership is inherent within the organization) significantly impact the organizational culture. Leadership style strongly reflects the mode and nature of the prevalent atmosphere, be it warm, collaborative, harsh, intimidating, engaging or frustrating.

Applying the transformational leadership style as a strategy of influence toward improved competitive drive in organizational culture reflects the leaders' support for the employees. Applying the transformational leadership style as a powerful tool hinges on idealized influence (attributes), idealized influence (behaviors), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration of employee perception gives room for the actualization of personal development (Jaroliya & Gyanchandani, 2022). In their quantitative survey-designed study, Jaroliya and Gyanchandani (2022) assessed each of the transformational leadership construct as a standalone and paired variables and suggested that transformational leadership as a leadership strategy of influence for competitive drive improvement in organizational culture entails the exemplification teams' support where innovation ideas and growth are encouraged, encourages teams to go beyond their perceived capabilities and expectations, provide a high level of moral example, and provide feedback for improvement and taking up challenges. Alzoraiki et al. (2023) suggested that transformational leaders employ charisma, intellectual stimulation, and motivation to build trust and establish a healthy and working environment that fosters deep involvement and strong task identification and execution. In the business world today, thoughtful and purposeful employees (followers) are easily attracted to transformational leaders as they see their personal development, growth, and fulfillment reflected in the exemplified attributes of the leader(s).

Transformational leaders are intentional and long-term goals-driven, not deterred by the short-term inconveniences that may be encountered in the organizational change and competitive drive. Corroborating the findings of Budur and Demir (2022) and

Jaroliya and Gyanchandani (2022), Risnawati et al.'s (2024) explanatory design showed that intentional exemplification of transformational leadership style positively impacts improved competitive drive in organizational culture through consistency and deliberate attention to fulfilling the organization's commitments by the top management. Also, Peng et al. (2021) performed a quantitative meta-analytical empirical study to understand the role of transformational leadership on employees' attitudes toward organizational change, using a sample of 30 independent studies of approximately 12,240 respondents. Peng et al. discovered that for every business organizational quantum leap in change acceptance and management, transformational leaders play a crucial facilitating role in ensuring that identified business objectives are achieved and enjoyed maximally. In other words, a positive organizational culture toward change, openness, flexibility, and adaptability starts with having the right leadership style that is transformation-oriented.

In addition, the role of transformational leadership style as the most applied leadership influence toward attaining an optimum organizational performance through improved competitive drive in organizational culture still resonates loudly today. Gomes et al. (2021) suggested that transformational leadership aims to identify the unique organizational resources (skills, potentials, capabilities) that align with the organizational strategic objectives, while building a sensitive, positive, and reputable organizationally cultured environment (AlNuaimi et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2022). According to Yang et al.'s (2021) findings, team-based transformational leadership promotes team-based innovation through collaborative and evolving positive culture, while individual-based

transformational leadership facilitates self-awareness, efficacy, self-development, and achievement of personal goals.

Similarly, transformation-oriented business leaders also need to establish connections to achieve the desired goals and objectives. To achieve the desired expectations, transformation-oriented business leaders seek to establish a connection between leadership and followership by identifying those vital humane attributes that emphasize emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals (Koo & Lee, 2022; Northouse, 2019; Qalati et al., 2022) toward a competitive drive in organizational culture. This means that transformational leaders do not work alone; they work and attract followers (employees) to themselves through their deliberate and purpose-driven behavioral traits to ensure that in driving the desired organizational changes and improved organizational performance goals, the aspirations and expectations of the workforce are also achieved. By so doing, attaining and sustaining a competitive advantage becomes easy and a healthy working environment is established.

There is an urgent need for several industry leaders within the information technology space to re-strategize by re-adopting transformational leadership as an invaluable strategy to improve the competitive drive in organizational culture. A competitive culture encourages innovation, enriches research and development, and increases awareness levels of the bigger organizational picture, modalities to that achievement and contributory values. Tareque and Islam (2020) noted that business organizations achieve different levels of success, improved organizational performance, innovation, and competitive advantage, depending on the leadership behavior (style/trait)

exemplified. Using transformational leadership as a viable strategy available to the business, Khan et al. (2020) noted that different leadership styles and their applicable strategies achieve varying levels of innovative and creative behaviors within the business and industrial world. These strategies can be replicated within the educational sector by the leaders becoming supportive and cooperative.

Furthermore, the importance of having the requisite support and cooperation cannot be overemphasized. The support and cooperation exhibited by various leadership styles and strategies play a vital role in fostering a warm and positive competitive drive within an organizational culture that encourages innovation and creativity (Qalati et al., 2022; Tye et al., 2022). Similarly, O'Reilly et al. (2023) also found that organizational culture influences business leaders, just as business leaders drive organizational culture. Whereas a detail-oriented culture is associated with business managers who exhibit improved levels of conscientiousness, an organizational culture with high adaptability potential is associated with business managers who are open and flexible. This simply means that the impact of organizational culture is experienced significantly and differently by business leaders at varying levels and times, given the unique behavioral traits and leadership styles they adopt. Both leadership and organizational culture can be an impactful strategy, and the effects can be short-term or long-term.

Adapting the transformational leadership style as a strategy for improving competitive drive in an organizational culture addresses the need to drive and maintain an organizational culture that transcends beyond the immediate and short-term benefits. The long-term impact of improving competitive drive in organizational culture is evident

through its adaptability, consistency, resilience, humane and people-centered policies, shared mutual respect, and a collective effort to achieve their personal and organizational goals (Elkordy, 2022). Similarly, Madi Odeh et al. (2023) posited that with transformational leadership, business organizations are better equipped and strengthened to adapt and be more resilient in the face of challenges as these leaders demonstrate and inculcate the same approach into the organizational culture. Transformational leaders demonstrate and align with the four constructs of the transformational leadership theory and by so doing, they are able to weather the storm, not easily swayed by the prevailing internal and external circumstances.

In comparison with the transactional leaders, the transformational leaders apply inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation to identify the needs of their followers (employees) and devise effective means to collaborate and empower, not based on the temporary gains and rewards (not transaction-based). Lasrado and Kassem (2021) and Risnawati et al. (2024) equally noted that with a transformational leadership style, employees are more engaged, motivated, highly integrated into the system, collaborative, empowered through capacity building and knowledge sharing, and team-oriented approach, reflecting a high level of organizational excellence and improved performance. The impact of transformational leadership always differs from other leadership styles, given the uniqueness of the applied transformational approach.

Applying leadership strategies to a well-curated and effective corporate and social responsibility has been noted to impact both the financial and non-financial performance of business organizations. Saeidi et al. (2021) suggested that having effective leadership

strategies that support business managers' drive fosters a deep evaluation of the organizational capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses. This fostered deep evaluation also makes for an effective champion and contributor of positive corporate social responsibility, as enshrined in the competitive drive of the organizational culture, whose impact can be financial or non-financial.

Scholars and their literary works show the direct relationship between leadership, strategies, innovation, competitive advantage, organizational performance, and competitive organizational culture. Mishra (2021) took a deep dive to separate the managerial ability of a leader from its operational capability into the impact of two types of managerial fitness ability—strategic and operational—on any business organization's innovativeness. The analyst noted the positive correlation between managerial fitness (strategic ability) in the innovative culture and the business's competitive advantage, while the operational managerial ability speaks to the propensity for adequate investment risk management and returns on assets. Therefore, to achieve an innovative culture that supports business competitive advantage, with maximum investment risk management and improved returns on assets requires an effective combination of managerial fitness and operational managerial ability.

In sum, leadership strategies with specific reference to the transformational leadership style have a significant influence on competitive drive in organizational culture and employee performance by ensuring a mutual and collaborative working environment that makes for employee growth and personal development and, in turn, drives strategic organizational goals. The organizational culture theory also guides the

requisite strategies that drive an improved organizational competitive culture that will benefit the information technology business managers toward optimization of their potential and leverage innovative opportunities presented by the fast-paced advancement.

Knowledge Sharing and Management

Knowledge sharing and management are other strategies that information technology business managers can employ to improve the competitive drive on an organizational culture. In Park and Joo's (2022) cross-sectional survey design, the results showed an observation that to achieve improved competitive drive in organizational culture; there is a need for empowered leadership to drive the social capital of the business through effective and deliberate knowledge sharing, as it is proven to facilitate organizational oneness and sharing of ideas among the employees, which in turn drives organizational innovation and performance. Other identified findings by Park and Joo suggested the need for the management and their leadership to intentionally focus and build the learning mindsets of their employees to facilitate smooth and mutual communication of ideas and knowledge sharing through the enhancement of the competitive drive in organizational learning culture. A learning culture is a growing culture that consistently seeks a better way of improving an existing or prevailing condition. Therefore, to achieve the strategic leadership objective of continuous improvement, a positive mindset that is centered on growth, innovation, and creativity, knowledge sharing, training, and intentional management support for learning and development is not negotiable.

Furthermore, knowledge sharing and management facilitate building and learning enhancement systems. The building and enhancement system fosters an atmosphere where employees of every cadre have a sense of belonging, mutual respect, and understanding through effective collaboration, which instills a high level of social togetherness and trust (Sun et al., 2023). With knowledge sharing and management, employees are empowered and connected to innovative ideas and high-performing, conducive environments that foster an organization's competitive culture (Azeem et al., 2021). Likewise, the results of the quantitative research carried out by Sun et al. (2023) showed that with knowledge sharing and management, a high level of social togetherness conveyed through transparent communication that ignites an innovative drive of the business organization is attainable, which in turn sustains a positive competitive drive in organizational culture while facilitating information flow and accommodating a working environment. In addition, Luo et al. (2023) noted that with knowledge sharing, information technology business managers apply their strategies to promote an inclusive organizational culture that drives effective knowledge sharing and management, free flow of ideas that engenders innovation, creativity, oneness, mutual respect and understanding, employee engagement, and to dispel forms of workplace exclusion. A cohesive team supports and facilitates effective team collaboration through knowledge sharing moderated by unique transformational leadership traits. Notgrass et al. (2021) noted that with intentional, well-concreted efforts of teams, competitive drive in organizational culture can be built and imbued through knowledge sharing among cohesive teams whose leadership is also deliberate in applying the inspirational leadership traits toward

maintaining the competitive drive in organizational culture. This simply means that learning and development, or the building of a cohesive team, does not come by chance. It is not by accident; rather it is an offshoot of a deliberate management commitment to support growth, drive the positive, healthy organizational culture that is consistently competitive.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is another reliable strategy available for business leaders to improve the competitive organizational culture. Over the years, employee engagement has been a term webbed with different definitions from different scholars and researchers (Kahn, 1990; Goyal & Kaur, 2023; Lemon & Macklin, 2021; Robinson & Hayday, 2007; Soni et al., 2022). Due to complexities in developing a more specific, defined, and well-aligned definition of the term, Lemon and Macklin (2021) posited that different scholars tend to apply the word according to the context of their research, ranging from a top-down management perspective, functionalistic perspective, organizational perspective (co-creational), work-engagement perspective, psychological dimension, and communicative conceptualized perspective. According to Chanana and Sangeeta (2021), employee engagement relates to understanding and appreciating the individual's state of mind, well-being, and work engagement in relation to emotional, physical, and mental health to elicit and drive inner commitment, satisfaction, and support for organization strategy and goals achievement. From the above, it simply points out that the definition of employee engagement can be subjective depending on the prevailing circumstances. However, in all these subjectivities, one thing is certain—an employee is involved, the

person's state of mind, health, commitment, and their workflow effect on organizational goal achievement is under review.

The commitment of an employee is demonstrated in their level of engagement and behavioral attitudes in the workplace. Engaged employees willingly demonstrate their commitment to the business organization, which is reflected in the organizational improvement and productivity, customer-centricity and satisfaction, and bottom-line improvement (Alam et al., 2021; Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021). In Chanana and Sangeeta's (2021) conceptual study, the authors noted that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed and re-emphasized the importance of ensuring that employees are positively engaged to obtain the best through constant and constructive feedback. This feedback helps to build trust while helping these employees to successfully navigate and achieve personal development goals. On the other hand, Alam et al. (2021) noted that supervisor support through ethical leadership improves employee engagement mediated by organizational commitment. Prambudi et al.'s (2025) research on 327 employees at the UT central office found that empowering the workforce spurs affective commitment, trust, and mutually beneficial relationships between supervisors and their subordinates. This means that empowered employees voluntarily show their commitment to all they do, which positively impacts the performance and productivity of the business organization.

Further research has shown that employee engagement, when used as a strategy, is beneficial for improving the competitive drive within an organizational culture. Employees express their cognitive, emotional, and physical facets as a means of connecting with the organization and all it represents (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021;

Lemon & Macklin, 2021). Engaged employees demonstrate their commitment, willingness to work, appreciation, and success in the shared feedback enshrined in the positive organizational competitive culture (Abduraimi et al., 2023). Engaged employees are the bedrock of productivity, innovation, and competitive advantage as they embody the true competitive drive within their organizational culture (Wilkinson & Dundon, 2021).

