2018

Strategies for Motivating Sales Employees' Performance within Small Businesses in the United States

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MSc, University of Liverpool, 2014

PDHRM, Northrise University, 2011

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The loss of revenue, profits, brand, and corporate sustainability are possible for companies whose managers do not use strategies to motivate employee sales performance. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the strategies managers use to motivate sales employees' performance. A purposeful sample of 3 managers from U.S. companies with sales employees shared their strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. Methodological triangulation was used to review and analyze information from semistructured interviews, journal notes, member checking data, and review and analysis of relevant company documents. Additionally, coding indicated 4 main themes supporting the benefits of strategies to motivate sales employees' performance: sales personnel with self-motivation exhibit enhanced sales results earlier than nonself-motivated personnel; setting mandatory guidelines, and continuous checking to observe results motivates performance; financial rewards enhance performance; and sales employees receive motivation from recognition of their peer sales group and the organization. The study findings may contribute to social change by increasing the awareness of sales managers to motivate their sales employees, who will add revenue and profits to the organization thereby maintaining jobs, creating more jobs, and providing additional disposable income for health and well-being.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my dear Loving wife, Ireen Mwenya Chishimba, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement during the entire challenging DBA journey. Without her unfailing love, persistent prayers, understanding, and tolerance of the many hours of day and night study, which robbed her of the opportunity to have quality time with me, this research work would not have become a reality today. My wife is a visionary and woman of integrity to whom I am highly indebted for the rest of my life. Also, to my two precious children who have always been the most important people in my life, Comfort Chikwanda Chishimba (Trizzy) and Grace Chishimba (Baby G). Surely all things are possible to them that believeth (Mark 9:23). Last, but not the least, to my entire family I dedicate this study to mark the new dawn of a new generation of intellectuals who shall be full of knowledge and wisdom of God. Above everything else, I dedicate this study to the Almighty God who granted me the ability to complete this research work despite the many obstacles I faced along the way. Jesus Christ provided me this rare opportunity and privilege to be the first in my family to earn a doctorate degree from an American University whose primary focus is to bring positive social change in the lives of many people.

Acknowledgements

Primarily, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for giving me the salvation, which has been my anchor and strong tower in times of difficulties throughout this journey of attaining my Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree. Great thanks to my doctoral study committee chair, Dr. Patricia Fusch and Dr Rollis Erickson for keeping my dream alive of becoming the first one in my family to attain a doctorate degree. My second tribute goes to Dr. Erica Gamble for her excellent feedback as a second committee member throughout my DBA challenging research process and Dr. Janet Booker my university research review (URR) Professor for her timely feedback. I would like to thank my all-weather friend and brother Dr. Les Owen Paull for standing with me throughout this arduous ordeal and accomplishment. A special thanks goes to my queen and loving wife Ireen Mwenya Chishimba for her unfailing love and for providing a shoulder to lean on in bad and good times. Also, to my dear loving children Comfort Chikwanda Chishimba, Grace Chishimba, my brother in law David Mwenya and the rest of my family members, for their true love, support, patience, sacrifice, understanding and encouragement during the entire DBA journey. They all understood and supported me when I could not be with them at most of the very important family events due to the many hours of day and night work my DBA journey demanded. Last but not the least; special thanks go to my deceased father Mr. Abel Kaoma Chishimba for being my role model and my late mum Mrs. Petronella Bwalya Chisase for her ever-shining love and good upbringing for me.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Executives of small business organizations might require increased understanding about the significance of leadership strategies to motivate employees' sales performance to increase organizational profitability (Fernet, Trépanier, Austin, Gagné, & Forest, 2015). Small business organizations account for 99.9% of the all U.S. employer organizations; they hire 48% of the private sector workforce, and are responsible for 41.2% of the overall U.S. private payroll (Small Business and Entrepreneurial Council, 2016). Small businesses are responsible for a substantial percentage of job creation in the United States and they ignite the economy (Artinger & Powell, 2015; Cader & Leatherman, 2011; Small Business and Entrepreneurial Council, 2017). Strategies to motivate sales employees' performance perpetuates and adds to the U.S. economy by providing information to other organizations about employee motivation best practices. The information in this study could help managers determine strategies to increase sales performance and be used by sales managers to identify leadership strategies to reduce sales employees' lack of motivation to sell, thereby increasing profitability.

Background of the Problem

Small businesses are the mainstay of city economies, especially during an economic downturn. State leaders provide minimal effort to develop this important sector of the economy (Blackburn, Hart & Wainwright, 2013; Houston & Reuschke, 2017; Lee, 2018; Stuetzeet al., 2017; Weber, Geneste & Connell, 2015; Zeuli & O'Shea, 2017). Cancino (2017) discussed that small businesses compete and, in most cases, surpass the influence of big businesses in creating the needed jobs for inner cities. Small business contributes a high percentage of jobs in large cities such as Detroit (64%), Chicago (70%), and 77% in Los Angeles (Zeuli & O'Shea, 2017).

Entrepreneurs of small businesses account for 50% of the total labor force in the United States and are responsible for 500,000 business startups every month (Small Business Administration, 2014a). Newly created small businesses generate jobs but lack managerial strategies to increase sales performance to increase profits over the critical 5 years after startup (Criscuolo et al., 2014; Lofstrom, Bates, & Parker, 2014; McMullan & Kenworthy, 2014). Since entrepreneurs provide innovative ideas, products, and services, it is incumbent on those individuals to use strategies to motivate their salespeople to increase their performance (McMullan & Kenworthy, 2014; Rae, 2004; Reijonen, 2008; Yan & Yan, 2013. Small business enterprise contributes 96% to the U.S. economy annually through small business enterprise (SBA, 2014a).

Problem Statement

Lack of leadership strategies to motivate sales employees to perform at the highest level may result in lower organizational performance (Fernet et al., 2015). Nearly 70% of the 125.5 million full-time employees in the United States lack leadership support to improve organizational performance in sales and other areas, costing the United States economy half a trillion dollars each year (Zakaria, Idris, & Ismail, 2017). The general business problem is that workers lose motivation to perform at high levels because managers lack strategies to motivate sales employees, which can adversely affect business profits (Ogilvie, Rapp, Bachrach, Mullins, & Harvey, 2017; Ramarajan, Rothbard, & Wilk, 2016). The specific business problem is that some business managers lack strategies to motivate sales employees' performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies business leaders use to motivate sales employees' performance. The target population for this study consisted of three sales managers from three businesses in the Southern United States who use strategies to motivate their employees. Improved performance from motivated sales employees could contribute to positive social change by increasing company profits, which would contribute to the local economy through tax revenue and increase social well-being for sales force employees and stakeholders.

Nature of the Study

Qualitative research methods typically relate to the exploration of social and cultural problems based on real-world circumstances of the research subjects (Gelhorn et al., 2016; Yin, 2013). Quantitative research is a process of collecting numerical data as measurements to predict and analyze results but does not use textual data to find meaning (Petty, Thompson, & Stew, 2012a, 2012b). A mixed method approach is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies (Ågerfalk, 2013; Molina-Azorin, 2016; Molina-Azorín & López-Gamero, 2016). Neither the quantitative method nor the mixed method was appropriate for this research because the focus of this study was on social and cultural problems, which did not include collecting measurements or numerical data to predict or analyze results. The purpose of this study was to explore complex issues in a real-world context; thus the multiple case qualitative research method was best suited.

Other qualitative case study research methods considered included phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and ethnography. Phenomenology research is the process of providing descriptions of the phenomenon by documenting the experiences of the participants in the study (Petty et al., 2012b; Wiersma, 2000). Phenomenology did not meet the needs of this research study because the focus of this study was an analysis of real-world phenomena and not the experiences lived by the participants in the study. Narrative inquiry is a combined view of people's experiences, and a means to inquire about detailed experiences and stories (Huber, Caine, Huber, & Steeves, 2013). Business leaders who focus on real-world strategies, not detailed experiences, and stories could use the content of this study. Consequently, the narrative inquiry did not meet the needs of this study. Ethnography is a method some researchers use to provide details about specific communities, social groups, and cultures (Pluye, Hong, Bush, & Vedel, 2016; Yin, 2010). This study did not require the analysis or exploration of cultures or social groups; therefore, ethnography did not meet the requirements for this study. Consequently, a multiple case study design best met the requirements of this study.

Research Question

What strategies do some managers use to motivate sales employees' performance?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do your managers use to motivate sales employees' performance in your organization?
2. How do you measure the outcome of your strategies for motivating sales employees?
3. What challenges did your managers encounter in the implementation of

employee motivational strategies?

4. How did your organization address the key challenges to implementing the motivational strategies for increasing sales employees' performance?
5. What strategies have you found to be repeatable and measurable?
6. What additional information would you like to provide as it relates to strategies and motivation in sales employees' performance?

Conceptual Framework

Burns (1978) established the seminal works of transformational leadership theory (TLT) in 1978. Burns defined transformational leadership as a method by which leaders persuade followers to achieve objectives representing the values, motivations, wants, needs, aspirations, and expectations of both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). Burns (1978) suggested the following fundamental constructs for TLT as idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized. I selected the TLT for this study because of the alignment with the specific business problem that some business managers lack strategies to motivate sales employees' performance and to answer the research question: What strategies do some managers use to motivate sales employees' performance? The design and application of strategies to motivate sales employees' performance hinge on comprehensive communication among managers and executives to increase the probability of understanding and using motivational strategies (Lai, 2016; Ouma & Ambrose, 2016).

The application of TLT offered a potential framework for developing and implementing strategies for communicating with all stakeholders. The TLT aligned with the conceptual framework to mitigate an organizations' unacceptable low profitability resulting from low sales caused by demotivated employees. The TLT was the basis of the conceptual framework for this study because it provided a platform to explore successful strategies to increase sales employees' performance.

Operational Definitions

Ethnic groups: An ethnic group, or ethnicity, is a category of people who identify with each other based on resemblances such as shared heritage, linguistic, the social order, values, or beliefs (Delaney, 2017).

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) founded in 1999 as a worldwide research body piloted by a conglomerate of universities with a mission to evaluate the level of entrepreneurship happening with an objective of a big basket of nations (Wong, Ho, & Autio, 2005).

Initiative for a competitive inner city (ICIC): ICIC is a nonprofit organization which started in 1994 by Professor Michael Porter from Harvard Business School whose sole purpose is to carry out research and advises the U.S. inner city businesses to help them thrive economically. The other function of ICIC is to advance economic prosperity in America's inner cities using private sector investment for job creation, revenue and creation of wealth to empower the communities (Cancino, 2017).