Maintaining engaged employees has been found to be one of the championed initiatives (practices) of human resources (HR) management. HR practices are considered one of the contributory factors that shape and guide employee engagement in the workplace as they help to reduce anxiety and create a conducive and humane working environment (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021; Dalain, 2023). Employee engagement can be boosted and improved for innovation and creativity through the support of HR practices geared toward improving the competitive drive in organizational culture (Dalain, 2023). The same HR practices have also supported the building and sustenance of several humane and positive organizational competitive cultures where employees strive for innovation and creativity (El-Kassar et al., 2022). Employees also express their commitment through positive engagement as anxiety, loneliness, and all forms of workplace toxicity are reduced (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Similarly, employee engagement has been proven to be at its best when a healthy, positive, and improved competitive drive in the organizational culture is committed to open and social communication driven by managerial leadership (Soni et al., 2022). Further, Soni et al. (2022) identified that organizational culture and its corporate ethos

positively impact employee engagement through its leadership and management, organizational glue, and strategy, which in turn, flows to improved employee performance and organizational success at large. The test of an organizational culture improvement is reflected in the commitment and engagement level of its employees. A well-engaged employee cannot speak ill of its organizational culture improvement drive and vice versa.

Conducive Business Environment and Dynamic Capabilities

Building a conducive business environment where emotional safety is upheld, and dynamic capabilities leveraged is a viable strategy for improving competitive drive in organizational culture. A conducive operational environment where emotional safety is upheld is one where business leaders drive and champion an atmosphere for employees to feel cared for and protected from internal and external threats while performing their duties toward physical, emotional, and psychological well-being (Lal, 2023). A conducive environment is not toxic or negative; rather, it is positive, healthy, forward-looking, accommodating, and encouraging. A conducive working environment makes goal attainment and other deliverables enjoyable, despite the associated work pressure.

Some previous empirical studies, like Spears (1995, 1996, 2021), showed that leaders need to have attentive ears and hearts, be empathetic toward others, perform self-assessment for areas of weaknesses and strengths, focus on the long-term goals and visions, and impact rather than the short-term; be committed to employees' personal growth and development; demonstrate a stewardship approach to people and resources management. and can build and drive a communal sense of belonging, internally and

externally. Spear's (1995, 1996, 2021) findings corroborated Lal's (2023) descriptive study of the welcoming, excellence, collaboration, accountability, respect, and equity (WECARE) value system, where employees were engaged and emotionally safe to share ideas and knowledge, build trust with mutual respect, make and learn from mistakes, and build the WECARE designed values. In relation to the project topic, information technology business managers can leverage the lessons of the WECARE system, as suggested by Lal's findings, toward improving the competitive drive in organizational culture. O'Reilly and Tushman (2021) further noted that often the operating environment may not be conducive as desired by the business organization, given the various technological advancements, but the ability of the organizational leaders to explore and exploit the identified opportunities and promptly align their strategic precision to navigating same is fundamental to attaining competitive drive in organizational culture.

Organizational Innovation Drive and Communication

Having an effective organizational innovation drive and communication is another viable strategy that information technology business managers can employ to improve the competitive drive of the organization's culture. As organizational leaders navigate through the intensely competitive market where adaptation, flexibility, and distinctively marked offerings are the order of the day (Kuhn & Bhatiasevi, 2024). Maintaining a good innovation drive and communication helps to reinforce the difference and build an improved competitive drive in organizational culture (Mikkelsen & Hesse, 2023, 2024). Kuhn and Bhatiasevi (2024) noted that organizational innovation, improvement, and sustained performance are positively and significantly connected to the

existential culture within the organization, be it clan, hierarchical, market, or adhocracy culture. They further stated that internal and external orientations, coupled with the organization's unique capabilities and flexibility, are powerful and valuable tools for improving organizational innovation and all dimensions of organizational performance.

In like manner, Jiang and Shen (2023) and Luo et al. (2023), posited that an improved competitive drive in organizational culture is reflected in their employees' ability to share a high sense of value and commitment, and organizational communication is transparent, guiding them toward the actions and decisions of the business, which in turn sets the pace and a conducive environment that supports innovation drive mediated by digital media variables when effectively combined. An improved organizational culture provides employees with a sense of belonging that is both good and fulfilling, which they are proud to be associated with, in turn engendering good citizenship behavior among them with improved organizational performance.

An improved and positive organizational culture that also leverages digital opportunities, fosters an inclusive and oneness atmosphere among the employees. In setting the pace and a conducive environment that supports innovation drive mediated by digital media variables when effectively combined, Luo et al. (2023) discovered that workplace exclusion reduces innovation, openness, inclusiveness, and the ability for effective knowledge sharing. An excluded employee experiences a higher propensity of anxiety, self-doubt, disappointment, low esteem, and low self-confidence, which in turn hinders demonstration of unique innovative capabilities, organizational growth, and performance success (Luo et al., 2023). Likewise, employees' unique capabilities and

alignment of professional growth are exemplified through improved organizational communication and innovation drive that supports competitive drive in an organizational culture (Kuhn & Bhatiasevi, 2024). Employees and leaders with introjected motivation feel obliged to communicate and share relevant knowledge and ideas where the competitive drive in organizational culture exists (Chaman et al., 2021). Chaman et al. (2021) and Zen et al. (2023) reported business leaders should focus on people, serve as sources of guidance, and promote social learning where both parties enjoy mutual benefits.

Moreover, as business leaders focus on the people, serve as sources of guidance, and promote social learning, they also champion organizational innovation drive and communication that foster a competitive organizational culture. Nguyen et al. (2024) noted that leaders in their various capacities are the champions and drivers of this desired culture. Engaged employees with their various skills, knowledge, and experiences are the sources of innovative drive that test and ensure the positive alignment of the organizational culture toward competitiveness (Wilkinson & Dundon, 2021). Zen et al. (2023) suggested it is necessary and critical to have effective leaders who champion and oversee the competitive drive on organizational culture and its transformational changes through effective communication. This communication includes explaining the necessities of the information technology changes and implementation, identification and harnessing of the organizational resources that facilitate the cultural changes by training and access to information. Business leaders should also offer feedback and support that builds mutual trust and eases unwanted pressure, and finally, continuously monitor and

evaluate the change process to ensure that obstacles are removed and the project objectives are timely achieved.

In the same vein, transparent communication facilitates an improved organizational culture. Sun et al. (2023) showed that a positive organizational culture portrays the mental well-being of its employees, including employees within the healthcare industry. As part of their study, a purposeful sampling was applied to identify 509 eligible participants in the Pakistan healthcare industry who met the research objectives and the study's criteria. The data collected were analyzed using the Smart PLS (partial least squares) application, which suggested a significant relationship between an organizational culture, its competitive drive, and the mental health (well-being) of its employees to enjoy a safe and positive working environment (Sun et al., 2023). In sum, the impact of having and building a positive organizational culture that encourages and imbues transparent communication is critical to the maintenance of employees' well-being (mental health), which in turn translates to an improved, innovative, and competitive drive of the business. Although communication and innovative drive contribute to an organization's competitive culture drive, Kuhn and Bhatiasevi (2024) noted that the relationship can be complex in that some of the organizational culture constructs and tenets behave and affect differently depending on the geographical regions and diverse cultural landscapes. The impact of being guided by the espoused values and principles, as one of the organizational culture constructs in the Eastern region of Nigeria may differ from its impact in the Southern or even in the Northern regions due to both geographical, cultural and peculiar business operational modalities.

Summary

Information technology business managers are challenged daily to find the most appropriate strategies that will guide the improvement of competitive drive in organizational culture due to the consistent fast-paced technological advancements and the social need to be seen as humane, people-centric, and customer-driven organizations. Information technology business managers are also challenged by the recent upward trend in the importance of instituting economic, social governance that guides its operations and is ecosystem-friendly (climatically and environmentally safe). Several studies validated the proliferation of success and failure variables that can either make or mar the strategies used by information technology business managers for improved competitive drive in organizational culture (Budur & Demir, 2022; Dalain; 2023; Jaroliya & Gyanchandani, 2022; Zen et al., 2023). These success and failure variables need to be effectively monitored and managed to ensure that the right results are achieved while the pitfalls and its possible accompanying breaches are adequately addressed and avoided.

Transition

In this section, relevant professional and academic literature was discussed and its applications to the business problem were explained. As part of Section 3, project ethics, the nature of the project, data collection and analysis, and reliability and validity are discussed and addressed. In Section 4, the findings and implications for business practice, social change, and further research are provided.

Section 3: Research Project Methodology

In Section 3, I describe how the research project was conducted and provide a guided context on the rationale for the methods chosen and adopted. The aim is to demonstrate methodological thoroughness and replicability. Project ethics, nature of the project, population sampling, and participants are addressed. Also, data collection activities, interview questions, data organization, and analysis techniques are discussed. Furthermore, a thorough evaluation of the reliability and validity of the data and its analytical techniques is presented, as they address the research question.

Project Ethics

My role as a researcher was to genuinely collect pertinent, relevant, and seminal data related to my doctoral project topic, as reflected in the research question. I also ensured that cordial and professional relationships were established and maintained with the research participants through the creation of elucidating open-ended interview questions that aided the free flow and sharing of information. As noted by Mwita (2022), having and identifying the appropriate research skills for informed and improved data collection is vital to achieving the research objectives and answering the research questions. Having these appropriate skills to systematically hone the relevant data is needed by both expert and novice researchers. In the same vein, Hendriarto et al. (2021) further posited that the success of every research study and the fulfillment of the researcher's goals are evident in the appropriate skills that guide the successful, timely, and valid completion of the project with quality and reliable results.

In the course of my professional career, and personal life within the private sector of the financial and capital market and automobile industry that spanned over more than 15 years, I have always developed an interest in understanding how leaders and their skills, personal and otherwise, impact the competitiveness of their organizational culture and how that differentiates them from their counterparts or competitors. As nations and industries grappled with the COVID-19 recovery and its impact, greater emphasis was placed on how business organizations and their management build and uphold positive, humane, and competitive organizational cultures that benefit the entire organization above its peers.

For this project, I interviewed seven research participants who fulfilled the eligibility criteria of (a) being a business leader; (b) having leadership experience in devising strategies that information technology business leaders can leverage toward improving competitive drive in organizational culture; (c) having operated in industries like technology (Fintechs inclusive), education, financial, and manufacturing; and finally, (d) residing in the Southwestern region of Nigeria.

As the researcher, I had an absolute commitment to research within the ethical boundaries and requirements of the project and methodology, without bias and with utmost due diligence. *The Belmont Report* and the doctrines of Helsinki, which enumerated guiding principles and minimum standards of practice when human subjects are part of the research, were strictly adhered to. Protecting, respecting the rights, and equal respect of the research participants are among the core requirements of *The Belmont Report*, as noted by Gupta (2022). In this research project, the main priorities

were protecting participants from harm and obtaining informed consent before the interview exercise commenced, which are key components of research ethics, while aligning with *The Belmont Report's* principles of ensuring ethical standards and research integrity. Acquiring voluntary participation and informed consent from each participant was part of the ethical research requirements for this project, and obtaining informed consent was foundational, as it respects participants' autonomy and fosters trust between researchers and participants (Sindhuri & Dongre, 2023). I obtained approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), reflecting my commitment to adhere to these standards and ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines. Also, protecting the confidentiality and privacy of each participant was critical through pre-informing each participant, obtaining their consent, and ensuring that they were comfortable with the interview process through the shared and signed consent form. I provided each of the project participants with an informed consent form, along with documentation outlining the purpose of the project and including any foreseeable risks or benefits.

The informed consent form served as a comprehensive guide, providing and supporting the participants with clear and detailed instructions to ensure the ethical execution of the research project. To uphold these ethical standards, each participant was provided with written authorization while adhering to the stipulated IRB requirements. Additionally, the consent form included pertinent details about the research project, addressing ethical considerations such as the voluntary nature of participation and the

disclosure of compensation, while collecting consent forms to confirm participants' willingness and capability to participate in the project.

However, the research participants were at liberty to voluntarily withdraw without penalty. This withdrawal process could have been through emails, calls, or messages to the researcher, notifying the researcher of their intention to withdraw. I did not incentivize the participants to engage in this project. To protect the names and keep the participants' identity confidential, Panos et al. (2021) suggested that pseudonyms be used for each participant, such as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), Participant 3 (P3), and so forth, to conceal the actual and direct particulars of the participants.

Furthermore, as maintaining participants' confidentiality is critical to ethical adherence to requirements, access to all data was restricted. Data and physical findings were securely stored in a locked, fireproof file cabinet within my residence. This restricted access to all data helped to further maintain participants' confidentiality. To ensure the confidentiality of project participants, the principle of beneficence was followed by minimizing risks and maximizing benefits, safeguarding participant confidentiality through anonymization, and securing data storage for 5 years, in line with IRB guidelines, as done in this project. To avoid exploitation and discrimination (perceived or assumed), fair recruitment practices were employed with measures that ensured that the research's high ethical standards were maintained, public trust was built, and regulatory requirements were met, reinforcing the credibility and integrity of the research process. All reports, presentations, and publications showed general patterns rather than specific details from the data. Measures for safeguarding participant

confidentiality by securely storing interview transcripts and other research data for a minimum of 5 years following the approval date, in alignment with the IRB manual, in locked filing cabinets or secure digital storage systems. This project was approved by the Walden University IRB (Approval No. 08-04-25-0407466).

Nature of the Project

The qualitative research methodology was used to identify and explore the effective strategies used by information technology business managers to improve the competitive drive in organizational culture. The choice for this qualitative research methodology was appropriate for the project and stemmed from the rare opportunity that the qualitative method gives researchers the ability to observe and interpret certain subjective, spoken, and unspoken social constructs that might not be captured by using standardized statistical data, wherein the research objects are free within their natural settings (Delgado-Hito & Romero-García, 2021; Dezin & Lincoln, 2011; Quintão et al., 2020; Yin, 2014). Further consideration was given to the research of AbuRaya and Gomaa (2020), who noted that qualitative research is more of a descriptive study than a statistical study, seeking to understand the meanings of behaviors, things, people, spoken and unspoken cues as they occur in their natural phenomena.

In relation to the methodology, the pragmatic inquiry design was chosen because it offers the researcher a rare opportunity to observe, identify, and interpret the critical perspective and relational view of the various social factors and actions (Dewey, 1920; Holdo, 2023). With pragmatic inquiry design, the transformational learning ability and impact of the research objects, as well as other varying contextual factors that affect their

cognitive and reasoning ability in their natural social state, are evaluated (Dewey, 1920; Holdo, 2023). Furthermore, Ramanadhan et al. (2021) noted that pragmatic inquiry provides flexibility with the chance of reformulating the researcher's prior knowledge and understanding during the research process through its inductiveness, ability to use multiple sources of data, preservation of enriched quality and rigor through fitness assessment, providing clear and unambiguous clarifications where necessary, and applicability to any business industry or phenomena while striking a balance of its insider and outsider perspectives.

Population, Sampling, and Participants

The population group for this qualitative research methodology was information technology business managers and business leaders from several industries, ranging from education, healthcare, manufacturing, financial institutions, FinTechs, and the like, who have demonstrated experience in effective strategies to improve competitive drive in organizational culture. Eligible participants met the following criteria and (a) were a business leader; (b) had leadership experience in devising strategies that information technology business leaders can leverage toward improving competitive drive in organizational culture; (c) operated in industries like technology (Fintechs inclusive), education, financial, and manufacturing; and (d) resided in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. Having a deep understanding of the project guides, the purposeful and insightful determination of the eligibility criteria, targeted population, and its accompanying research questions (Dodgson, 2021). These targeted populations were identified through professional and social networks if they meet the eligibility criteria, which, according to

Braun and Clarke (2022), intentionally needed to be broadened to ensure rich, inclusive, and quality data collection for ease of transferability and generalization of results. While leveraging the established working relationship gained through social and professional networks, the targeted population group was engaged. There was also an intentional consideration for a workaround for all possible scheduling conflicts, explicitly explaining to the participants the professional and career journey thus far that has necessitated the request to include them as part of the interview participants for this research project in response to the research question.

In relation to attaining data saturation, data saturation refers to the point at which constant data collection is achieved, to the extent possible, to the point where additional collection offers little or no new contribution to the project. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) posited that adequate data should be collected to the extent that there is no need for further data collection and insights, as constant and consistent data repetition appears to be present, thereby making additional data collection redundant. However, Bekele and Ago (2022) argued that due to the qualitative nature of the research methodology and the need for rich data, determining the actual sample size will be challenging as several factors ranging from the preferred project design, the researcher's level of experience, whether it is funded or not, data quality, heterogeneous or homogeneous population group, and research scope among other varying considerable factors will need to be evaluated. Therefore, seven participants were interviewed to attain data saturation, with iterative analysis, continuous review, and assessment of data to detect redundancy while ensuring a comprehensive exploration of identified themes.

Data Collection Activities

Data collection is the bedrock for obtaining information required for the validation of an identified research problem (business problem), without which a research project is incomplete (Mazhar et al., 2021). Data collection and gathering activities were done as a systematic means of validating the research's identified business problem. Semistructured interviews with open-ended questions and public data were used for this project. Conducting a semistructured interview with open-ended exploratory questions offers the researcher the flexible opportunity to obtain additional responses from the participants toward attaining rich data collection and adequate information in the complete resolution of the research question and the research study objectives (Elhami & Khoshnevisan, 2022; Mwita, 2022). As part of the data collection process, interviews were conducted both in person and remotely using the Zoom videoconferencing application, in consideration of the participant's availability, proximity, and schedule to avoid undue interference and to create a conducive atmosphere to elicit all the required inputs/answers.

Meanwhile, as the stage for the commencement of the interview sessions was set, the topic of the doctoral project was introduced alongside the objectives of the project and the purpose of the interview. A standardized interview protocol (see Appendix) was applied to ensure consistency in the interview process and ensure that each participant was asked the same questions in the same order, doing less talking and more listening, and allowing each participant to share any stories they might want to share or relate with as suggested by Siedlecki (2022) and Yin (2018). I audio-recorded the interview sessions,

while writing notes down on words and paraphrases as needed and asking follow-up, probing questions after the main interview questions. As part of the interview protocol, well-written opening statements, an ordered list of interview questions and prompts for probing, and interview-closing comments were included, which ensured clear and detailed procedural steps that were followed consistently as the semistructured interviews with participants were conducted.

As each interview session neared its end, deliberate attention was paid to ensure that the last interview question wrapped up the interviewing process and included any additional experiences the participant desired to share. In the same vein, the participants were thanked and appreciated for participating in the interview, while a voluntary follow-up meeting was scheduled for member-checking of my interpretations of the participants' responses. To help ensure rigor and credibility in the project's findings on strategies used by information technology business leaders to improve competitive drive in organizational culture, these data collection strategies were applied in order to verify accuracy and credibility, including member checking, also known as participant validation. The interview protocol that was followed and discussed with each participant in my project is shown in Appendix, as it describes using semistructured interviews to collect data for my project.

Furthermore, the audio recordings were personally transcribed with the support of the most relevant transcribing tool and backed up to avoid information loss or oversight. The most appropriate and cost-effective transcription tool used for audio recording

transcription was the NVivo application. Adhering to this standardized interview protocol facilitated better understanding and elicitation of rich information.

Interview Questions

For this qualitative pragmatic inquiry research project, I used open-ended semistructured exploratory interview questions, which ensured alignment with the research question and the conceptual framework for this project. The open-ended exploratory interview questions were as follows:

1. How do you assess your organizational culture?
2. What strategies do you use to improve competitive drive in organizational culture?
3. How do you assess the strategies used for the competitive drive in organizational culture?
4. How do you assess the strategies used for the competitive drive in practical business impact?
5. What leadership strategies do you use to promote improved organizational culture while ensuring they remain competitive?
6. How do you sustain organizational performance through your role as a business leader in the face of competition?
7. How competitive is your organizational culture?
8. How flexible is your organizational culture?
9. How resilient is your organizational culture?

10. What are the benefits of having effective leadership strategies to improve competitive drive in organizational culture?
11. What are the dark sides of poor leadership behavioral traits on how competitive your organizational culture should be?
12. What other information would you like to add to this topic that we have not covered?

Data Organization and Analysis Techniques

For the data organization and analysis techniques in this qualitative pragmatic inquiry, Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis was the most appropriate data analysis process. Thematic analysis is a suitable, foundational method of qualitative data analysis involving the development of ideas, meaning, and understanding of qualitative data through coding procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ozuem et al., 2022). According to Braun and Clarke (2022), qualitative researchers use thematic analysis for conceptual and design thinking regarding their studies and can integrate reflexivity to meet the research quality criteria of rigor, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, and reflection. This data analysis process involved reflexive thematic analysis, which enabled the deepened development and interpretation of the data collected.

Given the qualitative methodology of this pragmatic inquiry that has been adopted for ease of organization, analysis, and display, the coding and thematic analysis involved the indexing of contextual collectible data (i.e., audio recordings, interview transcripts), research logs, and tables with pseudonyms for privacy protection and confidentiality. Cloutier and Ravasi (2021) suggested that the essence of indexing is to aid ease of

reading, understanding, analysis, and interpretation, as well as to identify patterns and themes, immersion, and iterative reflection, while demonstrating a high level of trustworthiness in the quality of the research exercise. Braun et al. (2022) further noted that these themes have a central rallying point to which several multifaceted summaries and data may relate. Despite the multifaceted nature of the collected data, all the identified themes revolve around and return to the central focal point, as evidenced and seen in the identified theme.

The coding and analysis method as identified by Braun and Clarke (2022), included the following: (a) compilation of the data sources, interviews, and observations; (b) deconstructing of unvarying themes and patterns for code generation, (c) reconstruction of data into core themes, (d) interpreting reassembled patterns and defining nature of the themes, and (e) conclusion and detailed summary of the data narratives to contextualize and represent the findings.

Step 1: Familiarize Yourself With the Data

According to Braun and Clarke (2022), this step entails identifying the appropriate qualitative conceptual framework that underpins the project, the richness of the data, its integrity, and relevance to the project through thematic analysis. Step one also involves identifying and understanding how the various dots of the identified data connect to establish a flow. Therefore, following this step, an in-depth review of literary and scholarly works that are foundational to the chosen conceptual framework and its contribution to the researched business problem was performed.

Step 2: Generating Initial Codes

According to Braun and Clarke (2022), this step involves the interpretation of the data insights as inputs known as codes to the research process. These codes can be split into several data inputs—unique atomic data units or collapsed into a singular molecular input. These codes can also be merged with other codes or expanded, all geared toward extracting and deepening the researcher's interpretation and understanding of the data obtained. Therefore, following this step, a deep study of the various data inputs for improved understanding of their relevance and connectivity to the research topic was undertaken, as well as a systematic collaborative record-keeping and documentation process to enhance guided reflexive thematic analysis.

Step 3: Generating Initial Themes

Codes identified in the previous step serve as the bedrock (foundation) for the development of themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2022), this third step involves deep identification of patterns and trends from the generated codes through the coordinated interplay of the researcher's understanding of the data, subjectivity that fuels deep diving and insights extraction, organized conceptual frameworks, and theories that make for easy elicitation that aligns with the research purposes and aims. Therefore, I followed this step, and in-depth attention to detail was applied to identify the relevant themes and their applicability to the business.

Step 2: Reviewing Themes

The next step, according to Braun and Clarke (2022), is the review of the identified themes. This step entails both an inductive and deductive assessment of the

identified themes against a codebook or code frame, which serves as a guide for the researcher(s), toward an in-depth thematic reflexive analysis and for reliability.

Reviewing these themes facilitates an improved conceptualization of data, languages, and other insights gained from the participants, given their unique shared experiences, realities, and natural orientations (dispositions) in alignment with the research topic.

Therefore, following this step, references were made to the jotted insights while the interview sessions were replayed, to extract additional information that objectively aided the themes' review process and connection to the identified dots. The NVivo application, as the most preferred transcription tool, was used to facilitate a better transcription, review, and understanding of the identified themes

Step 5: Defining and Naming the Themes

Being able to define and name the themes is important for an objective and reliable qualitative pragmatic research experience. According to Braun and Clarke (2022), this step entails using the pattern meanings extracted from the review process to create unique themes that are highly relatable to the project, applicable to business, and deeply demonstrate the participants' responses. I, as the preferred choice for data analysis, defined and named the themes, while the NVivo application, chosen as the application of choice, verifies the themes due to the qualitative nature of the research methodology and other benefits to be derived. Being able to define and name these themes was made possible through the application of reflexive thematic analysis, which encouraged me to consistently interact with the collected data while referring to the previously collected notes for deep reflection, recursively, and deep-rooted meanings

beyond being superficial. Therefore, following this step, I identified the emergent themes and used the NVivo software application to verify the identification and naming of themes.

Step 6: Writing up

Having adhered to the first five steps noted by Braun and Clarke (2022) for the qualitative pragmatic research data analysis, the final step was the writing up, which involves clearly stating the business problem in its broader terms before narrowing it down specifically as guided by the reflexive thematic analysis journey and establishing the one's disposition as rooted and contextualized from the various engagements with both participants and other relevant literary works (resources). Adhering to this methodology reinforced my objectivity and ability to chronologically connect and demonstrate the dots, themes, and identified realities toward the reliability of the research findings and their application to the business problem. Therefore, for this step, I strictly adhered to diligent maintenance of all writing materials used during the entire research process, clearly articulated the research question as it applies to the reflexive thematic analysis of the business problem, and finally, built solid reliability in the findings of the research through a detailed and in-depth demonstration of the sequence of events.