Organizational performance: Organizational performance is the innovation of new marketplaces, firsthand merchandise prospects, a rise in cost price management, reduction in spending, and intensified marketplace consciousness (Yang, Huang, & Hsu, 2014).

Small Business and Entrepreneurial Council: The small business and entrepreneurship council (SBE Council) is a body established to act as a compelling voice, which advocates for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Its focus is on pushing forward policies and ingenuities that promote the growth of entrepreneurship and small business growth development (Small Business & Entrepreneurial Council, 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are thoughts, which are beyond the individual management of the scientists but are very important because, without them, it was almost impossible to conduct research or study (Jansson, 2013; Simon & Goes, 2013; Sparkes, 2015). A key assumption was the ability to gather accurate data from participants with experience in strategies to motivate sales employees' performance and every participant in the study responded to the interview questions truthfully. Another assumption was that each participant would understand all definitions and terms associated with the motivation of sales employees' performance and that all the interviews happened on the schedule approved to by the three organizations giving authorization for the interviews.

Limitations

Limitations are restrictions that are out of the researcher's control but carry the potential to influence the results of the study (Noble & Smith, 2015; Simon & Goes, 2013). One major limitation for this study also included the small sample size of the participants. I drew the participants for this study from three small businesses whose activities involved sales operations and management. Ng et al. (2013) posited that a research study with limited latitude could cause the outcomes of a study not to be generalizable. Another limitation for this study was the geographical location of the participating companies and the participants situated in the southern United States. Carrying out a study from a specific geographic location with a minor sample size could cause limitations (Coffie, 2013). The third limitation for this study was the use of Skype because using Skype to interview participants instead of the traditional face-to-face interview could affect the areas of rapport and nonverbal cues (Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016).

Delimitations

Delimitations are zones generated from the limitations within the context of the research study and through the conscious removal and addition of the researcher's preferences at the time planning stage of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). Florin (2014) posited that delimitations are hypothetical borders needed to finish a study. The geographical area of southern part of the U.S was a delimitation of this research study. Concentrating on this region produced generalization of leadership strategies in motivating sales employees' performance in small businesses situated in different locations. In this research study, the participants came from three organizations and one manager from each of the organizations to participate in the interview process. The participants had a minimum of one-year of experience in a small business environment, which was a delimitation of this research study. Participants who had not worked in a small business setting or environment were not able to provide the much-needed in-depth answers and were not accepted. Small businesses are mainly made up of a small number of employees in most cases not more than 500 (SBA, 2014a), consequently studying these businesses could be a delimitation. The organizational criteria for participating in this study were companies involved in doing business on a small scale and not on a larger scale; this was a delimitation. I gathered information from the expertise of small business managers involved in employee sales performance to learn from their comprehension and perception of the importance of leadership in the motivation of sales employees; this was delimitation.

Significance of the Study

Governments globally recognize small businesses for their input to fiscal steadiness and development, occupation, and the establishment of more jobs (Marom & Lussier, 2014; SBA, 2014). Researchers may use the information in this study to enhance corporate actions and to explore and implement strategies for managers and executives to mitigate low employee sales. Recognition of new strategies by U.S. based small business enterprises might decrease the possibility of low-performance by sales employees. Employee demotivation was one cause of low sales performance that may have contributed to decreasing sales revenue and reduced profits for the organization (Harrison & Hall, 2016).

Contribution to Business Practice

Business leaders could use the results of this qualitative case study to contribute to business practices for organizational leaders seeking strategies to motivate employees in sales. Leaders could use the outcomes of this study to develop new approaches to support motivational strategies for improved employee sales performance resulting in improved profitability. Furthermore, business leaders can use motivational strategies to improve organizational performance, business growth, and provide an organizational competitive advantage (Iarossi, Miller, O'Connor, & Keil, 2013; Podsiadlowski, Gröschke, Kogler, Springer, & van der Zee, 2013). An improved understanding of employee motivational strategies can help in improving organizational performance (Boulouta, 2012; Sabharwal, 2014).

Implications for Social Change

Podsiadlowski et al. (2013) posited that business leaders could create an enabling environment to catalyze employee work ethic and increase employee knowledge and performance. The authors further posited that regardless of their social status or ethnic background business leaders could create a favorable working environment for employees. Bjerregaard and Lauring (2013) argued that leadership support could also assist in improving both personal and organizational performance in the development of social accountability. The business leaders could use the outcome of this study to create socially responsible positive change by generating more employment in local communities, which spawns additional jobs, creating more spendable money and increased health and human services. Nkomo and Hoobler (2014) stated that leaders could create and use strategies to attract and integrate racial and ethnic groups into the labor force to increase socioeconomic output as a strategy to increase sales output within the sales force of a company.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The researchers' objective in this section was to explore literature concerning transformational leadership theory that may lead to strategies to increase the performance of sales employees. The researchers' purpose in this literature review was to analyze the current state of research regarding the themes of transformational leadership models identified to improve employee motivation to enhance sales performance.

The literature review was a critical component of this research composed of peer-reviewed articles mainly published between 2013 and 2017 from a variety of numerous databank resources. The most regularly used databanks were Google Scholar, SAGE Journals, ProQuest Central, and EBSCO Host. Keyword searches included, *transformational leadership*, *employee motivation, organizational performance and culture*, *sales performance, high performing teams* and *human resource management* provided links to articles, books, and journals.

The literature review included peer-reviewed journal articles published no more than 5 years prior to completion of the study. The research documents used were pertinent to key concepts in my research question. Table 1 provides statistical information, including the total number of sources and the percentage of peer-reviewed journal articles.

Table: 1

Literature Review Sources by Year of Publication

Literature type	Older than 5 years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total %	Total no.
Peer-reviewed articles	10	26	26	26	20	0	98%	108
Non-peer-reviewed articles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Books	0	0	1	1	0	0	2%	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0
Total	10	26	27	27	20	0	100%	110

Transformational Leadership Theory

James McGregor Burns developed the TLT framework (Burns, 1978). Bass (1985) further enhanced the Burns transformational leadership framework. The transformational leadership concept remains in good use today providing leadership principles to argue that leaders can inspire their followers to change (Choudhary, Akhtar, & Zaheer, 2013; Chully & Sandhya, 2014; Lim & Cromartie, 2001; Ng, 2016). The central constructs of the TLT theory included individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influences (Ahmad, Mohamed, & Manaf, 2017; Moon, 2017). Each of the constructs set of the TLT could be used by leaders to provide a solid foundation for quality leadership that could allow them to develop and implement strategies to enhance profitability of sales with motivated sales employees.

Idealized influence. The leaders of the idealized influence grouping shared a commonality of admiration, respect, and trust (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). Bass and Riggio (2006) theorized followers of idealized influence identified with their leaders and wanted to emulate those leaders. Another significant element of idealized influence was that leaders pondered on how to obtain praise from their followers, sacrificing their own needs in support of their followers (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010). In addition, leaders often compromised their safety to protect their character and work to demonstrate ethical values and principles (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Bass and Avolio (2004) proposed exercising idealized influence into attributes and behaviors. Transformational leaders; instilled pride in others, went beyond self-interest for the good of the group, acted in ways that inspired others, and respected and displayed a sense of power and confidence (Barnes, Christensen, & Stillman, 2013; Boga & Ensari, 2009; Clinebell, Škudienė, Trijonyte, & Reardon, 2013). Bass and Avolio (2004) suggested that a transformational leader had tough values and beliefs, a strong sense of purpose that they considered the moral and ethical consequences of decisions, and they emphasized the importance of having a collective sense of mission.

Employees of any company, large or small, might benefit from transformational leaders (TL), which included a sales team under transformational leadership guided by inspirational motivation while using the design and expression of vision and challenging goals (Shen, Ju, Koh, Rowlinson, & Bridge, 2017). Characteristics connected to idealized influence or inspirational motivation comprised infusing positive egotism in others, developing a link associated with the leader, and persuading followers to go above their self-interests for the benefit of the group (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Kahn, 2017; Pradhan, Panda, & Jena, 2017). Other characteristics of idealized influence were, giving comfort when difficulties occur and assuredness that attainment and implementation of objectives and jobs are within reach. Additional characteristics included speaking enthusiastically that anything is possible, and that tomorrow will bring new light and courage, sharing the dream of the leader, and providing an image of structural change (Mullen, Kelloway, & Teed, 2017; Prestia, 2016).

Inspirational motivation. Leaders who practiced inspirational motivation acted in a manner to inspire their followers by giving direction and affirmation about their work effort (Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2010; Hemsworth, Muterera, & Baregheh, 2013). A result of inspirational motivation is individual, and team spirit arousal, enthusiasm, and optimism are displayed (Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2010; Hemsworth, Muterera, & Baregheh, 2013). A result of inspirational motivation is an inspired individual, a team whose spirit is stimulated, a team full of enthusiasm, and optimism displayed through results (Hutahayan, Astuti, Raharjo, & Hamid, 2013; Jiang, Zhao, & Ni, 2017). The leader of a sales team can inspire team members to visualize good plans for the group in short and long-term objectives (Bass & Avolio, 1994, 2004). In addition, Bass and Avolio (2004) segmented inspirational motivation into the following behaviors

- transformational leaders talk optimistically about the future;
- enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished;
- as well as articulate a compelling vision of the future; and
- express confidence that goals are achievable.

Intellectual stimulation. Leaders that provide intellectual stimulation to their follower's effort catalyze innovative and creative ideas that they can question assumptions, reframe problems, and approach old situations in new ways (Irshad & Hashmi, 2014; Ljungholm, 2014). Interestingly, using intellectual curiosity provided by transformational leaders there is no ridicule or public criticism of individual member’s mistakes (Azzuhri, 2018; Mohamad, Daud, & Yahya, 2014). Transformational leaders encouraged their followers to discuss new ideas and creative solutions to problems (Abbas, Iqbal, Waheed, & Naveed Riaz, 2012; Abdelhafiz, Alloubani, & Almatari, 2016; Abdussamad, Akib, & Paramata, 2015). Leaders and followers used intellectual stimulation to encourage the development of brainpower, level-headedness, and cautious problem solving (Liborius, 2017). Leaders actions linked to intellectual stimulation embraced opposing viewpoints when resolving difficulties, suggesting new ways of investigating the means to finishing work as well as inspiring brainstorming of philosophies (Henry, 2013; Irshad & Hashmi, 2014; Kazmi, Naaranoja, Kytölä, & Kantola, 2016). The leaders’ application of intellectual stimulation could have a significant effect on sales performance with the sales employees of an organization (Ljungholm, 2014). New creative learning opportunities occurred along with a supportive climate in which to grow, with intellectual stimulation as a result (Aryee, Walumbwa, Zhou, & Hartnell, 2012).