To focus on the key themes that emerged from the data, I correlated the themes to the literature review, and intentional reflexiveness was applied to focus on those key themes. Braun and Clarke (2022) suggested that reflexivity helps determine final themes for analysis from a universe of potentially identified themes, produced at the intersection of the data, the researcher's subjectivity, and theoretical and conceptual frames. With

improved reflexive thematic analysis process, recent or new information obtained in further review of other literary works was performed even after the project. All raw data will be securely stored for 5 years.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two vital qualitative research criteria that enhance the quality and integrity of the research process and its results. Reliability and validity assess the measure of trustworthiness, error-free integrity, and consistency in item measurements over and across time, as well as the reasonableness of the drawn conclusions (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2021; Coleman, 2021). The dimensions of trustworthiness, which included dependability for reliability and credibility, transferability, and confirmability for validity, according to Singh et al. (2021), were applied. Applying these critical qualitative research criteria in the research project ensured a high-quality research project and methodological rigor.

Reliability

First, define dependability. The strategy to address dependability included effusive documentation, an interview protocol, member checking of data interpretation, and an audit trail for detail and transparency. When researchers confirm the accuracy of their understanding with participants, transparency and detailed descriptions of the rationale for their research and its implementation help the readers of their studies better evaluate their reliability (Coleman, 2021; Singh et al., 2021). Additionally, to ensure reliability, the semistructured interview protocol in the Appendix was used, wherein all the participants were asked the same questions in the same order, and all data were coded

promptly at the conclusion of the data collection period. All interviews were comparable to each other and regularly checked for consistency and to detect drift. To enhance the dependability of the research project, I employed member-checking to assess the interpretation of the collected data, validate the interview questions through experts in the research field, follow an interview protocol, and ensure that data saturation was reached.

Validity

To ensure the validity of the research project, credibility, transferability, and confirmability must be supported. To achieve the various tenets of validity according to Degeling and Rock (2020) and Lemon and Hayes (2020), member checking of data interpretation, transcript review, and triangulation of data were carried out to attain credibility.

Transferability relates to the ability to apply research findings to other contexts and settings, which in turn, facilitates repeatability (Degeling & Rock, 2020). For ease of transferability, the use of an interview protocol when collecting the data was applied to ensure thorough documentation and a transparent account of data analysis methods. The transferability process helps readers of the project assess the extent to which accurate inferences can be made with well-founded results and conclusions may be extended beyond the proposed research setting. How did your project use transferability?

To ensure confirmability, Lemon and Hayes (2020) suggested that the lived experiences of the research participants must be objectively and accurately reflected, devoid of the researcher's personal biases. I achieved confirmability by using adequate probing during the interview sessions, conducting follow-up member-checking

interviews, using triangulated data from multiple sources, and reflexive commentary were applied.

Finally, to attain data saturation, which helps to validate credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the research findings, I iteratively collected data from the participants through semistructured interviews until no new data insights were identified. Furthermore, Hennink and Kaiser (2022) posited that data saturation occurs when issues and insights regarding the phenomenon under study begin to recur, making further collection redundant and excessive.

Transition and Summary

In Section 3, the research project's ethics, population sampling, participants, and nature, including the methodology and design, were addressed. A further review of Section 3 showed data collection activities, interview questions, data organization, and analysis techniques intended to complete the research project and ensure its reliability and validity. In Section 4, I present the findings of the project, as it addresses business contributions and recommendations for professional practice, discussions on implications for social change, and recommendations for further research. Additional information is provided as it relates to the complete overview and conclusion, with a transition that contains a summary of critical points of the research.

Section 4: Findings and Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to explore strategies used by information system business managers to improve competitive drive in organizational culture, with the overarching research question being to understand what strategies information technology business managers use to improve competitive drive in organizational culture. Data were collected through audio-recorded Zoom meetings, semistructured interview sessions with seven participants who were business leaders who met the eligibility criteria. Each of the participants was uniquely identified with alphanumeric pseudonyms of P1 through P7 for confidentiality and to align with the attested ethical standards. Due to the qualitative methodology adopted, Braun and Clarke's (2023) thematic analysis was used to organize and analyze the data collected during the interview sessions. Member-checking was applied to enhance data accuracy, validity, and credibility of the findings.

NVivo 15 software was used to verify the seven identified themes: (a) leadership and role modeling, (b) organizational culture and value system, (c) employee engagement and empowerment, (d) dynamic capabilities and sustainability, (e) customer centricity and innovation, (f) continuous training and development, and (g) adaptability and resilience. These seven themes reflected the experiences and expertise of the interviewed participants and current findings, which will be connected to the conceptual framework and the literature review.

Presentation of the Findings

The seven emergent themes underpin the various leadership strategies that information technology business managers could leverage to improve the competitive drive in the organizational culture.

Theme 1: Leadership and Role Modeling

Leadership and role modeling were identified as one of the key influencers of the strategies used by information technology business managers in achieving improvement in competitive drive in organizational culture. P2 noted that leadership values and role modeling encompass the leader and their leadership behavior—approachable and simple, not building an empire, appreciative of the various collaborative efforts of the teams towards getting the job done, growth mindset or fixed mindset, willing to change or accept and support change, learn, unlearn and relearn, try and keep trying (not resting on one's oars), fail-forward, and see beyond the short-term (temporary) gains and inconveniences, with a proper understanding of the value system, impacts the organizational culture. Larsman et al. (2024) noted that functional role-modeled leadership behaviors with positive consequent actions and outcomes are easier copied by followers than non-functional behaviors due to the positive reinforcement, behavioral reward, and demonstration. Some of the participants noted that the best form of leadership is leadership by doing (by example), which makes emulation and role modeling faster and easier to adapt.

Similarly, P4 posited that due to the fast-paced changes occurring within the business environment, having the right leadership that models the right and appropriate

leadership attributes that naturally depict a high sense of excellence, determination, and grace, consistently showing up to encourage the team, with a can-do spirit, makes competitive drive improvement in an organizational culture very malleable and contagious. According to Balwant and Singh (2023), role modeling leadership involves an exhibited cognitive consciousness and attention whereby people or employees within an organization emulate and aspire to be like a particular leader whom they have observed and are drawn to, either by the values, attributes, or some uniqueness of the leader which they desire to identify with.

There are several fast-paced transitional changes associated with the information technology environment. To manage these fast-paced transitional changes effectively, business organizations require the application of transformation leadership wherein trust can be built over time and effectively managed to create an environment where people (old and new employees) are mutually challenged, deeply involved with strong task identification and ownership, guided by positivist optimism, role modeled behavior, and inspirationally supported (Alzoraiki et al., 2023; Park & Byon, 2025). In relation to the identified theme, this means that one appointed as a leader can make or mar the organizational culture, and its emergence as the information technology industry is characterized by young fellows who need direction and guidance in life, as they too aspire to be future leaders that are worthy of emulation and a power (an authority) to reckon with.

Connection to Organizational Culture Conceptual Framework

The Theme 1 finding on leadership and role modeling exemplifies one of the tenets of the organizational culture framework that deals with *espoused values*—guiding principles and rules inherent within an organization. According to Nanayakkara and Wilkinson (2021), espoused values are reflected and shown in the strategic management discourse, mission and vision statement, and other organizational structures that guide the daily activities of the business. With leadership and role modeling, organizational leaders provide the much-needed guidance, motivation, inspiration, and exemplary behavior for the employees. Most of the participants suggested that to improve competitive drive in organizational culture, leadership, their behavioral attributes, and style go a long way to sustain organizational culture, especially where such culture has been enshrined in the values of the business, given their years of existence and value delivery to their stakeholders (and shareholders).

The transformational leadership theory has been identified as one of the key supporters of role modeling for business leaders to improve competitive drive in organizational culture. Qalati et al. (2022) posited that transformational leadership fosters a healthy relationship between the leaders and their followers (employees) by demonstrating strong and positive citizenship behaviors, as leaders provide a reliable and conducive working environment that ensures innovation drives towards improved organizational performance and culture. Supporting the role modeled leadership as a strategy for improving competitive drive on organizational culture, Larsman et al. (2024) suggested that leadership role modeling is also exemplified when leaders provide social,

emotional, and intellectual safety to employees with positive psychological and behavioral reward reinforcement.

Moreover, organizational culture and its competitive drive for improvement cannot be addressed without the critical role-play of business leaders. Due to consistent and fast-paced technological advancement, business leaders must intentionally avoid being caught in the web of organizational culture downplay or degradation, as they are regarded as champions who understand the vision and mission of the organization and in like manner, work toward ensuring the sustained improvement in that organizational culture. Bagga et al. (2023) further noted that transformational business leaders help to provide the required coordination, motivation, and inspiration to ensure that the progressive and supportive organizational culture is promoted as business organizations face the dynamic impact of globalization and technological advancement. In other words, the achievement and sustenance of competitive drive in organizational culture is made feasible and possible within any business organization when there is a deep-rooted leadership anchor (buy-in), role modeled and guided by the transformational leadership agenda.

Connection to Literature Review

Leadership and role modeling are one of the strategic pillars for organizational culture improvement and competitive drive. When there are no leaders, the people live and behave according to their desires and inclinations, without appropriate guidance, support, and direction. Leaders birth role models who can inspire others to be like them, motivate others to be and do more, and provide the necessary support needed to live and

accommodate one another. This assertion resonates with Larsman et al. (2025), wherein leaders are the anchors of workplace safety behaviors, encourage constructive feedback between the employees and their line managers (seniors), provide employees with reinforceable rewards and appreciation when targets and deliverables are achieved, monitor employees for guided feedback, and safe climate to develop and share ideas for innovation and creativity. As earlier noted by P2 and P4, business leaders are to lead by example, showing the employees what they would expect from their hands as leaders, willing to take up challenges, and inspire the learning and knowledge sharing culture for the employees to emulate.

Organizational business leaders play a crucial role in building employees' careers and professional paths to greater success, which flows through the business organization for greater performance and competitive advantage. Van der Walt and Wiese (2025) suggested that business leaders who also act as role models are like compasses that show and guide the way, even during confusion. They encourage and motivate employees as team players, inspire excellence and personal development, drive organizational efficiency, and exhibit commitment and strength to achieve organizational strategic objectives. For a competitive drive in organizational culture improvement journey, Iddris et al. (2023) stated that business leaders need to emulate and imbibe the transformational leadership style of being visionary, strive for an improved and healthy employees and organizational future, encourage effective collaboration among the teams, and steer the teams and organization in the right direction of improved performance, competitive advantage, and consistent relevance.

Moreover, business leaders who are role models of competitive drive in organizational growth provide guidance and motivation to the employees to be more effective and efficient, challenge employees to become innovative and creative, encourage knowledge sharing and inspire others to feel comfortable to contributing, invite perspectives, and drive the employees to understand their role in the bigger organizational picture (Dani & Gandhi, 2022). In other words, with leadership and role models as a strategy for competitive drive improvement in organizational culture, employees experience both emotional, physical, and psychological safety, enjoy a conducive and healthy working environment, feel obliged to contribute and freely share ideas, which in turn reflects in the overall organizational performance and value-added customer delivery

Theme 2: Organizational Culture and Values

The identification of an organizational culture and values as a theme in this project reinforces the appropriateness of the identified and applied conceptual framework. P7 explained that an organizational culture and values that encourage discipline, staying focused, teamwork, and upholding the highest level of integrity for maximum returns to shareholders foster competitive drive improvement. P7 further noted that with a strong value system, transparency is upheld, customers' trust is built and reinforced, improved regulatory engagement and reporting, and a highly adaptive organizational climate is enshrined and maintained. Van der Walt and Wiese (2025) posited that organizational culture and values demonstration and reinforcement should be a daily practice within the organization and not only during crisis or conflict periods,

which makes personal reflection and alignment challenging. Being a consistent part of the organization's daily operational and strategic activities instills some sense of accountability, responsibility, leadership, communication, participation, and shared values. Likewise, Kusumawati et al. (2024) suggested that the upholding and consistent reinforcement of the organizational culture and values facilitates organizational growth and improved performance, as people practice and are guided by the organizational culture theory tenets which they highly esteem.

Furthermore, P2 noted that an organizational value system drives her organizational culture in that it reinforces acceptable and positive behaviors for its employees to abide by (internally and externally due to brand, image, and reputation preservation), monitors, tracks, and corrects where deviations are observed. Corroborating P2's input, P5 also explained that a culture of flexibility, inclusiveness, diversity, openness to sharing ideas, and friendly though disciplined, facilitates competitive drive improvement. P5 also added that an organizational culture and value system that promotes a culture (lifestyle and atmosphere) of collaboration, whereby employees are encouraged and motivated to contribute to different programs organized at intervals for innovation challenges. In the collaborating atmosphere, the management reward, appreciate, and recognize these employees for their various contributions to the growth and organizational bottom-line, are also improving the competitive drive in an organizational culture. Cremers and Curşeu (2024) noted that identifying the value system within the organization and the respective teams fosters synergies and upholding of culture, toward performance improvement, reaching desired outcomes, clear

communication of vision, and aggregation of teams and teamwork, which sees to the effective contribution of the employees to the wider organizational objectives. Hasriyanti et al. (2022) further noted that organizational performance, learnings, and adaptability is highly influenced by the availability and application of information technologies, moderated by the prevailing organizational working culture, resulting from proper management and leadership. In other words, the impact of organizational culture and value system is far-reaching.