Individual consideration. The leaders using individual consideration concentrate on each follower’s need for development and advancement by taking on the role of mentor and life coach (Bass, 1990; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Mohamad, Daud, Z. & Yahya, 2014). Followers advance to successively higher levels of potential while under the influence of personal individual consideration (Alotaibi, Yusoff, Al-Swidi, Al-Matari, & AlSharqi, 2015; Bass, 1990; Bass, 1997). Personal preferences of followers' desires and needs are a serious consideration for a leader (Bacha & Walker, 2013; Dartey-Baah, 2014). Individual consideration for sales employee improvement centered on teaching and coaching individuals, treating others as individuals rather than just a member of the group (Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2014).

Transformational leadership earned an excellent reputation as an essential method for supporting employee motivation and a performing organization, but few articles existed that discussed how specific strategies resulted in improved sales performance for sales employees using precise leadership and motivational theories (Bellé, 2013; Dartey-Baah & Mekpor, 2017a; Pongpearchan, 2016). Transformational leadership was relevant to the administration of employee motivation for organizational performance (Elufiede & Flynn, 2017). Leading scholars and specialists might benefit from an academic understanding of the impact leadership, and motivational philosophies can provide to the body of knowledge on how to improve sales employees' performance (Chan & Mak, 2014a, 2014b; Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016; Elufiede & Flynn, 2017).

An essential component of this literature review was the role leaders' played in providing effective leadership strategies in promoting sales employee motivation to support organizational performance. Leaders used employee motivation to address employees' emotional, mental, and psychological functioning at work (Galperin &

Alamuri, 2016; Sparks & Repede, 2016). Transformational leadership was a valuable management tool for developing employee motivation and performance (Moon, 2017; Mozammel & Haan, 2016). Transformational leadership encompassed expressing a vision that promoted a person's motivation and directing them to support the execution of that vision (Caillier, 2014; Galante & Ward, 2017). A gap in the literature existed about the value of transformational leadership and employee motivation within an organization (Nguyen, Mia, Winata, & Chong, 2017; Nielsen et al., 2017). Previous authors discussing motivation of employees provided little information about the realization of how transformational leadership and employee motivation could function together to stimulate employee and organizational performance (Peltokorpi & Hasu, 2014).

Since its development in the 1990s, employee motivation framework grew in popularity as a state-of-the-art strategy for influencing optimistic employee attitudes and building a higher performing organization (Wong-MingJi, 2017). Jauhari, Singh, and Kumar (2017) argued that research concerning transformational leadership in business is an ongoing process. Leaders provided the primary support in inspiring workers' performance, but unfortunately, not much is in place regarding specific systems that are responsible for encouraging the impact of transformational leadership (Bayram & Dinç, 2015). Jeong, Hsiao, Song, Kim, and Bae (2016) defined transformational leadership as the actions of leaders, which changed as well as encouraged followers to work more than anticipated to benefit the organization. Many company executives favored the transformational leadership model because organizational executives searched for leaders who successfully directed the achievement of business objectives

(Belias & Koustelios, 2014; Chatterjee & Kulakli, 2015; Trmal, Bustamam, & Mohamed, 2015).

The strategic vision and objective of the organization had a direct impact on the reasoning of the leaders, and the tactics used to motivate employees (Mozammel & Haan, 2016; Ricard, Klijn, Lewis, & Ysa, 2016). Some leaders preferred the personalized approach of treating followers as essential components of the organization rather than nonessential associates of a team (Alos-Simo, Verdu-Jover, & Gomez-Gras, 2017; Carter et al., 2014). A transformational leader was one that put emphasis on the performance of their followers to increase personal satisfaction in performance (Bellé, 2014; Effelsberg & Solga, 2015; Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2013; Mathew & Gupta, 2015; Şahin, Çubuk, & Uslu, 2014; Zawawi & Nasurdin, 2015).

Qu, Janssen, and Shi, 2015 noted that many in the academic and business world believe transformational leadership was the best leadership style. Few researchers have investigated the unique link existing among transformational leadership concepts and how managers motivated their employees for organizational performance (Qu, Janssen, & Shi, 2015; Şahin, Gurbuz, & Sesen, 2017; Salas-Vallina, López-Cabrales, Alegre, & Fernández, 2017). Transformational leaders provided inspiring, knowledgeable interest and motivated others to achievement of goals (Bachmann, 2016; Dust, Resick, & Mawritz, 2013). Additionally, transformational leaders allowed employees to develop their leadership capabilities while receiving guidance from their leaders (Prakash, 2016; Shah, Mirani, Memon, & Bhutto, 2016). Speck (2012) indicated that transformational leadership was an applied model for a broad number of disciplines and cultures. In summary, transformational leadership affected organizational needs linked to leadership efficiency in driving change as well as converting demotivated employees to effective personnel (Amankwaa & Anku-Tsede, 2015; Louis & Murphy, 2017; Tampubolon, 2016).

Organizational Performance

Several researchers referred to the capability of entrepreneurs to achieve profitable fiscal results individually and for their organization (Singh, Darwish, & Potočnik, 2016). The performance measurement of an organization had several metrics including specific discipline and the owner's anticipations (Jourdan & Kivleniece, 2014, 2016; Miller, Fugate, & Golicic, 2017; Ridge, Ingram, & Hill, 2017). An organization's performance was a measure of a business's performance based on a set of goals and objectives such as economic performance, sales performance, and investor value performance (Bayer, Tuli, & Skiera, 2017; Gao, Harford, & Li, 2017; Smith, 2017; van den Bekerom, Schalk & Torenvlied, 2017).

Employee Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction is a widely researched topic by many social scientists and continues to attract researchers. Most social scientists research findings indicated that when the workforce had achieved employee satisfaction, employees found gratification and happiness about the work they performed (Durai, 2017; Eid, 2016; Khan & Aleem, 2014; Mahal, 2016; Sang, 2016; Shan, Li, Yao, Shi, & Ren, 2014). Once employees got a sense of satisfaction with their jobs, there was an immediate improvement in their performance, and the personal performances supplemented the general organizational performance (Briggs, Jaramillo, & Noboa, 2015; Mahal, 2016; Tang & Lee, 2014). Sakiru, D'Silva, Othman, DaudSilong, & Busayo (2013) argued that business leaders looked at the lack of job satisfaction as a critical ingredient for poor productivity of an employee, which may have had an adverse impact on fellow employees, and sales of the organization. Leaders provided a critical impact on job performance by enhancing employee job satisfaction resulting in uplifting employee performance (Hanafi, 2016; Hasmin, 2017; Hermininingsih, 2017; Mihalcea, 2014; Singh, 2013; Tu, Lu, & Yu, 2016).

Proper leadership culminated in employee satisfaction, and job satisfaction which enriched employee performance (Purnama, 2017; Sakiru et al., 2013). Numerous researchers discussed job satisfaction and improved performance based on knowledge of their work environment. Employees who lacked knowledge about the organization typically lacked appreciation of the business vision and objectives, resulting in becoming demotivated about their job, which eventually reduced employee engagement and performance (Fatimah, Moelyati, & Syailendra, 2016; Sakiru et al., 2013; Wang & Hsieh, 2013). Employee discontent could lead to inferior performance, lower company revenues, and higher expenses for the organization (Babalola, 2016; Sakiru et al., 2013). It was essential for leaders to understand and apply effective communication strategies with employees to attain anticipated objectives and circumvent demotivation (Qazi & Jeet, 2016; Yozgat & Meşekıran, 2016). Furthermore, several researchers linked poor communication with poor organizational conduct including the threat to organizational sustainability (Daniela, 2013; Hamid, Yulianto, Amrullah, & Haerani, 2017).

Contrasting Theories

I compared several theories to the TLT to determine what strategies some managers used to motivate sales employees and increase performance. One of the theories explored was by Gordon Willard Allport (1937a), who developed the trait theory. In addition, I reviewed the behavioral theory developed by Ohio State University researchers in the 1940’s and then supplemented by researchers at the University of Michigan in the 1950’s (Northouse, 2017). I also explored the contingency theory developed from the seminal works of Joan Woodward (1958) and Fred Edward Fiedler in 1967 (Fiedler, 1964a; 1967; Strube & Garcia, 1981). Additional reviews of the authoritarian and laissez-faire theories developed by psychologist and leadership theorist Kurt Lewin in 1939 did not align with the conceptual theory. Situational leadership theories developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard during the 1970’s also did not align with the conceptual theory and neither theory met the requirements necessary to fulfill the needs of the conceptual framework for this study.

The trait theory argued that leadership was a born trait combined with patterns of individual characteristics that mirrored a range of personnel changes, which promoted steady leader efficiency across a team environment (Allport, 1937b; Zaccaro, 2007). The trait theory did not suit the needs of this study because it did not align with the problem statement, which focused on business manager’s strategies to motivate sales employees’ performance. Organizations that used a trait leadership theory for leadership might have challenges connecting specific business problems with strategic growth and traits, which would be inherently difficult to determine for each leader.

The Ohio State University and the University of Michigan behavioral theories of leadership studies concentrated on behaviors of a leader suggesting one of the determining factors of leadership was inspiration (Allport, 1966; Dugan, 2017; Meuser, Higgs, & Dulewicz, 2016; Northouse, 2017). Neither the trait theory nor the behavioral theory was appropriate for this study because they are not relevant to the current business world environment, are not specific enough to address employees' sales motivation techniques, and cannot provide strategies for motivating sales employees' performance.

The Joan Woodward (1958) and Fred Edward Fiedler (1967) contingency theories were organizational theories that asserted there was no preeminent approach to establish an organization. Additionally, the theory suggested pre-determined approaches to operate a business or arrive at decisions are contingent on the interior and exterior circumstances of the business (Fiedler, 1986). A contingent leader successfully used a personal style of leadership to the right situation (Fiedler, 1967; Wong-MingJi, 2017; Woodward, 1958). Contingency theory was not the best option for this study because it was limited in its ability to adjust to what individual leaders should do in the event the group of leaders disagreed about strategies to improve productivity (Fiedler, 1967; Northouse, 2017).

Kurt Lewin's laissez-faire leadership theory, also known as the delegating leadership theory, was a leadership style wherein leaders were easy going and permitted team members to work without interference (Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016). Scholars discovered that the laissez-faire theory was usually the leadership style that produced the lowest productivity amid teams (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). Without the guidance of the sales employees by competent leaders, the ability to increase sales productivity might continue to decline. Since performance could decline using the Lewin laissez-fair theory; it was not an appropriate theory for this study, and, therefore, unacceptable because the results of this study was to provide strategies to motivate sales employees' performance.

The Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard situational leadership theory had its fundamental philosophy based on the understanding that there was no one best style of leadership (Begum & Mujtaba, 2016; Berg & Karlsen, 2016; Katzenbach, 1998). Situational leaders customize their leadership style to the performance willingness of the persons or teams they are endeavoring to inspire (Begum & Mujtaba, 2016; Berg & Karlsen, 2016; Katzenbach, 1998). Situational leadership theory was not suitable for this study because the one on one relationship between the leader and the follower, which was available on transformational leadership, was absent. The focus on transformational leadership was on group leadership, which involved matching leadership styles to the overall development of the group.

Leadership as a Motivational Discipline

Motivational leadership was a desirable and exceedingly treasured management asset that organizations and society have become progressively interested to understand employee motivation (Chan & Mak, 2014; Komives & Wagner, 2016; Skendall, Ostick, Komives, & Wagner, 2017). The question: what makes good leaders? has continued to be asked since the 19th century and still of concern today (Mills & Boardley, 2017; Northouse, 2017; Tal & Gordon, 2016). Carasco-Saul, Kim, and Kim (2015) discussed that corporate leaders and individuals continued to pursue knowledge about what makes a great and productive leader and what motivational skills good leaders used to promote productivity.

Several scholars believed that leadership was a means to develop one's individual, societal, and professional improvement (Chapman, Johnson, & Kilner, 2014). Business executives look for people with leadership capabilities hoping such individuals arrived with unique motivational skills to increase profitability (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Jaffe, 2017; Magsaysay & Hechanova, 2017). Furthermore, the study of motivational leadership did not have a specific geographical area; instead, the understanding of leadership was a global concern (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Daniëls, Hondeghem, & Dochy, 2017). A critical analysis of the academic research on leadership indicated that there are several conceptual methods to describe the intricacies of the leadership process (Avolio, Avey, & Quisenberry, 2016; Berg, Karlsen, & Karlsen, 2016).

Some scholars theorized leadership was a trait or behavior while others perceived leadership as a contingency, participative, and situational point of view (Anderson, Baur, Griffith, & Buckley, 2017; Raelin, 2016). Leadership research indicated that leadership could be qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, all of which strive to promote improvement in the individual (Avolio, Keng-Highberger, Schaubroeck, Trevino, & Kozlowski, 2016; Lord, Day, Zaccaro, Avolio, & Eagly, 2017). The research results on leadership depicted a procedure that was highly complicated, far more erudited, and intricated than the usual ordinary opinion brought forth in the majority of literature about leadership (Crosby & Bryson, 2017; Hartnell, Kinicki, Lambert, Fugate, & Doyle Corner, 2016; Zigarmi, Roberts, & Roberts, 2017). The review of published literature in this study focused on what strategies some managers use to motivate sales employees' performance as suggested by Carter, Stogdill, and Coons (1958).

Historical Motivation Strategies Using the Trait Theory

To correctly understand and determine what strategies might be useful to motivate sales employees' performance it was necessary to review many of the historical concepts and theories dealing with leadership and management. Taylor (1914) was one of the first 20^{th} century authors to recognize and discuss the differentiation between the manager and worker. The exploration of leadership in the workplace proliferated during the 1920s and 1930s, often referred to as the scientific management period. Before the Taylor (1914) research, differentiation between the manager and worker concept had not evolved. The Great Man Theory was the dominant theory during the 19th-century as proposed by rationalists Carlyle, Nietzsche, and Galton (Borgatta, Bales, & Couch, 1954; Carlyle, 1907; Galton, 1869; Waring, 2016). Spector (2015) posited that in the great man theory, some people were born carrying different genes that included the essential characteristics of their position of leadership.

Meuser et al. (2016) argued that a leader was a protagonist with the ability to achieve objectives contrary to any obstacle for the good of the people they lead. The trait theory suggested that persons in authority are worthy of their position of leadership because of birth in a family of acknowledged prominence (Meuser et al. 2016). Additionally, Meuser argued that the leadership personality traits stayed constant within many diverse groups and believed that every great leader carried their leadership traits, irrespective of the period or place (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d). Anderson and Sun, (2017) and Northouse, (2017) posited that all great leaders shared similar characteristics regardless of where they lived or the position they may have occupied in the past.

The great man theory was the first concept that birthed trait-related theories of leadership (Grandy & Sliwa, 2015; Kollenscher, Popper, & Ronen, 2016). The great man theory was prevalent in the early1900s until the trait theory was introduced during the 1940s (Kollenscher et al., 2016; Solaja, Idowu, & James, 2016; Trichas, Schyns, Lord, & Hall, 2017). The vital information posited by the Trait Theory was that traits comprised leaders' intellectual, physical, and social physiognomies that differentiated leaders from followers (Zagenczyk, Smallfield, Scott, Galloway, & Purvis, 2017). The great man theory and the trait theory had no relevance in the current business world because interaction with employees allowed leaders to evaluate other individual's inputs to assist in arriving at appropriate motivational strategies.

Behavioral Theory of Leadership as Motivation Strategy

Leadership had many styles, techniques, and concepts (Chemers, 2014). The literature review contained in this section included an exploration of behavior as a style and strategy to motivate employees and aligned directly with the research question: what strategies do managers use to motivate sales employees' performance. The behavioral theories had a different perspective that empowered scholars to focus on the behaviors of the leaders as opposed to their mental, physical, or social characteristics (Buchholz & Sandler, 2017; Maak, Pless, & Voegtlin, 2015, 2016; Mendenhall, Weber, Arna, Arnardottir, & Oddou, 2017). The behavioral social scientists had gathered arguments provided by the evolution of psychometrics, notably factor analysis, which allowed them to measure the cause and effect relationship of specific human behaviors between leaders and followers (Araujo-Cabrera, Suarez-Acosta, & Aguiar-Quintana, 2017; Ruiz, Hamlin, & Carioni, 2016). The cause and effect relationship had characteristics similar to modern day goal-oriented outcomes that could prove its importance for developing motivational strategies to improve sales employees' performance. The behavioral theorists divided motivational leaders into two categories; task leaders and people-oriented leaders (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016b, 2016c). Behavioral theories of leadership are classified as such because they assisted researchers to focus on the study of specific behaviors of a leader (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2013; 2016a).

Behavioral theorists believed that leader behavior was the best predictor of leadership influence and as a result was the best determinant of leadership success (Collett, 1959; Lehmann-Willenbrock, Meinecke, Rowold, & Kauffeld, 2015; Littrell, 2013Ruiz, Hamlin, & Carioni, 2016). Kriger and Zhovtobryukh, (2016e) and Martin, Côté, and Woodruff (2016) noted that leaders are made rather than born, and the basis of successful leadership came from definable, learnable behavior. Behavioral theories of leadership did not seek inborn traits or capabilities; rather they looked at what leaders did (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016d). The behavioral theory differed from trait theory in that behavioral theory assumed that leadership capability could be learned, rather than inherited as suggested by trait theory (Behrendt, Matz, & Göritz, 2017; Mattaini & Holtschneider, 2017).

When researchers took time to compare behavioral theory to trait theory the process allowed exploration and comparison of the two styles, thereby providing insight into motivational strategies for modern business environments (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016c). The behavioral method of assessment used simple psychometric methods that sort individuals with leadership potential rather than categorizing certain individuals as incapable of leadership, as per trait theory (Fein, Tziner, Vasiliu, & Felea, 2015). Behavioral theory was relatively unaffected by design, as the concept was to assess both leadership success and the actions of leaders (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016b). With an extensive study sample, a statistical correlation was possible to identify significant behaviors related to success as well as identifying behaviors that contributed to failure (Blickle et al., 2013; Littrell et al., 2013).

The next evolution of thought concerning behavioral science developing strategies to motivate employees occurred during the 1950s and 1960s (Germain, 2012). The behavioral theory asserted that leaders are successful when followers became acquainted with the leader’s behavior and emulated the traits of their leaders (Fein et al., 2015). The behavioral leadership theory served as the archetypical theory of leadership because of questioning whether people were born leaders or acquired through training (Fein et al., 2015).

The early behavioral theorists faced a significant split in the aftermath of the Second World War and rapid growth in United States productivity, after the great depression. Two streams of theories were born out of the behavioral leadership studies immediately after WW II. The first theory discussed the duty of a leader while the second hinged on the association of the leader with their followers (Behrendt, Matz, & Göritz, 2017). The development of behavioral theory ended the trait theory and was the beginning of incorporating task and relationship constituents in the leadership theory (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016a). The absence of trait theory as the dominant accepted leadership theory and opened a new field of study to explore the success or failure of leadership (Martin et al., 2016). The use of behavioral theory by leaders might supply insight to individual behaviors used as strategies to increase the productivity of sales personnel.

Contingency Theory of Leadership as a Motivational Strategy

One of the significant arguments found in contingency theory was that the behavior portrayed by a team leader could have a negative or positive influence on the mental state of their followers and business results (Mills & McKimm, 2016; Northouse, 2017; Stogdill, 1974; Waters, 2013). Contingency theory was a combination of the Fiedler model and the Cognitive resource theory (Korman, 1973; Villoria, 2016). The Fiedler theory posited that productive teams are the pairing of teams, subject to how the leader mingled with followers, and how that interaction affected the leader (Fiedler 1964b, 1986). Fiedler's theory operated using three steps, namely pinpointing the styles of leadership, understanding the situation, and pairing leaders with situations (Fiedler, 1995; Peters, Hartke, & Pohlmann, 1985). In addition, the theory of contingency argued that companies could never be managed using one method because various circumstances might present various precursors (Fiedler, 1964a; Northouse, 2017).

Psychology scholars from Ohio State University and the University of Michigan provided the first two scientific studies, which contributed to the development of contingency leadership theory, during the 1950s and 1960s respectively (Collett, 1959; Northouse, 2017). The scholars sent questionnaires to small businesses to explore leader behaviors across different business perspectives (Stogdill 1948, 1969, 1974). The contingency leadership theory was a theory of leadership efficiency with the ability to forecast how a team might perform depending on how the chosen leadership style fitted the prevailing circumstances of the overall business environment (Korman, 1973; Yukl, 1994).