Connection to Organizational Culture Conceptual Framework

Every business organization has a culture that can be easily identified by and values that guide its operation, both operationally and strategically. The organizational culture framework revolves around those unique attributes, norms, values, and basic assumptions that guide any given organization (Rajamani et al., 2022). From the interview sessions, most of the participants noted that when the organizational culture and values are widely known (duly communicated to all employees and equitably practiced), building on them while demanding compliance to these values from the employees, as championed by the business leaders, becomes very easy. This assertion was re-echoed by Rajamani et al.'s (2022) study, whereby a positive organizational culture driven and led by the organizational leaders is a critical facilitator and pillar for effective implementation of any health information technological implementation. Simply put, for there to be a positive improvement in organizational culture drive, the organizational leaders must champion and set the pace as people are moved to faster

achievement, recognition, and reward by the examples observed or copied from their leaders.

Moreover, with the review of several literary works on organizational culture and values, one can deduce that organizational culture and value system differs from one organization to another. According to Azeem et al. (2021), organizational culture is the shared and/or mutual values, beliefs, and perceptions of the organization and the environment (Schein, 1992); to another, culture can be creative, supportive, quality, and productive culture (Rowe et al., 1994); and another, culture entails adaptability and mission - externally oriented or involvement and consistency - internally oriented (Denison & Mishra, 1995). The organizational culture and values are born out of the consistent interactions of the employees among themselves and their operating environment. The culture guides the behavior of the organization and its employees, guides the morale, performance, and productivity, dictates the values and the working environment, determines the engagement level of the employees and the job satisfaction derived (Soni et al., 2022). That means, the organizational culture is that unwritten but prevalent working aura that guides every activity within the organization, from its values to the employees' management and engagement, job satisfaction, collaboration, leadership, performance, and overall productivity.

Connection to Literature Review

Every organization has a culture and values for which they are known or can be identified. From P1–P7, they noted that these cultures and values are the remarkable patterns on the fabrics of each business organization, woven daily, and guide the

operational activities up to the brand reputation and external engagements. Van der Walt and Wiese (2025) noted that organizational culture and values define the behaviors of their employees, the working environment, and determine their recruitment potential and behavior as it relates to the type of person employed within the organization. In other words, organizations tend to employ people who will align and run with the organizational culture and values without tarnishing the age-long efforts invested in building it. Chigangaidze (2022) further illustrated the role of organizational values and culture with the Ubuntu philosophy, wherein the organization is likened to a community of people, mutually guided by their values and culture that emphasizes humanness, caring and sharing, mutual respect, and community living while giving back to the organization (community) through their commitments and deliverables.

Organizational culture and values as a strategy for competitiveness drive improvement. Cremers and Curşeu (2024) posited that with organizational culture, values are built and enshrined into the organizational system, employees are empowered as teams and units where their resources are unified toward achieving the bigger organizational objectives, flexibility and versatility is leveraged, knowledge sharing is facilitated and personal development is empowered. Bagga et al. (2023) showed that organizational culture and values, as championed by transformational leadership, breed coordination among teams, whether physical or virtual teams, with effective change management. Bagga et al. further noted that organizational culture and values make for improved performance, a supportive and productive business environment for agile enhancement toward tackling the dynamic impact of globalization and technological

advancement. Similarly, Wanto's (2021) study illustrated the connections between organizational culture, organizational learning, information technology, competitive strategy, and company performance. In this study, Wanto discovered that small and medium-scale business owners pay less attention to employee relationships, resulting from poor organizational culture and learning capabilities as promoted by business management. This connection, according to Wanto, shows a negative impact on the organizational performance, effectiveness, and efficiency, but can be remedied if the business owners intentionally create a positive and humane organizational culture and values that support leadership and subordinate relationships, facilitate employees' skills improvement, and competence development.

Theme 3: Employee Engagement and Empowerment

Every organization has employees who are its assets that make things happen. Employee engagement and empowerment as another powerful theme identified from this data analysis due to the critical role in ensuring that strategies and business objectives are achieved. P2 suggested that the organization has a heart with emotions and feelings, geared toward ensuring that the people are psychologically safe, duly empowered, and the environment is conducive enough to allow employees' expression. Employee engagement is a matter taken very seriously, whereby the pulse and everyday living of these employees are evaluated through the annual exercise called "are you a fan" (AYAF), an anonymous program wherein the employees provide honest feedback on personal issues and treatment, the organization and its working environment, line managers, and peers' assessment. As engaged and empowered employees demonstrate

strong ties and affective commitment to the organization (Kaur & Mittal, 2020), go for extra role performance with job satisfaction and reduced turnover (Iwan et al., 2025), the competitive drive in organizational culture is enhanced. Where employees are engaged and empowered, the demonstration of affective trust and willingness to take up additional responsibilities comes naturally with them, and their commitment gets recognized and duly rewarded.

In the same vein, P1 noted that with employee engagement and empowerment, customer centricity improves, allowing for proactive listening and solving, thereby filling the gaps (satisfaction needs of the customer) left unsolved by competitors. P1 went further and suggested that for a company to be customer-centric, one has to be people-focused (almost like second nature). So, the team is very important because the teams are made up of employees with diverse perspectives and capabilities that must be consistently engaged, motivated, and appreciated to provide the kind of service that one expects for the customer. Employee empowerment fosters trust, motivation, commitment, and encourages participation between them and their line managers (AlKahtani et al., 2021; Uddin, 2023). An employee value proposition exists, which goes beyond just the remuneration to include training and development, career path and mobility, and also different offerings with workplace environment flexibility to ensure that the staff also feels valued. Borrego and Orgambidez (2024) suggested that more efforts should be put in by organizational HR professionals to build and instill an environment that fosters positive and healthy working conditions that will motivate the employees to demonstrate affective and emotional organizational attachment, willingness to give their best, and be

proud to be associated with it. Aligning with the idiomatic expression “it takes two to tango” validates that for an employee to demonstrate affective and emotional organizational attachment while giving their best, it requires a joint effort between the organizational leaders and the employees, each deliberately playing their role to achieve the desired strategic objectives.

Connection to Organizational Culture Conceptual Framework

Employee engagement and empowerment cannot be complete without having the right organizational culture as its guiding foundation. An improved, positive, and healthy organizational culture determines the engagement and empowerment level of employees. Soni et al. (2022) posited that employees are empowered and engaged only in a mutually conducive environment that permits collaboration, knowledge sharing, psychological and emotional safety, and balancing, building blocks for fostering and promoting positive energy, motivation, and involvement, and an enabler for innovation. All the participants, in one way or another, stressed the importance and impact of organizational culture on employees’ engagement and empowerment. P2 and P3 noted that a positive and healthy organizational culture makes for satisfied and happy employees. Other participants stated that improved organizational culture, as directed and exemplified by the business leaders, gives morale boost, encourages innovation and passion for knowledge sharing, improves performance and productivity, breeds a mutually beneficial environment, facilitates passion for personal development, encourages innovation challenges (programs), reduces employee burnout, and turnover despite the work pressure.

Furthermore, attaining maximum employee participation in tasks and role execution requires a deeper intellectual and psychological understanding of the employees. Employee engagement and empowerment also inculcate understanding of the physiological and physical conditions that guide an employee's role execution within any organization (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021; Kahn, 1990). These physiological and physical conditions include obtaining meaningfulness, safety, availability, and unhindered expression of oneself cognitively, emotionally, and physically. Similarly, P2 suggested that empowered and engaged employees do not need to be coerced into delivering their respective tasks and responsibilities, as they feel connected and committed toward ensuring that the organization stands out. P5 also described empowered and engaged employees as ones who constantly challenge themselves to do more (get involved the more), satisfied with their respective role deliveries even without the observing eyes of their seniors and by so doing, their managers are happy to nominate them for exchange or secondment roles whenever it is available. Corroborating the above feedback shared by the participants, E. P. (2022) identified that organizational culture births employee engagement and empowerment as demonstrated by the employees' flexibility and receptiveness to ideas and constructive guidance, innovatively and creatively challenged, go far and beyond the norm, willing to contribute, and setting the organization up for competitive advantage which might be hard to be rivaled. Purposeful employees voluntarily give back to the organization through their deep commitment, as they witness and enjoy the creative and innovative working environment that supports their growth and development.

Connection to Literature Review

Considering the identified strategy, employee empowerment and engagement as a contributing strategy for organizational culture competitive drive improvement, reinforces the importance of these assets (employees) to success, survival, competitive advantage, adaptability, and resilience of the business. According to Dani and Gandhi (2022), there are certain essential conditions that must be fulfilled and implemented to enable employee engagement and empowerment, which in turn fosters employee creativity. They include, but are not limited to, positively minded and transformational leadership, organizational support in generating new ideas, allowing employees to take risks, and empowering and encouraging them through participatory decision-making. Moreso, with engaged and empowered employees, the robustness of the organizational culture and values is tested. Bui and Le (2023) and Alam et al. (2021) suggested that with empowered and engaged employees, there is a reduction in turnover rate, increased talent retention, a healthy and balanced workforce, with impact visibly seen in the productivity growth, reduced customer complaints, improved customer satisfaction, and high recommendation for the organizational brand (brand reputation). Though several papers, articles, and journals have been written on employee engagement with some consensus and others divergent views on the roles of organizational culture in empowering employees. However, Bui and Le stated that organizational culture defines the values inherent within the organization, guides the behavioral attitudes of the employees, builds the shared knowledge among the employees, facilitates competitive performance, and improves customer experience. Business organizations are deemed non-existent and

without a tangible value-add proposition if there is no overarching and supportive culture or value system by which they could be identified. The strategic business goals tend to become a mirage (difficult to achieve) as there are no guiding principles or values to instruct both the leaders and employees per time (everyone does what they like at will).

In addition, an improved organizational culture makes for a happy employee. With employee engagement and empowerment revolving around the inner state of mind, that is, physically, emotionally, and mentally stable, committed, and passionate as noted by Chanana and Sangeeta (2021), engaged and empowered employees will always care about their effort, work, and performance, their healthy interpersonal relationships with others, and how their contributions feed into the bigger organizational picture, bind them together and ensure a deep-rooted satisfaction.

Theme 4: Dynamic Capabilities and Sustainability

The dynamic capabilities of every business organization are reflected in their employees' uniqueness (organizational assets), organizational attributes, culture, and resources that can either be imitated or are peculiar to them. These unique dynamic capabilities are demonstrated in their day-to-day activities, which cumulate toward fostering and building the organizational sustainability drive over time. Teece et al. (1997), Teece (2007), and Ceicyte-Pranskune (2025) noted that dynamic capabilities revolve around the business's ability to integrate, leverage, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to successfully deal with the fast-paced environmental changes toward improving competitive advantage and business sustainability. In other words, the ability of any business organization, irrespective of its industry of operation, is

dependent on its ability to build and harness its dynamic capabilities toward relevance and sustainability. P6 noted that consistent training and leveraging the various upskilling opportunities presented by the relevant professional and academic associations help to strengthen the team, give them a rooted understanding of the changes and their implications on the environment, employees, and business operations, and prepare them to confidently surmount any challenges that might arise.

In addition, P1 suggested that as the customers are the *king* of the business, having matched dynamic capabilities facilitate smoother and faster customer-centric services and products purely designed based on the customers' feedback while identifying and filling the gaps left by the competition. By filling the gap left by the competition, the business organization, through its programs, initiatives, and strategic business drives, offers diverse opportunities where the employees are given an equal playing field to participate and showcase their unique dynamic capabilities through various programs, toward solving for the customers and for business sustainability. Wided (2022) posited that attaining business sustainability first starts with adequate evaluation and harnessing of the dynamic capabilities of the business resources for proper positioning, utilization, and alignment for improved competitive advantage. Where there is full application of identified organizational dynamic capabilities (internal and external), the competitive drive for improved organizational culture becomes easier, flexible, and highly adaptable for competitive advantage and business sustainability.

Connection to Organizational Culture Conceptual Framework

Theme 4 findings further emphasize the sound contribution and foundational role-play of organizational culture in building, empowering, and supporting the employees towards harnessing the dynamic capabilities within the organization to ensure business sustainability. E. P. (2022) suggested that for any business organization to identify and harness the dynamic capabilities and to ensure sustainability, the perceived organizational support from the employees must be strong and positive. This strong and positive perceived organizational support must demonstrate the organizational readiness to support their employees in every way possible, create a healthy atmosphere, offer supervisory and supportive commitments, recognitions, and growth opportunities—all embedded in the organizational culture and value system.

Some of the interview participants noted that every organization is blessed with unique capabilities that cut across their responsible teams and units, but the ability to identify and tap into these assets lies in the effectiveness of the organizational culture and value system driven by the business leaders to ensure its sustainability. Dynamic capabilities, according to Teece (2018) and Haider et al. (2022), refer to an organization's ability to perceive, identify, seize, and transform its resources in response to the changing operational environment. Komkowski et al. (2025) further suggested that the efficiency of dynamic capabilities lies in the ability of any business organization to quickly evaluate the operating environment, identify resources that can be leveraged toward integration, reuse, and realignment to ward-off the competition and retain a competitive advantage.

In the same vein, the sustainability of business organizations can be tied to their dynamic capabilities, which distinguish them from other business organizations and help them build strong systems and processes around these assets to attain a competitive advantage. Having the right organizational culture and its consistent improvement supports an organization's dynamic capabilities, competency drive, and positive energy that are flexible, rare, not easily imitated, adaptive, and resilient, enabling it to sustain competitive advantage.

Connection to Literature Review

Dynamic capabilities and sustainability are among the business strategies tested while assessing the competitiveness of any organizational culture. As noted earlier by the interview participants, the dynamic capabilities are the rare treasures of any business organization that can be leveraged toward improved productivity, competitive advantage, resilience, and sustainability. These capabilities become pressured and meaningfully valued when the business organization undergoes challenging circumstances. According to Wided (2022) and Teece et al. (1997), for any organizational capabilities to be called dynamic, it must be those abilities and potentials that are not in their daily normal or ordinary use of operations, capabilities that are rare, immutable, valuable, comprise of a heterogeneous mix of resources and skills that are critical to the sustainability and competitive advantage of the business. Similarly, Seo et al. (2021) posited that dynamic capabilities are those capabilities developed and harnessed primarily during organizational rapid response and evolutionary adjustment to innovation and creativity crises to be adaptive and demonstrate their competitive advantage. Dynamic capabilities

are nurtured through an organization's intentional integration, resource-based collaboration, knowledge-based sharing, and reconfigured interactions with environmental changes toward creating and developing new economic opportunities (Seo et al., 2021). Simply put, dynamic capabilities are not static, not rigid, or non-adaptive. They stem from the in-depth evaluation of the business organization in response to the economic and environmental changes aimed at ensuring business sustainability and competitive advantage.

In addition, with dynamic capabilities and sustainability as a strategic pillar for improving competitive drive in organizational culture, business leaders are mandated to perform an inward assessment of the existing organizational culture and values, its flexibility, responsiveness, and adaptability to ensure that all available resources and opportunities are leveraged and maximized. In Peng's (2025) study of understanding the role of international strategic alliance and dynamic internationalization capability in building competitive advantage for SMEs - evidence from Taiwan, the author noted that dynamic capabilities can be groomed internally or externally through networked alliances, enhanced through expertise acquisition and knowledge sharing. The impact of these groomed dynamic capabilities on organizational performance can be seen through the various reformative and exploratory changes in response to the prevailing economic and environmental changes. The same impact can be internationalized through intentional performance improvement assessments, continuous learning, resource-based resilience, and adaptability strategies. P7 linked this dynamic capability and sustainability to an organizational readiness in response to the environment and constant customer changes in

tastes and preferences. Corroborating the feedback shared by P7, Phalswal et al. (2024) stated that dynamic capabilities and sustainability strategy involve encompassing workforce reconfiguration and supply-chain restructuring, co-innovation and knowledge combination, network establishment and sustainable enterprise strategy, and integration of leaders' managerial and operational capabilities as the driver and influencer of them all.

Theme 5: Customer Centricity and Innovation

Customer centricity revolves around placing the customer at the heart of everything done by the business toward ensuring a satisfied customer with a positive experience. According to P1, the organizational culture revolves around having a strong customer-centricity drive and an ambitious innovation set, through collaborative engagement. Due to its heightened importance to the business goals and strategic objectives, the organizational culture is centered on ensuring that all teams work together to achieve milestones for the customer, solve problems for the customer through innovative ways, deliver value-add services and products for the customer, understand the needs and concerns of the customer, and apply the firm's resources through intelligent customer interactions and engagements emphasis. Galbraith (2011), Lamberti (2013), Ulaga (2018), and Wunderlich et al. (2025) noted that customer centricity and innovation also entail understanding the distinctive customer needs and employing a firm's resources to develop solutions that cater to them. Key capabilities (expertise) for improving customer-centricity include obtaining customer intelligence, actively engaging with customers on relevant marketing and innovation efforts, and shifting the focus from

products or services to delivering a comprehensive value-added customer experience.

Wunderlich et al. further suggested that a firm's customer-centricity approach comprises four key processes: interactive CRM, customer integration, internal integration, and external integration.

Furthermore, P7 posited that upholding customer-centricity and innovation consist of the organizational intentionality to deliver top-notch services and products in alignment with the customers' expectations, through finding blue ocean strategies that can be leveraged to ensure equitable and fair market play, constant update to the customers on the environmental and industry happenings, timely, accurate, complete and adequate information to the customers on their financial health (wellbeing) to aid informed decision making. Iddris et al. (2023) identified that whilst business organizations strive to maintain and sustain customer-centricity, having innovative-minded employees facilitates and makes that journey achieve greater success with commendable milestones. Employees with innovative mindsets reflect and put forward their domain-relevant skills and intrinsic potentials with greater room for improvement to learn and adapt quickly while harnessing the various opportunities presented by information technology to ensure top-notch services and products are rendered, and they are happily engaged.

Connection to Organizational Culture Conceptual Framework

Customer centricity and innovation, as it relates to the organizational culture framework, stems from the understanding that the culture prevalent within any organization determines what they prioritize and allocate strategic resources for its finite

execution. With the customer being the king of the business, several business organizations solve and work for the customer-focused and driven. P1 stated that their organizational culture revolves around customer-centricity, whereby everything performed by the business in their respective units and teams prioritizes the customer—how to make the customer fees better and happier while using their products and services. To fulfill this demand of customer-centricity, Ford and Yoho (2025) noted that every customer-centric journey begins with empathy. The ability to empathize with the customer shows a deeper understanding and connection with the customer's choices, needs, and preferences, which cannot be overlooked or allowed for the competition to overtake.

However, this customer-centricity and innovation do not just start and end with empathy. The business, through its responsible units and teams, proceeds to define these customer needs, ideate (invite perspectives and share ideas with the sole purpose of positive customer experience), prototype, and tests to ensure adequate alignment with the customers' expectations (Ford & Yoho, 2025). With organizational culture as the foundational pillar of prioritizing customers' needs as king, these needs become the central focal point for the business and enable continual review and adaptation toward offering the most memorable positive customer experience and satisfaction necessary in today's world, and foster lifelong customer relationships

Connection to Literature Review

Customer-centricity and innovation revolve around the customer as the king of the business. How does the organizational culture support the provision of solutions to

customers and their needs? Is the organizational culture competitive enough to address the dynamic needs of the customers while leveraging the gap left uncovered (unattended) by the competition? P1, in agreement with other participants, noted that though organizational culture should be people-centric, it should also cover and spur the employees toward having customer satisfaction and a positive experience at the center of every action, deliverable, team tasks, stakeholders' collaborative engagement, and the organization's bigger picture. Bring another dimension to this strategy in consideration of the persistent technological advancement and impact of big data, Nguyen et al. (2024) and Acciarini et al. (2023) noted that in a big data-driven organizational culture, business leaders and the organizational culture—values, beliefs, and norms are guided by the amount of big data amassed and utilized by the business toward creativity, innovation, and digitization. This big data-driven organizational culture consistently nudges and prompts business leaders to take intentional and conscious steps in real-time to address changing business processes and customers' demands, update and align workflows and process routines, and transform organizational structure, culture, and systems to identify, harness, and effectively utilize competencies.

In the same vein, solving for customer-centricity encourages prioritizing existing customers and their satisfaction over the cost of acquiring new customers. For the customers and innovation entails identifying customer retention strategies over the hassles of fresh acquisitions, adequate customer segmentation with big data, personalized customer experiences with available data to reduce asymmetric information, geared toward ensuring connectivity, modularity, and compatibility (Acciarini et al., 2023). In

other words, the use of big data, enshrined in the organizational culture, fosters shared values, a conducive environment, mutual respect, and understanding that instills optimal focus on the customers and positive experience in the minds of the employees. Soni et al. (2022) equally suggested that to ensure consistent value-added services, products, and impact on the customers and for innovation, business leaders should inculcate the insights garnered from big data, networking, alliances, and other engagements to make the customer experience a long-lasting one. With the gathering of big data and the extraction of business insights from the analyzed data, business leaders are well-positioned to make informed decisions, monitor trends and patterns, and effectively leverage emerging business opportunities.

Theme 6: Continuous Training and Development

Continuous training and development have been identified as a major contributor to the growth and organizational culture improvement for every business organization, just like the saying goes, one begins to die when one stops learning. Continuous training and development through knowledge sharing, either within the organization (internally organized) or externally anchored, helps businesses to keep abreast of the changes, exchange ideas among teams, and retain consistent relevance within their respective operating industries. P5 suggested that the organization is consistently improved for innovativeness and creativity as employees adequately participate in effective communication and collaboration, which allows for free flow and sharing of ideas.

Training sessions are also organized for the employees to familiarize themselves with the organizational culture, personal development, and maximum delivery in their

role functions. Azeem et al. (2021) noted that through knowledge sharing, as espoused in continuous training and development, the creativity and innovation capabilities of business organizations are promoted and accelerated. With continuous training and development, new business opportunities are identified, conducive working environments are created for the transmission of information (data and ideas) toward solving critical/complex business problems, new ways of work improvement are identified, maximization of organizational ability to manage its knowledge resources (capabilities), and finally, business goals are achieved more efficiently.

Similarly, P6 stated that due to the technicality and consistent dynamic changes experienced in the industry of operation toward ensuring relevance and adequate competitiveness, training sessions are organized bi-weekly to educate and keep the employees duly informed of these changes, perform their duties with all diligence and excellence, and confidently compete for business opportunities wherever they find themselves. According to Park and Joo (2022), continuous training and development by way of learning is a knowledge enhancement methodology through the adoption and development of new skills, and the mastery of new circumstances and challenges. With continuous training and development, business organizational leaders build empowered teams with a growth mindset that challenges, identifies new opportunities, and leverages the same toward improved competitive advantage, balanced knowledge of the organizational culture, and well-prepared leadership for tomorrow's relevance. Continuous training and development through knowledge sharing, anchored by the organizational leadership helps to identify areas of improvement, improves people's

innovative and quality knowledge base toward assessing satisfaction and knowledge utility, enhances work quality output and ownership, and builds strong cohesive teams (Sahibzada et al., 2022, 2024). To build and maintain a strong, cohesive team, free flow of ideas in the form of knowledge sharing and other forms of personnel development must be encouraged and practiced. Continuous updates in alignment with the business's current realities must be upheld.

Connection to Organizational Culture Conceptual Framework

For every business organization to excellently navigate through the consistent prevalent changes within their respective industries of operation, such a business organization must be a learning and continuously improving one. Continuous training and development must be embedded into the fiber of the organizational culture for the organization to remain relevant and sustainable. Most of the participants rightly noted that one begins to die when he/she ceases to learn—reinforcing the paradigm of learn, unlearn, and relearn. Haider et al. (2022) stated that any organization that identifies itself as a person-fit organization must be readily available to give training, learning, and knowledge sharing its priority, as their success is dependent on the availability and utilization of the information by the employees to drive creativity and innovation.

With the guiding organizational culture framework, the training of all employees and personal development are emphasized, and employees are empowered to take charge of their personal development, which in turn translates to increased productivity, performance improvement, and sustained competitive advantage. However, achieving and imbuing the continuous culture of training and development cannot be complete

without the leadership who must be seen as champions and drivers of this strategic move. Sindakis et al. (2024) explored the role of leadership in fostering and promoting a positive organizational culture through knowledge sharing in driving organizational innovation and improved performance. The authors noted that in applying this strategy—continuous training and development, a conscious effort must be made to encourage the business leaders to adopt the transformational leadership style where business leaders motivate, inspire, and promote healthy and positive relationships that support collaboration, a culture of proactiveness, precise vision formulation, and communication; while facilitating employee engagement and commitment. In other words, the achievement of employee engagement and commitment to organizational objectives comes under serious threat where there is no management commitment to train and develop the workforce. The organization also stands to lose the best of its talents and skilled potential to competitors, which jeopardizes its competitive advantage mission.

Connection to Literature Review

A learning organization is a growing organization. A learning organization is a testament to social evolution that values and prioritizes its people's (employees') training and personal development for talent retention, improved productivity, and positively satisfied customers (Park & Joo, 2022). In further consideration, Park and Joo (2022) observed that to achieve improved organizational culture, there is a need for the organizational leadership to drive the social capital of the business through effective knowledge sharing, as it is proven to facilitate organizational oneness among the employees, which in turn drives organizational innovation. With leadership and improved

organizational culture, employees have a sense of belonging, mutual respect, willingness to share ideas, and understanding through effective collaboration, which instills a high level of social togetherness. This high level of social togetherness ignites the innovative drive of the business organization, which in turn sustains competitive advantage.