Understanding how various leadership styles operated successfully in specific environments compared to other styles of leadership provided for a better understanding of the styles, which was a possible strategy to enhance the probability of creating a successful business (Sousa, Dias, Moco, Saldanha, & Caracol, 2017; Likert 1961, 1967). One of the questions researchers have been studying in the field of leadership is; what constitutes a great leader in a business environment? Some controversies surround the contingency leadership theory within the literature concerning the behavioral field of leadership (Binci, Cerruti, & Braganza, 2016; Homan et al., 2014). The use of technology and the size of the organization are two elements discussed by scholars to understand effects of behavior on employees in a business environment (Carroll, Ford, & Taylor, 2015).

Determinism in leadership contingency theory was another factor used to encourage organizations to make their own strategic decisions about leadership (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015). Scientific arguments provided a view that contingencies were responsible for the creation of structures, which created a bureaucracy in the system (Mills & McKimm, 2016). Furthermore, some scholars had sought to interchange the multivariate contingency model using the structures founded on consistency (Waters, 2013). Contingency theory offered the possibility to develop strategies to motivate sales employees' because sales are often contingent on several uncontrollable factors.

Situational Leadership Theory as a Motivational Strategy

The sequence of previous leadership theories enabled readers of this study to understand the evolution of leadership techniques and styles of the past used to motivate and understand employee performance. The following section provided insight into situational leadership theory and possible strategies to motivate sales employees. The situational leadership theory (SLT) referred to as the Hersey and Blanchard situational leadership theory (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Graeff, 1983; Jetha & Hetrick, 2017; Vecchio, 1987). The seminal works of the SLT, established by the behavioral researchers Paul Hersey and his counterpart, a management consultant, Ken Blanchard in the 1970s (Graeff, 1997; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Lynch, McCance, McCormack, & Brown, 2017).

During the period between the 1970s and 1980s Hersey and Blanchard explored different concepts of leadership theory (Fernandez & Vecchio, 1997; Hawkinson, 2016; Meier, 2016). Hersey pursued the situational leadership model while his colleague Blanchard pursued the situational leadership II model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Luo & Liu, 2014). The foundation of the situational leadership theory was that there existed no single grand style in the field of leadership (Afshari et al., 2017; Lynch et al., 2017;

McCleskey, 2014; Tortorella & Fogliatto, 2017; Zigarmi & Roberts, 2017).

Successful leaders embraced the task-relevant approach demonstrating that efficient leaders practiced their leadership to suit the readiness, capability, and preparedness of the followers they intended to provide guidance (Bennis, 2007; Berg & Karlsen, 2016; Goodson, McGee, & Cashman, 1989; Sands, 2017; Sousa et al., 2017; Sun, Anderson, Perry, & Lin, 2017). Good leaders differed between the individual leadership style, the nature of the team working with the leader, the type of task to be carried out, and the completed task (Dartey-Baah & Mekpor, 2017b; Prabhakar & Yaseen, 2016; Sethuraman & Suresh, 2014; Thompson & Glasø, 2015). Two critical elements forming the foundation of the SLT are the type of leadership, and the person or team's level of performance readiness (Cote, 2017; Déméh & Rosengren, 2015). The SLT had the necessary elements to help leaders create valuable strategies to motivate sales employees' performance.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Leadership Theory Motivation Strategies

George B. Graen and Mary Uhl-Bien developed the leader-member exchange theory, referred to as LMX or vertical dyad linkage theory, during the 1970s whose concentration was on the relationship between leaders with their group members (Carnevale, Huang, Crede, Harms, & Uhl-Bien, 2017; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Dunegan, Duchon, & Uhl-Bien, 1992; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Jian, 2015; Winkler, 2009). The LMX theory argued that every relationship between leaders and their followers undergo a three-phase process of, role taking, role making, and role routinization (Cropanzano, Dasborough, & Weiss, 2016; Nahrgang, Seo, Bauer, &

Erdogan, 2014; Peng, Chen, Xia, & Ran, 2017; Sheer, 2014).

The leader-member exchange theory (LMX) was a subset of situational theory, founded on the concept that leaders are capable of developing highly rated employee performance scores, reduce employee turnover, and creating greater happiness among the leaders (Day, Miscenko, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2014; Lu, Sun, & James, 2017; Nahrgang & Seo, 2014; Omilion-Hodges, Ptacek, & Zerilli, 2016; Whittington & Bell, 2016; Xu, Liu, & Guo, 2014). Due to the limited time leaders are expected to deliver performance results, the leaders create a good relationship with some of their subordinates from within the team, referred to as the in-group (Chen, Yu, & Son, 2014; Hanasono, 2017; Erdogan & Bauer, 2015; Law-Penrose, Wilson, Taylor, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2014; Park & Kim, 2014; Taylor, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2014; Tordera & González-Romá, 2013; Whittington & Bell, 2016). The in-group was given adequate time and attention from their leader to enhance the exchange of communication, information, and materials (Chen et al., 2014; Chinomona & Mofokeng, 2017; Gu, Tang, & Jiang, 2013; Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2014; Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2014; 2015; Vidyarthi, Erdogan, Anand, Liden, & Chaudhry, 2014).

The result of creating in-groups placed the balance of the group members in the out-group, which received very little attention from their leader, minimal formal interactions, and limited exchanges of information and materials (Bauer et., 2015; Gutermann, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Boer, Born, & Voelpel, 2017; He & Long, 2014; Herdman, Yang, & Arthur, 2014; Li & Liao, 2014; Marstand, Martin, & Epitropaki, 2017; Wang, Fang, Qureshi, & Janssen, 2015). Naturally, the limited contact from the leader to the out-group affected the outputs from the out-group thereby affecting goal achievements while followers from the in-group displayed very high performance resulting in high productivity (Bolino & Hsiung, 2014; Kahrobaei & Mortazavi, 2016; Liao, Wayne, Liden, & Meuser, 2017; Nahrgang et al., 2014; Peng et al., 2017; Radzi & Othman, 2016). The LMX theory offered insight about how to use group members to assist in developing strategies to motivate sales employee performance.

Motivation Strategies Using the Path-Goal Leadership Theory

The path-goal concept was a model anchored in understanding leadership style as well as the leader’s character and how each item suited the follower's needs while considering the work circumstances to attain the intended profitability target (Antonakis & House, 2014; Evans, 1970; Greene, 1974; Savkin, 2014). Robert House (1971; 1996) established the foundation of the path-goal theory, drawn from the expectancy theory of motivation. The objective of the path-goal theory was intended to enhance the worker's morale, supported enablement, and contentment (Malik, Aziz, & Hassan, 2014; Phillips & Phillips, 2016). The path-goal model was a demonstration of a worker’s insight and their transfer of such insight to the leader, thereby influencing the leader’s management attitude, style, and personality, to increase productivity for the organization (Famakin & Abisuga, 2016; Malik et al., 2014). Organizational leaders who practiced path-goal theory may provide employees a chance to be part of the motivational strategies to increase sales performance, which aligned with the research question of this study (Famakin & Abisuga, 2016).

Alanazi, Khalaf, and Rasli (2013) argued that path-goal theory demonstrated it was the responsibility of the leader to help his or her group members or followers to achieve their objectives. The researchers' theory also stated that it was the job of the leaders to provide boundaries to assure the follower's actions were within the expected norms of the organization in order to support and provide strategies to attain their performance goals (Cote, 2017; Erenel, 2015; Mulki, Caemmerer, & Heggde, 2015). The theory also outlined the leader's responsibility of ensuring the goals set for the followers are in line with the overall objective of the team and the entire organization (Chang, Chen, & Chiou, 2014; Famakin & Abisuga, 2016; Lu, Laux, & Antony, 2017). There were four categories of leaders under the path-goal theory. The four categories were: (a) directive whose interest was on the job at hand, (b) supportive whose interests was for happiness and welfare of employees. The final two categories were; (c) participative to interact with followers and involve them in decision making, and (d) achievement with focus on the results setting difficult objectives for his followers (Bettencourt, Bond, Domingues, Vieira, & Agnihotri, 2017; Johnson, Witt, Romay, Childers, & Virgets, 2015; Partono, Siregar, & Saleh, 2015).

Servant Leadership Philosophy as a Motivational Strategy

Servant leadership is a philosophical concept, which was a group of actions meant to improve the lifestyle of individuals, established an improved business environment and eventually produce a fairer and loving world (Greenleaf, 1977). The theory of servant leadership dated as far back as two thousand years but Greenleaf first started the contemporary servant leadership crusade during the 1970's when he published the first journal titled *The Servant as Leader* (Greenleaf, 1970). Greenleaf conceived the servant-leader motivational strategy as his servant leader essay (Greenleaf, 1972). Greenleaf argued that the servant-leader was a servant first (Greenleaf, 1970; 1972; 1977).

Robert Greenleaf suggested that such an individual was severely diverse from one who was *leader* first, probably because of the importance to mitigate an uncommon authority effort or to obtain physical properties (Greenleaf, 1970; 1972; 1977). There was a general perception among business leaders to believe what was acceptable to society than to believe the servant leadership concept, which promoted servant first instead of leader-first (Greenleaf, 1970; 1972; 1977). Among business leaders who practiced servant leadership, grey areas about the theory existed making it unclear and formed part of the immeasurable diversity of human nature one of them being to serve others (Greenleaf, 1977).

The servant leadership concept involved leader's prioritization and demonstration of their care and love for their followers (Irving & Berndt, 2017; Jaramillo, Bande, & Varela, 2015; Lacroix & Verdorfer, 2017; Sousa & Dierendonck, 2017). Greenleaf further suggested that the servant-leader was a servant first the leader has a craving to serve others; the heart of a servant was a necessary attribute of a servant-leader (Greenleaf, 1970; 1972; 1977). Greenleaf posited that the theory of servant leadership did not entail being sycophantic, instead leaders desired to assist fellow human beings while pinpointing and satisfying the needs of coworkers, clients, and societies (Greenleaf, 1970; 1972; 1977).

Greenleaf discussed other critical measures for servant leadership such as conceptualization, foresight, persuasion, listening plus understanding; awareness and perception; acceptance and empathy; rebuilding community and self-healing (Bavik, Yuen Lam, & Pok Man, 2017; Burton, Welty Peachey, & Wells, 2017; Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhuys, 2017a; Liden, Wayne, Chenwei, & Meuser, 2014). Greenleaf defined servant-leaders to be persons starting the action, focused on objectives, visionaries with big plans, great correspondents who could pull out and re-engage themselves; they are reliable, trustworthy, ingenious, spontaneous, and situational (Greenleaf, 1970; 1972; 1977).