Reflecting on the interview participants' feedback, they noted that learning and personal development cannot be over-emphasized as it identifies and draws the intellectual resources of the organization to optimal utilization, through ensuring flexibility, effective collaboration, knowledge and ideas sharing, participation in innovation program challenges, and consistent building of the next generation business leaders.

Moreover, a learning organization cannot be said to be against promoting employee involvement and development, as learning stems from the innate culture inherent within the organization. Luo et al. (2023) observed that when and where knowledge resources, training, and personnel development are absorbed, interacted with, influenced, and transformed, a conducive environment is created, which makes for creativity and innovation. A continuously trained and development-minded business organization that has a knowledge-sharing policy enshrined as part of the organizational culture makes learning, knowledge sharing, integration, and structural acclimatization easier and faster, which in turn builds agility and high adaptability into the organization and its processes. Qalati et al. (2022) also suggested that with continuous training and development, employees are happy with their bosses (leaders) as they emulate and desire to learn and grow, employee creativity and abilities are improved, organizational competitiveness is increased, staff turnover is reduced, and talent mapping is achieved as

it aligns with the organizational training strategy and culture. In other words, organizational culture improvement and competitiveness facilitate continuous training and development toward ensuring that all employees are engaged and the organizational culture is constantly improved.

Theme 7: Adaptability and Resilience

Having adaptability and resilience as the last identified theme points to the correlational behavior that connects these identified themes. From the first theme - understanding leadership and role modeling, to the second theme - organizational culture and values, through to employee engagement and empowerment, dynamic capabilities and sustainability, customer centricity and innovation, continuous training and development, and finally, this last theme - ensuring adaptability and resilience, one can attest to the existing significant relationship. In other words, business adaptability and resilience cannot be solved for, in isolation from the first six themes. Business adaptability and resilience facilitate quick and purposeful navigation, with effective mastery of the market (operating environment) dynamics. P5 posited that to build organizational resilience and adaptability, employees are encouraged to collaborate effectively, come up with ideas, engage in the presentation of these ideas to the management for consideration, and the management, in return, evaluates all possible scenarios to assess its readiness to any eventuality. Suryani and Dwiputra (2025) noted that to enhance organizational resilience and adaptability, a thorough assessment of their innovation capability, employees' engagement, organizational agility, and other operational efficiency drivers is key. The attainment of adaptability and resilience reflects

the organizational culture improvement drive and competitiveness in the face of market dynamics and changing business climates.

In addition, P7 suggested that to ensure adaptability and business resilience, consistent internal evaluation should be done by the organization to track and monitor itself. Externally, a competitive analysis is also done between the organization and other industry players to ensure standardization alignment, enforcement of best practices, consistent business relevance, sustained and entrenched market leadership (in services, products, and value offerings), improved competitive edge, and finally, sustained leadership and customer obsession values and identities. Internal and external evaluation help manage the organizational thought process as they continue to think as leaders and continue to drive the right culture. Choong et al. (2023) stated that an organization's ability to drive the right culture, create strong business value, compete advantageously (domestically and internationally), offer customer-centric products and services, and ensure relevance despite the market dynamics is dependent on its adaptability and resilience strategies (strength). Performing internal and external evaluation also demonstrates the organizational ability to leverage the various opportunities presented by information technology and supporting capabilities.

Connection to Organizational Culture Conceptual Framework

Theme 7 finding of adaptability and resilience sums up the entire themes and their connection to the conceptual framework of organizational culture. As the business organization goes through its daily journey in ensuring that the right and healthy organizational values and culture are embedded, it must not lose focus that all strategies

adopted or yet to be adopted by business leaders have the end game of ensuring adaptability and resilience, especially when it matters most. Adaptability and resilience are two sides of the same coin in that one cannot exist or be said to be complete without the other, though distinct, but are connected to one another—a resilient business organization is one that is highly adaptive to the various changes and updates within its surrounding business environment, and vice versa. According to Choong et al. (2023), an adaptive and resilient business organization is one that has enshrined adaptive and resilient variables as part of its organizational culture, taking advantage of various conditions and changes within its environment, absorbing the environmental variability and proactively building smart recovery and resilient capabilities toward strategic positioning and competitive advantage. The resilience and adaptability propensity of business organizations are tested and reflected in their capability to smartly leverage all possible recovery strategies and opportunities inherent in their operating environment.

In connection with the organizational culture conceptual framework, the participants agreed that adaptability and resilience do not come by chance nor drop overnight. It comes through intentional and dedicated hard work of building a positive and healthy environment, promoting culture that fosters employees' engagement and empowerment, building, designing and solving for the customers (from the customer's perspective), deliberate action to train, share knowledge, and continuously develop, identify and harness the dynamic capabilities that drive innovation and sustainability, as embedded as part of the organizational culture that must be consistently improved.

Connection to Literature Review

The end result of every competitive drive improvement in an organizational culture is to ensure that the business is highly adaptive and resilient. Adaptability and resilience, as attested by the interview participants, are the two sides of a coin wherein a highly adaptive business organization steers its operational and strategic moves toward leveraging all possible opportunities presented by the various changes within the industry and economy to build resilience. By building adaptability and resilience, business organizational leaders intentionally employ transformational leaders who drive the positive organizational culture and values to empower and engage their employees through training and continuous development, inculcate into the culture, a conducive working environment where employees freely connect and integrate into the bigger organizational picture and clear vision, through the inspiration and motivational guidance of their transformational business leaders, toward innovation and competitive advantage (Nguyen et al., 2023). Another rationale for adaptability and resilience is the level of investment in employee engagement, job satisfaction, supportive organizational culture and values, leadership structure, and working environment as they significantly impact the productivity dynamics, performance propensity, and competitiveness of the business (Adinew, 2024). This simply means that the ability of any business organization to be resilient and adaptive lies in the foundational and conscious efforts plowed into the organization, its running (operations), cultures and values, and the prevailing leadership atmosphere positioned to effectively utilize its resources.

Business organizations' resilience and adaptability capabilities are consistently tested through service disruptions, economic challenges, pandemic outbreak, and other unforeseen circumstances. Traynor et al. (2024) stated that business adaptability and resilience-building involve conscious complex interactions (networks and alliances), identifying opportunities created by whatever inconveniences posed by those circumstances (disruptions), identifying new and smarter ways (agile business models) of ensuring nil service and product delivery disruptions, and leveraging on technologies and customer interactions. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2021) noted that organizational resilience is a fundamental determinant of an organization's capacity to successfully and effectively navigate crises and business disruptions. These findings from Chen et al.'s (2021) study increasingly affirm my analytical statement that resilient and adaptive business organizations possess and harness their dynamic capabilities, which distinguish and enhance their capacity for market adaptation, bolstering (sustaining) their propensity to maintain relevance, competitiveness, and responsiveness amid market/industry changes.

Business Contributions and Recommendations for Professional Practice

The findings of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry contribute to professional practice by highlighting the various strategies information technology organizational business leaders can apply to build and improve the competitive drive of their respective organizational culture. The highlighted strategies show the flow and synergy that exist between the organizational conceptual framework, transformational leadership theory, and dynamic capabilities as enshrined in the resource-based view theory, among other

discussed strategies. Starting from the organizational culture framework as the foundational framework, it is evident that an organizational culture determines its values, purposes, and beliefs, which, invariably, influences the employees and their relationships (internally and externally). This learning can guide the information technology business leaders, among other business leaders, to evaluate, understand, and build only on those organizational cultures that make the employees proud, comfortable, and voluntarily willing to go the extra mile, irrespective of the workload. Gheorghe and Muntean (2024) stated that an organizational culture defines employees' behaviors, whether verbal or non-verbal, and impacts their personality since the culture is an accumulation of shared values and experiences built and guided over time, passed and practiced among the employees of the organization.

An organizational culture is also reflected in the service delivery, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance (productivity). Wanto (2021) posited that, to obtain the best from the employees, especially in the tasks and deliverables already mastered and owned by the employees, there is an urgent need to ensure that the prevailing organizational culture creates and supports the requisite positive and healthy working environment for both the senior managers and their subordinates. Moreso, the prevailing organizational culture determines the atmosphere and image of the organization internally and externally. These findings add color and better reflection to the study of Abduraimi et al. (2023) which stated that as new employees are recruited into the organization, the organizational culture seen or practiced communicates a clear message on what the organization stands for, how they are guided, what are the goals and

expectations from the new recruits as they immerse themselves into the system, and the brand image at large, which in turn, determines their loyalty, commitment, trust in the process, work and justice procedures. This simply means that organizational culture cannot be left to chance or handled lightly, because it can either make or mar an organization in all its ramifications.

Flowing from the role of the organizational culture as a strategy to the leadership style, the role and contribution to the professional practice for information technology business leaders to adopt the transformational leadership style to achieve the desired results and objectives. Due to the consistent technological advancements experienced in the information technology industry whose impact is spreading rapidly to other industries, information technology business leaders, among many other business leaders can support and drive the desired organizational culture, values, and atmosphere which they seek to be evident within the business and the industry at large, especially among the Gen-Zs and Gen-Alpha who tend to lose touch of humane and passionate communication (Zierock et al., 2025). Nguyen et al. (2023) suggested that transformational leaders create the type of environment that they desire to experience through idealized influence and inspirational motivation. By creating the environment that they desire to see, they create an engagement process for themselves and the employees and inspire followers (employees) to attain their fullest potential.

Furthermore, improvement in the organizational culture's competitive drive leans on the transformational leaders' contribution to drive the desired change as change agents. Iddris et al (2023) stated that transformational leaders drive the change, clearly

communicate the vision and mission to the employees, and express charisma through listening and inviting perspectives. They encourage others, take responsibility whether things go right or wrong, appreciate the employees for their contributions, no matter how little, and create an opportunity to attain greater and smarter goals by striving for the ultimate (Nguyen, 2023; Pilone, 2021). Corroborating the findings from this study, Qalati et al. (2022) noted that with and under a transformational leadership, employees willingly develop and exhibit organizational citizenship behavior, which is reflected in their commitment, engagement, loyalty, and increased productivity. Transformational business leaders drive and champion the desired change they expect to see in their organization by applying the key constructs of the transformational leadership theory - idealized influence attribute, idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual motivation, and individualized consideration (Qalati et al., 2022). Similarly, Khan et al.'s (2020) study on the interplay of leadership styles and innovative work behavior posited that transformational leadership fosters and facilitates creativity and innovation, as there is flexibility within the system that encourages free flow or sharing of knowledge (ideas). With the smooth interplay of leadership styles and innovative work behavior, driven by the organizational champions (transformational leaders) comes the intellectual inspiration that facilitates the dealing of workplace issues from their roots with intellectual motivation to empower employees for greater achievements and personal development.

Transformational leadership drives and improves the process, too, not just the culture, as can be exemplified in today's professional practice. According to Kloutsiniotis et al. (2022), although every industry has its attributive stress and crisis, with

transformational leadership as an adapted leadership style for organizational culture, competitive drive improvement, there is an adequate management mechanism built into the system. This organizationally built-in system helps employees to overcome possible stresses and burnout and improve the employees' development process. The same organizationally built-in system further reinforces trust and humane process-oriented systems, satisfies employees' extrinsic needs, and enhances effective team cohesion during crisis and crisis management. These literary reviews on the organizational culture contributions to business and professional practice underpin its far-reaching impact on every arm of the organization, whether they be employees, business leaders, cultures and values, productivity, network alliances, adaptability, and sustainability.

Moving to other strategies and their contributions, which include but are not limited to customer centricity, identification of dynamic capability, continuous training and knowledge sharing, employee engagement and empowerment, adaptability, and resilience, reinforces the deep interconnectivity that exists among these strategies and their far-reaching impact on business organizations, irrespective of their industry of operation. One can see the identified themes interplay in the information technology industry, for example, where there have been huge, recorded successes in ways of doing business, employee, and stakeholder engagement. Kloutsiniotis et al. (2022) identified that the prevailing culture within any organization impacts HR practices and strategies, shapes employees' skills according to requirements, improves working conditions, boosts employee satisfaction, and work productivity. Dalain (2023) also stated that where there is a positive, healthy working culture, measurement of employees' goal congruence in

alignment with the organizational expectations is easier, which makes for improved employees' needs assessment for better empowerment, training, engagement, continuous training, and knowledge sharing. On the other hand, Phalswal et al. (2024) suggested that identifying and harnessing the dynamic capabilities of an organization is facilitated through knowledge sharing, training, and continuous development for improved employee engagement and an adaptive, sustainable business strategy, with sound organizational performance as reflected in the satisfaction level of the customers. With knowledge sharing, consistent training, and development, employees are empowered to work together, solve problems with innovative solutions discovered and shared, build trust, and foster a conducive working environment.