Many researchers recognized the critical characteristics of servant leadership hoping to establish a concept about the influence of servant leadership on followers and impact of the performance on the organization (Ali Chughtai, 2014; Carter & Baghurst, 2014; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015; Tang, Kwan, Zhang, & Zhu, 2016; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Additional information about servant leadership provided by van Dierendonck (2011) discussed the academic literature and recognized six main features of servant-leader conduct: authenticity, providing direction, empowering, developing people, humility, interpersonal acceptance and stewardship (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Greenleaf suggested that servant leadership was a philosophy, rather than a concept or theory because of the group of actions which enhanced the lifestyle of persons, and eventually produced individual and organizational performance (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Eva, Sendjaya, Herbert & Robin, 2017; Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Neubert, Hunter, & Tolentino, 2016; Trong Tuan, 2016). Consequently, the servant leadership philosophy included an ethical element, which did not only discuss individual decency and honesty of the servant-leader, but also inspired improved decent creative thinking among the leaders' followers to develop new innovative ideas to increase individual and organizational performance (Barbuto, Gottfredson, & Searle, 2014; Beck, 2014; Chan & Mak, 2014; de Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014).

Furthermore, the servant leader investigated the ethical origin of the servant-leaders' ideas as well as business objectives. Also, servant leaders' emphasis was serving subordinates because they are blameless, not only perfected the reputation of the company but also created lasting connections with subordinates, inspiring their development and expansion for the purpose~~s~~ of making them to unleash their fullest potential (Chen & Manning, 2015; Mertel & Brill, 2015; Wu, Tse, Fu, Kwan, & Liu, 2013). Northouse (2017), Russell and Gregory Stone (2002), Spears (2004), and Sun (2013) pointed out that servant leaders took care of the development of every stakeholder, workers, client~~s~~, corporate cohort~~s~~, society, and community in an inclusive manner. A servant-leader focused primarily on the growth and well-being of people to assist in development and motivation for the communities to which they belonged (Graham, 1991; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002).

While traditional leadership involved the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the top of the pyramid, servant leadership was different (Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Russell, 2001; Spears, 2010). The servant-leader shared power and put the needs of others first and helped people develop and perform as highly as possible (Joseph & Winston, 2005; Liden, Wayne, Liao & Meuser, 2014; Parris & Peachey, 2013). Servant leadership was not just a theory but work on the practical aspects and real-life situations as a philosophical leadership approach (Panaccio, Henderson, Liden; Sipe, & Frick, 2015). Traditional leadership usually encompassed the application of power by the one who was heading the organization. By contrast, the servant-leader segmented power and placed the needs of the followers as a priority to achieve performance enhancement for the organization (Chen, Zhu, & Zhou, 2015; VanMeter, Chonko, Grisaffe, & Goad, 2016).

Servant leadership shifted the power pyramid such that the leader survived to work for his or her subordinates (Barbuto Jr, Gottfredson, & Searle, 2014; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Greenleaf in his seminal works of 1970, 1972 and 1977 argued that in the event leaders changed their mentality and served first, they unleashed determination and creativity in people around them, culminating in the higher motivated group (Greenleaf, 1970; 1972; 1977). Greenleaf acknowledged that companies and individuals might be servant-leaders (Greenleaf, 1970; 1972; 1977).

Greenleaf (1970) had three crucial seminal works namely, The Servant as Leader, The Institution as Servant, and Trustees as Servants (Northouse, 2017). The seminal works formed the foundation for other researchers who developed additional servant leadership dimensions as follows. Spears (1995) developed the following ten physiognomies of servant leaders as foresight, listening, healing, empathy, awareness, conceptualization, persuasion, stewardship, building community and commitment to the growth of others (Spears, 1995; 1996; 2004; 2005; 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2002). Sipe and Frick (2015) argued that servant-leaders are persons with a good personality, people issues were first at heart, are experienced conversationalists, focused, organized intellectuals, and used ethical power (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Servant leadership had similarities with participative leadership style in that both styles focused on the interest of followers or subordinate and they took views of how to motivate people into consideration (de Waal & Sivro, 2012; Selladurai, 2014). This is unlike the authoritarian leadership type, which does not match the regulatory standards of servant leadership. The top priority of a servant leader was to inspire, care and empower followers to unleash their full potential and abilities (Irving & Berndt, 2017). Servant leadership lead to an obligation for servant leaders to exercise their right to share their leadership accountability and took part in participative policymaking (Irving & Berndt, 2017). The servant leadership method allowed for staff linked conduct and require a reconsideration of the reporting association between leader and followers (Whittington, 2017). Other leadership styles, with a top-down reporting structure, did not apply the servant leadership motivation model that accentuated teamwork, dependence, compassion, as well as moral use of authority (Serrat, 2017). Typically, the person was a servant to start with, creating the cognizant choice to be the leader for the purposes to work for others in a right way, not to increase their power (Jaiswal, Jaiswal, Dhar, & Dhar, 2017). Some researchers perceived dissimilarity among a leadership philosophy such as servant leadership which was sometimes called ethical leadership and a leadership theory such as functional which was also known as situational leadership theories (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016; Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhuys, 2017b; Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013).

Despite the many positive elements of servant leadership some of the critics argued the limitations of the model by stating that it took a long time implementing, hence requiring more time to be useful and add to productivity (van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Another argument was that servant leadership created challenges for leaders and followers to understand the meaning of the model, which created the perception as contradictory, making it appear far-fetched and unrealistic (van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Furthermore, a servant leader may be different from the acceptable model of a leader. Servant leadership researchers are still arguing about the approach to leadership models that motivated employees (Caldwell, Ichiho, & Anderson, 2017; Mumford, & Fried, 2014). A question remained as to whether conceptualization was a behavior or a cognitive capability along with the question of whether conceptualization was a standard element of servant leadership (Jit, Sharma, & Kawatra, 2017). Servant leadership was suitable for every stage of management in almost every company incorporated the philosophical outline of being concerned for other people and put forth an outline of behaviors that allowed other participants to become servant leaders (Nolan & Hurt, 2017; Trong Tuan, 2017; Zhang, Kwong Kwan, Everett, & Jian, 2012). Servant leadership was not abstrused but easy to grasp and user-friendly to many types of leadership scenarios (Saleem, Goher, & Qamar, 2017). Servant leadership created a philosophical approach as well as a set of behaviors which followed could absorb and grew using the motivational techniques of servant leadership and thereby increased profitability (Flynn, Smithe, & Walker, 2016; Seto & Sarros, 2016; Timiyo & Yeadon-Lee, 2016).

Employee Motivation Strategies

Employee motivation was one of the most critical components in attaining the objectives or achievement of goals and affluence of organizations (Khuong & Hoang, 2015). Employee motivation consisted of a group of active forces, including interior and exterior elements, such as occupational features, personal variances, and organizational processes (Khuong & Hoang, 2015). Thus, employee motivation must occur through a comprehensive mixture of employees' needs and desire made to include the work environment (Mahmood, 2016). Consequently, every leader needed to comprehend the worker's needs and desires to enable the creation of appropriate motivational work surroundings employees (Bosse, Duell, Memon, Treur, & van der Wal, 2017; Dinh et al., 2014; Meuser et al., 2016; Perko, Kinnunen, Tolvanen, & Feldt, 2014; 2015; 2016; Salehzadeh, Shahin, Kazemi, & Shaemi Barzoki, 2015).

The motivation of an employee was a difficult task and motivating sales employees was perhaps more difficult because sales personnel are usually outgoing and accustomed to goals of monetary reward for satisfactory performance (Perko et al., 2016). Maslow's prominent contribution to the scholarship of human behavior was his hierarchy of needs, which described a needs-based human motivation and hierarchical perception (Maslow, 1943). The objective of all persons was to satisfy specific needs and improve their overall conduct demonstrating that fulfilling one's needs did not guarantee that a higher order of need might not arise (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1948; Sparks & Repede, 2016). Individual acknowledgment provided a sense of being within a grouping, which affected one's capability for sustained development and growth, (Sparks & Repede, 2016). Maslow understood that basic needs must be satisfied first before motivational strategies, to enhance an individual's life stature. Understanding that food, shelter, and clothing must be the priority of humans allowed leaders to develop motivational strategies beyond the basic needs of all humans (Salehzadeh et al., 2015).

Employee Engagement Motivations

Leaders who understood that employee engagement was critical to happiness and contentment in the workplace may be better prepared to develop and implement employee motivational strategies (Sparks & Repede, 2016). Employee engagement in a work environment system could culminate in positive employee attitude changes. Such engagement thereby creating a favorable work atmosphere for every employee to perform to the best of their ability, upheld the company objectives and values, and be inspired to add to organizational accomplishment driven by a greater sense of their personal will and conviction (Anitha, 2014; Georgiades, 2015a; Khuong & Dung, 2015; Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). An engaged employee was one who had an appreciation of the way the business was achieving goals, how the organization evolved to accomplish its objectives and provided an opportunity to add a voice by giving ideas to enhance company productivity (Georgiades, 2015b; Hsieh & Wang, 2015; Stevens, 2013).

The concept of employee engagement anchored in faith, veracity, driven by the employee, and the employer's pledge to exchange information (Georgiades, 2015c; Malam, 2016; Shahzad & Naeem, 2013; Shuck & Reio, 2013). Employee engagement was a method that provided opportunities for organizational development and added to employee happiness (Aktar, 2017; Cesário & Chambel, 2017; Nasomboon, 2014). To attain personal happiness in the workplace and adequately motivate employee performance each employee must know their role in the organization, be willing to perform tasks without being pushed, and focused on being part of the team who worked toward attaining the business goals (Hanaysha, 2016; Huhtala & Feldt, 2016; Kocherlakota, 2015).

Transition

Section 1 included the problem that some business managers lack strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. The research question sought to determine what motivational strategies some managers use to improve sales performance. The lack of leadership strategies to motivate employees to perform at the highest standards could result in lower organizational performance.

Section 2 includes foundational information, including the role of the researcher, participant selection, the importance of conducting ethical research, and support for the chosen research method and design. Section 2 also contains information on the data collection process (analysis, instruments, organization, and technique) and closes with an overview of qualitative study criteria for reliability and validity.

Section 3 includes a presentation of the findings of the study, professional practice application, and implications for social change. Section 3 also includes recommendations for additional research, action recommendations, and a personal reflection and concluding statement.