The findings of this project can be leveraged by the broader manufacturing, academic community, and SMEs for effective organizational culture improvement, strategy utilization, and management, as these drastic changes call for drastic measures to ensure competitive advantage, adaptability, and sustainability. Luo et al. (2023) posited that a healthy organizational culture forbids and curtails workplace exclusion, which negatively impacts knowledge sharing, causing psychological stress and emotional exhaustion. With knowledge sharing, employees are empowered for higher responsibilities, while dynamic capabilities needed for those critical business moments (or circumstances) are identified and harnessed. These findings also reinforce the urgent need for further research into understanding how the innovative drive of an organizational culture can be improved and leveraged, as there appear to be younger fellows pushed or employed into the organizational workforce without proper coaching

and guidance on task diligence and responsibilities, organizational culture and values, and interpersonal communication. In sum, the current realities of drastic technological changes, customers' tastes and preferences, bolster the deliberate attention and conscious efforts required by information technology business leaders, among other business leaders, to ensure consistent competitive drive improvements in the organizational culture by adopting the earlier discussed strategies in order to reap their accompanying benefits.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this project reflect the transformative and transgenerational implications for positive social change, demonstrating the strategies that can be leveraged by organizational business leaders across the various sectors of industry for effective, innovative growth and sustained positive organizational culture. All through the findings of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry, the project reverberates the importance and foundational implications of organizational culture, be it good or bad. Borrego and Orgambidez (2024) suggested that organizational HR professionals should make greater efforts to build and instill an environment that fosters positive and healthy working conditions, motivating employees to demonstrate affective and emotional organizational attachment, a willingness to give their best, and take pride in being associated with it. Though the results from other scholarly works and literary reviews show the role of organizational culture in improving productivity, employee engagement, and competitive advantage, this project provides a roadmap for deeper understanding on how the organizational culture can be improved (irrespective of the business sector of operation) in connection with role modeling and leadership, customer centricity and innovation,

dynamic capabilities and sustainability, employee empowerment and development, adaptability and resilience.

From an individual organizational perspective, strategies for improving competitive drive in organizational culture demonstrate the need for business leaders to lead by example, modeling the changes they seek to make or desire to see, based on their current realities and accepted ethical standards. Similarly, Sahibzada et al. (2022) noted that an inert organizational structure founded on strong positive culture and values supports service innovation implementation and quality knowledge sharing. With the current realities of fast-paced technological advancements, loss of humanness, humor, and diligent execution (task delivery), it also calls for conscientious efforts by business leaders to emulate and practice a transformational leadership style laced with empathy and an innovative attitude

At the industry sectoral level, leadership strategies, influence, and employee engagement reinforce the need for a standardized acceptable culture among industry players for equitable and balanced assessment of their commitment to ethical culture and people, business performance, working conditions evaluations, and value system analysis. To standardize acceptable positive culture across industry players, Cumar et al. (2025) identified that leadership is a strong predictor of organizational culture and value system. With this standardization, industry players are compelled to build and uphold values and strong, positive cultural practices that advance the competitiveness of the organization above others, as an employer of choice. The standardization process dismantles all forms of hidden or secret walls that perpetuate poor cultural practices and

value systems, which encourage workplace intimidation and harassment, poor working conditions, favoritism, and inadequate employee empowerment. Standardization of humane, strong, healthy, and positive organizational culture establishes employee engagement, a high sense of organizational citizenship behavior, reduced employee turnover, and improved dynamic talent retention.

At the community level (society), the image of the business organization and its brand are preserved and highly recommended within their operating community and beyond, as the good news of a positive and healthy organizational culture spreads to its surrounding environment. Customers will be proud to be associated with such business organizations and their brand, hence competing for brand ambassadorial positions. Ford and Yoho (2025) noted that commitment to customer centricity is the point when business organizational leaders are moved with empathy toward creating a positive and long-lasting experience for the customers which in turn spurs them to become the business brand ambassadors. By this good gesture, their goodwill spreads both domestically and internationally, attracting foreign investments as these foreign investors are assured that their resources are safe and will surely yield positive earnings for them. In return, the positive image, brand reputation and huge foreign investments are attracted to the business organization, industry of operation, and the surrounding economy at large.

The findings of the project affirm that organizational cultural competitive drive improvement is rooted in effective collaboration and deep interconnectivity among the various strategies of transformational leadership and role modeling, strong organizational culture and values, healthy employee engagement and empowerment, harnessing

dynamic capabilities and sustainability, instilling customer-centricity and innovation, upholding continuous training and development, and pursuing adaptability and resilience. To build a future where employees are proud of their career journey and understand the worth of their contributions to the bigger organizational picture, a future where employees irrespective of their age, understands the organizational culture and the value system, imbibes the culture and its value system as part and parcel of their existence as long as they remain within the employment of the organization, and a future with healthy interpersonal communication that values the growth and development of their workforce. The time for societal change is now, and it is here to leverage the various opportunities accompanying these fast-paced technological advancements to the benefit of the employees and the entire business organization. Now is the time to build, foster, and facilitate the desired changes within the workplace.

Recommendations for Further Research

The strategies used by information technology business leaders for improved competitive drive in organizational culture of the Southwestern region of Nigeria were explored in this project. Despite the qualitative pragmatic inquiry design employed in this research, limitations within the project's scope were identified, which could provide broader research opportunities for future studies. Among the identified limitations in Section 1, future research can be conducted to include all C-suite (decision-making) business leaders, not just those in the information technology sector, on their willingness to objectively share their organizational experiences in improving competitive drive for organizational culture strategies. This extension can include organizational or

institutional leaders within the educational and manufacturing. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) further guided on effective sample size selection that can be applied irrespective of geographical location or region to attain saturation and justification of research findings. This further means that other sample sizes from other industries and sectors not covered by this project can be purposefully selected to ensure its meets the target objectives.

Second, due to the time constraints encountered, given the busy nature (hustling and bustling peculiarity of the Southwestern region), research can be extended to other geographical regions of Nigeria to see if the same experiences and lessons apply. A geographical region research project extension on the same topic may assist to either refute, debate or align with the findings of this project for enhancing qualitative objectivity and generalization.

Third, to adequately evaluate the long-term impact of these fast-paced technological advancements on improving an organizational culture and its competitiveness, it is highly recommended that future researchers apply a quantitative research methodology or mixed-methodology design. This will minimize the level of subjectivity bias associated with the qualitative methodology, as researchers will be dealing with the statistical evidence obtained in alignment with their designed hypothesis. Future researchers can assess and monitor whether geographical or regional cultural influences play a role in the building, improvement, and maintenance of organizational culture, value systems, and competitiveness, given the peculiarities of certain business operational climates and territories. Dodgson (2021) stated that to ensure adequate

alignment and balanced findings, there is a need to ensure that the applied variables are appropriate for the selected design and research question. With this approach, future researchers can monitor and measure the possible effects of these cultural attributes on maintaining standardized ethical practices or aligning with the regional dictates of the territory. In addition to the territory impact assessment, future researchers can assess the impact of the new tax legislation that becomes effective in 2026 on the organizational ability to uphold its integrity and organizational culture (and values) in relation to tax compliance, without evading the significant impact on employees' emoluments and take-home pay.

Finally, it is highly recommended that any future research build upon the limitations of this project, which include but are not limited to accessing accurate and unbiased information from participants, time constraints, a small sample size, and potential researcher bias. These limitations, as noted by Dodgson (2021), can be mitigated through detailed triangulation, inclusion of a larger sample size, use of publicly available data, and other forms of independent assessment to deepen our unified and mutual understanding of the strategies that can be used to improve organizational culture and its competitiveness.

Conclusion

In this qualitative pragmatic inquiry design project, I explored the strategies used by information technology business leaders to improve the competitive drive of their organizational culture. As part of the project, the scope, assumptions, and limitations as highlighted by Dodgson (2021) were discussed, which guided the formulation of the

research question. Using the research question as the guiding principle, semistructured interview sessions were conducted for seven willing and eligible participants who provided useful and supportive responses (evidence) that validated the research topic (project). From the semistructured interview sessions, seven key themes were identified: leadership and role modeling, organizational culture and values, employee engagement and empowerment, dynamic capabilities and sustainability, customer centricity and innovation, continuous training, and adaptability and resilience.

Each of the identified themes reflected the foundational role played by the organizational culture conceptual framework and its interplay/synergy with other strategies to ensure that business organizations and their leaders are not trapped in the web of non-alignment with current realities, as it affects their value system, culture, employees, customers, and the organization at large. The interviewees' responses reinforced the three tenets of the organizational culture conceptual framework as enacted by Schein (1992).

The findings from this project affirm that employees are the most critical assets any business organization can have. P1–P4 stated that the prevailing organizational culture within any business or sectoral industry of practice determines the values, its productivity, and competitiveness when it matters most. Organizational growth is directly tied to the leadership and role modeled within the organization, which the followers (employees) emulate (P7, P2, P3, and P5). P6 and P1 boldly noted the critical importance of continuous training and employee development, as this fuels the willingness of employees to associate and demonstrate organizational citizenship behavior, proactively

solve for the customer (with the customer considered at the heart of every decision).

These strategies, as analyzed in connection to the conceptual framework, literature reviews, and current realities, are supporting pillars to information technology business leaders, as a high number of younger fellows are churned out daily into the information technology sector in search of livelihood and greener pastures.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Primary Business Research Phenomenon Under Project and Overarching Research

Question

The topic for my research project is *strategies used by information technology business managers for improved competitive drive in organizational culture*.

Primary Research Goal to Achieve from This Interview

The purpose of this interview is to explore strategies that were used to improve the competitive drive in organizational culture.

Introduction

1. Thank you for your consent to participate in this project. Your participation in this educational project on the capability of information technology business managers to sustain improved competitive drive in organizational culture is important. It will help to better understand how the information technology business managers can improve the competitive drive in organizational culture given the fast-paced technological advancements and weighty reliance on leveraging the presented opportunities to make resilient and sustainable positive impact in society. I will be interviewing you and several other information technology business managers. So, I hope to have adequate information from this research project. Before we delve into the business of the day, I would like to go over just a few things with you.
2. First, you should know that your participation is totally voluntary, not compulsory. So, if I ask a question that you don't feel willing to answer, or if you need to stop the interview at any time, please do let me know.

3. With your permission, I will also be audiotaping the interview sessions and taking some notes, too. Afterwards, I will share with you a transcript of the audiotape along with my notes so you can take a look at them, review and validate them while making any relevant corrections that you may deem necessary to ensure that all that was said, raised, or discussed was properly and accurately captured.
4. As part of the research, the collected data may be shared with faculty members and colleague students for member-checking, and in sharing, only pseudonyms will be used – your names will not be mentioned. Even in instances where direct quotes will be used, I will maintain the pseudo names. Please note that this project might also be used in conferences and professional meetings.
5. I will strictly keep your shared information confidential and safely stored for five years after my project's completion date after which, I will destroy it.
6. Please do you have any questions? Kindly share your thoughts on the data collection requirements shared with you.
7. Also, I have set about 60 - 90 minutes for this interview. Do you think the allocated time will be okay for you for share answers to the interview question? We will not go beyond that time unless you desire to do so.
8. Is audiotaping still fine? Please confirm.
9. Ready to go?
10. Then, let's get started.

Initial Probe Questions

1. Please state your name and title.
2. What is your current role of responsibility within the organization?
3. How would you describe your organizational culture?
4. How would you describe your position within the organization concerning its competitive drive?

Targeted Interview Questions

While asking these questions, I will watch for nonverbal cues, paraphrase when needed, and follow up on responses with probing questions to obtain more depth and enriched data.

1. What strategies do you use to improve competitive drive in organizational culture?
2. How do you assess your organizational culture?
3. How do you assess your organizational competitiveness?
4. How do you assess the strategies used for the competitive drive in organizational culture?
5. How do you assess the strategies used for the competitive drive in practical business impact?
6. What leadership strategies do you use to promote improved organizational culture while ensuring they remain competitive?
7. How do you sustain organizational performance through your role as a business leader in the face of the competition?

Targeted Follow-up Questions

1. How competitive is your organizational culture?
2. How flexible and resilient is your organizational culture?
3. What are the benefits of having effective leadership strategies to improve competitive drive in organizational culture?
4. What are the dark sides of poor leadership behavioral traits on how competitive your organizational culture should be?
5. What other information would you like to add to this topic that we have not covered?

Targeted Wrap-up Question

1. Is there anything else you feel can be considered crucial to this project?

Closing

1. I want to start by saying thank you very much for your time and responses shared. You have provided me with very valuable information that will help me complete my project successfully.
2. I would like to schedule a follow-up session with you to review and discuss the audiotape transcript and my notes to ensure I interpreted your responses accurately. Would xx date and xx time be okay for you?
3. To allow you sufficient time to review, I will provide you with the transcript and notes at least three days in advance. Again, thank you very much for participating in my research project.