Section 2: The Project

The role of small business in sustaining the economy of the United States is through the creation of new jobs and providing a significant portion of the countries revenue. A potential outcome of this project was to prove that small business could increase the economic contribution to the U.S. economy by adding and implementing innovative motivational sales strategies (Artinger & Powell, 2015; Cader & Leatherman, 2011; SBA, 2014a). To achieve continued growth in the small business sector, I used qualitative multiple case study to explore the leadership strategies business leaders used to motivate sales employees' performance to improve productivity in small businesses.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies business leaders use to motivate sales employees' performance. The target population for this study consisted of 3 three sales managers from 3 three businesses in the Southern United States who use strategies to motivate their employees' sales performance. Improved sales performance strategies from motivated sales employees may could contribute to positive social change by increasing company profits, which will would contribute to the local economy through tax revenue and increase social well-being for sales force employees and stakeholders.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher used the activities of data collection, data analysis, and data presentation in a manner that was not biased, which was neutral in wording and ethically accepted according to the research standards (Khan, 2014a; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). My role as a researcher was to perform the duties of data collection, data analysis, and data presentation in an uncompromised way, nonaligned and in an ethically acceptable manner (Elo et al., 2014). Yin (2014) argued that the literature review conducted by the researcher would act as good basis for appreciating the critical and key terms that hold the topic of the research. Increased awareness of all the relevant information within the research gave the researcher an excellent opportunity to probe the participant, be aware of the importance of reducing personal bias, and increase the opportunity to complete the study ethically.

Fields and Kafai (2009) argued qualitative research requires the researcher and the participant to be aware of their potential bias as well as their respective worldview of the research. The *personal lens* of the researcher was a tool to collect data to understand it was impossible to delink the lens from the study (Jackson, 1990). A qualitative researcher embraced the cultural world of the research participants including their worldviews (Denzin, 2009, 1978). Bernard (2012) stated that it was important to note that the experiential and cultural background of the researcher included their values, ideologies, and biases that may have a negative impact on the interpretation of the research. That was the reason why the bias, which was due to the researchers' involvement in the study, posed a challenge, which required serious attention (Chenail, 2011). It was critical that the analysis of the phenomena was that of the participants and not that which represented the researcher (Holloway, Brown, & Shipway, 2010).

One of the common challenges faced by researchers was the inability to appreciate the way other people look at things or view things (Chenail, 2011). It was for the good of the researcher to understand their worldview and personal lens because these would help them to better understand other people's worldview thereby enhancing their interpretation of the reflections and behavior of others (Dibley, 2011; Fields & Kafai, 2009). I used member checking, transcript validation including review, allowing sense-making, attaining data saturation, proper creation of interview questions to minimize the use of my lens during data collection and analysis, as suggested by Dibley (2011), Doody (2013), Green (2013), and Haahr, Norlyk, and Hall (2013). None of the study participants were related to me in any way.

I am a seasoned human resources (HR) professional with 20 years of hands-on experience in both small and medium-sized multinational organizations. I am currently the president of Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) whose membership includes small and large business organizations and former vice president of Zambia Institute of Human Resources Management (ZIHRM). I am a fellow of the Zambia Institute of Human Resources Management. I am also a member of international professional bodies namely Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) and International People Management (IPM) respectively. My background and professional membership provided a strong history of experiences to professionally interact and understand the interview participants without personal bias.

It was an essential requirement for me as a researcher to carry out my study in an ethically accepted manner (Khan, 2014a). The safety of participants, voluntary consent by participants, confidentiality of participant personal details, and information provided by participants were part of the ethical research standards for researchers (Khan, 2014a). It was my responsibility as a researcher to ensure no disruption of the data collection site and that advance communication was the objective and intent of the study as well as confirmed appointments in writing, through phone, and email communication as recommended by Caruth (2013). I conducted my research ethically, and ensured no physical, emotional, and psychological harm occured for participants, and advised consent is voluntary and that anonymity of participants as well as keeping confidentiality was essential to the integrity of this study.

The ethical protocol covered the major principles and ethics concerning research that included human subjects as established by the 1979 Belmont Report. This report provided a set of guidelines concerning the fair treatment of human subjects and benevolence by the researcher (Brakewood & Poldrack, 2013). The United States Department of Health and Human Services (2015) provided three principles of reverence for people, avoidance of harm of any form to participants, and equitable allocation of fairness among all participants participating in research.

My role, as the instrument to provide the interviews, was to adhere to both the research ethical protocols of the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the American Psychological Association (APA). I obtained training regarding the proper handling of human research participants through an online program offered by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) completed on 07/12/15 and subsequent completion with certificate number 1797111.

Participants

Qualitative study outcomes hinge on the views and understanding of the answers from interview participants (Mikene et al. 2013). The first step in arranging a case study was the choice of a suitable organization to participate in the study that had personnel knowledgeable about the research topic and willing to participate in the interview process (Yin, 2014). A set of eligibility requirements assisted to guide the selection of possible research participants. Prospecting for participant organizations occured using an individual who suggested he had contacts with numerous organizations with knowledgeable managers experienced in motivating sales employees; then provided a list of prospective participants once the IRB granted the research number (05-03-18-0567264) to move the study forward. All participant organizations and actual participants received emails and phone calls as suggested by the research of Cridland, Jones, Caputi, and Magee (2016), Mikene
et al. (2013), and Yin (2014).

Eligibility Criteria

I called and e-mailed small business executive decision makers to ask if their company would participate as one of the case studies for this research and if they had personnel with experience using strategies to motivate sales employees' performance, as suggested by (Haider, Dodge, Brown, Hacker, & Raine, 2013). To ensure the integrity of the interview process, all participants were employed at the participating company, were at least 18 years of age, and had a minimum of 1-year of experience using strategies to motivate sales employees. Once three satisfactory organizations agreed to participate in the study, I emailed and called each potential interviewees suggested by the decision maker, to confirm their willingness to participate in the interviews as suggested in the research of Haider et al. (2013).

Yin (2014) posited that researchers should gather evidence about prospective participant qualifications, knowledge, and experience on the subject before the interview. In addition, Yin (2014) argued that researchers should gather credentials of all participants' previous knowledge to guarantee the candidates' suitability for partaking in the research. Consequently, collected a description of the participant's position within the company, confirmed current employment with the company, years of experience, current age, and that each participant had a minimum of one-year experience in motivating sales employees.

Access to possible candidates. I used a person in the United States familiar with small businesses that used motivational strategies to improve the sales performance of sales employees that had the interest to participate in this qualitative research study, as recommended by Donovan, Paramasivan, de Salis, and Toerien (2014). The individual assisted in the participant selection for this study and provided numerous potential organizations willing to participate in the study. I contacted all referred organizations, and approved managers from three different organizations who agreed to participate who had the necessary knowledge and qualifications to participate. After confirming the three candidates had all the necessary qualifications to participate, each received a formal invitation to participate in the study. Each participant in the research received a phone call or an email notification of acceptance into the research as well as a consent form.

Establishing a working relationship with participants. I communicated with all participants by email and calls, before the interviews and provided a letter of acceptance into the study and a consent form for each participant and organization to sign and return. The consent form explained the interview process, including sample questions, the type of study, potential dangers, the moral and ethical rigor to provide confidentiality, which included the Walden IRB. Yin (2014) argued that it was essential to building a healthy workgroup between individual study members and the researcher to establish a comfortable interview process.

Participants alignment with the research topic. To ensure the participants' knowledge of the research question, I used a multiple step procedure by contacting small business corporate decision makers asking if their company would participate as a case study for this research study and asked if they had management personnel with experience using strategies to motivate sales employees. All selected participants received invitation letters to participate in the research. Member checking occurred after the returned interview summary for their approval as suggested in the research of (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; Harvey, 2015). Member checking commenced after the candidates reviewed their interview summary and finished after the candidate acknowledged the summary was accurate, as recommended by Carlson (2010).

I made all interview participants aware in writing, and verbally, the interview would be approximately 60 minutes. The Walden University IRB and the *Belmont Report* guidelines suggested no interviews at the participant's place of business. Yin (2014) also stated that it is unacceptable to carry out a study at the researcher's place of employment. I did not conduct interviews at my place of business.

Morse et al. (2014) recommended the best sampling method for a multiple case study was purposive, which ensured the candidate's requirements took part in the research. The basis for using purposive sampling was to embrace candidates who are capable of providing comprehensive data about strategies to motivate sales employees' performance (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016; Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, & Hoagwood, 2014; Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014; Suri, 2011; Tongco, 2008). Gathering information on each participant's previous experience with motivation strategies before the interview should assure the participant's knowledge of the subject (Morse & Coulehan, 2015). Englander, (2012) and Robinson (2014) proposed that qualitative case study researchers must make use of comprehensive benchmarks for choosing of candidates to guarantee each candidate posessed the required knowledge and experience essential to the study.

Research Method and Design

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some managers used to motivate sales employees' performance. The use of the qualitative method with a multiple case study design assisted and guided this research. The following subsections include my rationale for selecting the research method and design for this study.

Research Method

Multiple factors influenced my selection of the research method such as the research question, my philosophical view, and the information available concerning strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. Petty et al. (2012a) posited that the choice of a research question could influence the selection of the research method. He went on to say the philosophical worldview could influence the research approach because the view illustrated the researcher's reality, which might inspire and influence the purpose of the research social constructivism was a good representation of my philosophical worldview. My interest was to understand the views and experiences of sales managers and the strategies they used to motivate sales employees' performance. In addition, my social constructivist worldview allowed the use of inductive reasoning and interpretivism along with open-ended questions and observations while listening carefully, to understand the participant's viewpoint, as described by Mikėnė, Gaižauskaitė, and Valavičienė (2013) and Yilmaz (2013).

My study is in line with the qualitative method, which backs a social constructivist philosophical worldview since qualitative researcher's concentration is on written data to obtain comprehension and an enhanced appreciation of a specific phenomenon, other than quantitative researchers whose focus is on evaluating statistical data (Anyan, 2013; Astalin, 2013). Researchers using a quantitative method generalized findings from the study to show they relate to the study population (Barnham, 2015). Qualitative research assists researchers to interpret human experience and phenomena in natural settings using textual data rather than numerical data, as described by Yilmaz (2013).

I used data from the interview responses of the participants to generate information to explain the strategies managers used to motivate sales employees' performance. Qualitative method researchers do not attempt to generalize or predict; they attempt to comprehend the meaning of the phenomenon (Bristowe, Selman, & Murtagh, 2015; Bytheway, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Yilmaz, 2013). A qualitative method was best suited for this study because the focus of the study was how and why a certain phenomenon existed and not an attempt to examine relationships between variables, as per quantitative method (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Morse, 2015a; Yin, 2014). Also, the quantitative method incorporated closed-ended questions to collect data to test the relationship between variables of a phenomenon (Bailey, 2014; Yilmaz, 2013). A quantitative method did not provide the generalized data required to develop a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. The use of qualitative information provided the opportunity to gather pertinent information to assist in finding the strategies some managers used to motivate sales employees' performance.

Yin (2014) and Griensven, Moore, and Hall (2014) argued that the mixed method was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Given the above argument, a quantitative or qualitative approach alone was not suited for answering my research question thus a mixed methods approach was not appropriate (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Hayes, Bonner, & Douglas, 2013). The type of data needed to answer the research question and identify strategies to motivate sales employees' performance was one of the reasons why the quantitative method was not adequate to address the research question. Qualitative research method carries many advantages when compared to quantitative or mixed methods because the construction of knowledge extrapolated from the information obtained from the collaboration procedure with the candidate's suited semistructured interview questions (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Kornbluh, 2015; Patton, 2015;

Southam-Gerow & Dorsey, 2014; Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Over and above, a qualitative case study permits improved collaboration among the interviewer including the mixed method or quantitative approaches (Dasgupta, 2015; Talbot, 2015).

Barnham (2015) argued that qualitative researcher's pursuit was to comprehend the participant's reasoning. Qualitative research suited this study for understanding the participant's motivations and the context of beliefs and actions as suggested by Yilmaz (2013). Potter (2013) posited that qualitative researchers are capable of evaluating the way human beings viewed the world. The available expert views set out above of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research suggested the qualitative method was most appropriate for this research study.

Yin (2014) suggested that researchers should take an interest in the participants' behavior and analyze current and archival booklets from within their organizations in the state of a secondary data source to gather data concerning the research question. I used relevant organizational booklets as a secondary source of information comprising websites, charts, schedules, graphs, plus other in-house company booklets concerning strategies used to sustain small businesses. I obtained unpublished organizational booklets as a secondary data source to assist in methodological triangulation as recommended by Gorissen, van Bruggen, and Jochems (2013). Onwuegbuzie and Byers (2014) argued that a scholar's chances to reach data saturation using document analysis from secondary sources increased and that some documents for review were in the public domain.

Research Design

Wahyuni (2012) and Yin (2014) argued that the research design was the reasonable arrangement for the researcher to link data to the research question. A multiple case study design was preeminently fit to handle this study because the design gives the flexibility to gather information about strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. I also explored the designs of ethnography, phenomenology, and narrative to assure my design was best suited for this study. Cronin (2014) and Yin (2014) posited that researchers making use of a case study design generated an excellent method for gathering data to provide evidence for the sequence and the reasons the interviewee experiences occurred in a particular manner.

Soares, Bastos, Rodrigues, Pereira, and Baptista (2015) argued that case study researchers usually use a multiple case study design to evaluate gathered information. Phenomenological research defined the phenomenon through recording the experience lived by the candidates in the research; phenomenologists endeavor to know the lived experiences of people through discovering the connotation of a phenomenon (Petty et al., 2012b; Roberts, 2013; Suorsa & Huotari, 2014; Tomkins & Eatough, 2013; Wagstaff & Williams, 2014; Whittemore, 2014). A phenomenological design allowed researchers to understand a phenomenon by defining its meaning using the views of peoples' experiences regarding the phenomenon (Robertson & Thomson, 2014; Rodham, Fox, & Doran, 2015; Snelgrove, 2014). A phenomenological design was not suited for a researcher's use in exploring strategies to motivate sales employees' performance because phenomenology uses interviews as a single source of evidence (Bevan, 2014; Davidsen, 2013; Gill, 2014; Khan, 2014b; Moustakas, 1994). Yin (2014) argued that a qualitative multiple case study design used several sources of proof to obtain a deeper appreciation of the phenomenon contrary to its background. Phenomenology was unable to support the research question in this research because I did not explore or concentrate on the connotation of a phenomenon.

Initially, narrative inquiry design appeared appropriate for use in my study. A narrative inquiry is a design made up of the collective opinions of people's experiences including an approach of investigation by means of documented reasons to explain experiences (Barbour, Doshi, & Hernandez, 2015; Benson, 2014; Birchall, 2014; Dailey & Browning, 2014; Huber et al., 2013). Narrative research design aimed at the life of persons, carrying the verbal antiquity of occasions from an individual or groups (Juntunen, 2014; Petty et al., 2012a). A narrative research design was not suitable for this study due to the data collection method, which delved into the lives of people using oral history to produce data (Wang & Geale, 2015; Yu, 2014). Additionally, the narrative inquiry did not suit this study because a focus on personal lives did not answer the research question concerning manager’s strategies to motivate sales employees’ performance, as suggested by Bruce, Beuthin, Sheilds, Molzahn, and Schick-Makaroff, (2016) and Petty et al. (2012b).

Ethnography is a method researcher’s use to write about people; ethnographies provide details of specific communities, social groups, and cultures (Delaney, 2017; Pluye et al., 2016). This study did not require details of cultures or social groups. Consequently, ethnography was not capable of meeting the requirements of this study. A qualitative multiple case study design is suitable for exploring and establishing motivational strategies for sales employees because researchers using the design can respond to questions coming from several sources. Consequently, I did not make use of a qualitative multiple case study design for this research.

Data saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015) argued that data saturation was a word that shows a comprehensive search of significant sources of proof to guarantee a sufficient gathering of valued data to sustain the research. Yin (2014) argued that the primary data source for case studies are interviews, while qualitative researchers might use numerous sources of data, like document reviews, observations, and corporate articles to increase the validity of the study. Onwuegbuzie and Byer (2014) argued that the probability of data saturation increased when using secondary data sources like document review. It was my responsibility to make sure data saturation occurs by using organization documentation and open-ended semi-structured questions until all new information was exhausted. Yin (2014) recommended that the researcher carefully review all participants' answers to interview questions because it improves the appreciation of data saturation before the beginning of the rest of participants' interviews and gives an opportunity to the researcher to ask further probing questions to exhaust all new information.

Yin (2014) stated that when the interviewer asks the participants direct questions, it enhances the likelihood of reliability as well as attaining data saturation. The use of secondary data sources like document review enhances the level of data saturation (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Silverman (2013) argued that researchers could get specific documents from the public domain. The data collection for my study included interviews with individuals about the research topic to obtain valuable information, as well as relevant corporate documents and other internal records related to strategies to motivate sales employees' performance (Dikko, 2016). Additionally, I also searched participant company websites and the internet for public information about the participating organizations business that might contribute relevant information to answer the research question.

Data saturation could occur during analysis of data collected from the interviews, which is the primary strategy for data collection (Morse, 2015b; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Morse (2015a) recommended that researchers could attain data saturation by returning to the participants and conduct more interviews until data is saturated. Additionally, member checking may be a strategy to increase the probability of data saturation, which does not require additional participants (Morse, 2015b). The best form of member checking occurs when participants receive a summary of their interview then review and endorse the correctness of the summary (Morse, 2015b).

Three case studies with one participant per case study provided sufficient data to reach saturation using an iterative process of continued member checking as per the guidelines of Morse (2015a). Data saturation occurred using the three participant interviews. Consequently, no additional participant interviews were required. Member checking assisted obtaining data saturation while enhancing the credibility and validity of the data from the interviews. Using a combination of interviews and company documents, and public information provided sufficient information to reach data saturation.

Population and Sampling

During this study, I explored strategies used by some United States managers to motivate sales employees' performance. I selected three interview participants from small businesses in the United States. The selected participants have operations in the United States and use a sales force. Each interview participant knew strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. The suggested participants were called before acceptance to verify their experience was adequate to answer the research question. Participants that met the qualifications for participation received an invitation to participate in the study.

Robinson (2014) outlined a four-point method to choose the population and sampling and using the approach would guarantee an appropriate population and sampling. Robinson (2014) stated that the four-point system has the following elements:

- a mechanism for selection of the sample;
- sample size selection;
- sample sourcing; and
- definition of the research population.

Furthermore, Robinson (2014) argued that recognizing both the population of research and the sampling approach helps in the implementation of a research study. To guarantee suitable sample size for this multiple case study, three small business managers of sales acted as interview candidates.

The selection standards for this research offered a population that was various geographically, yet homogenous. The selected participants were from companies that are small or medium-sized enterprises, operating in the United States, and using strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. I used an individual familiar with numerous small sales-oriented businesses to provide referrals of organizations that expressed interest to participate in this qualitative research study as discussed by Donovan et al. (2014). The individual referring potential participants for the study agreed to provide referrals to companies with potential qualified interview participants to participate in this research study. The individual familiar with companies interested in participating in this research study stated that he was confident about providing several candidates to participate in the interview process. I contacted organizations recommended by individual and requested a meeting with potential participants to inquire if they or their managers had experience using strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. Those that confirmed appropriate experience received an invitation to participate in this study. All individuals involved in the study received a written copy of a consent form to sign and return. The form stated that the identity of any participants and their respective companies are strictly confidential.

I provided all participants copies of all participation documents in advance of the interview via email and I followed-up with personal phone calls inviting each to participate in the interview. The emails and calls included the information listed in the consent form, which describes the procedures, sample questions, and voluntary nature of the study. Additional information to each participant included discussing potential dangers, protection of confidentiality, how to contact the Walden IRB staff concerning the procedures and protocols of the research. Yin (2014) argued that a good working friendship between the participant and the researcher is essential to support the proper application of the case study protocol. Each participant selected his or her setting for the interviews at a relaxed and comfortable site. In addition, I informed each participant their participation in the study was voluntary and participants could withdraw at any time from the interview process for any reason without penalty, and their confidentiality would be secured.

Ethical Research

Avasthi, Ghosh, Sarkar, and Grover (2013) argued that understanding the potential conflicts of semi-structured open-ended interview questions of providing ethical obligations can increase the research ethics. Principles for human ethical research and social impact assessment are guidelines to assist the researcher in maintaining honorable ethical principles (Hammersley, 2014; Hersh, 2014; Kasim & Al-Gahuri, 2015; Vanclay, Baines, & Taylor, 2013). Comprehension of the principles of human ethical research could increase the sensitivity of the interviewer to ensure all participant responses are free from coercion or bias that might adversely affect the study or alter the social impact assessment (Cook, Hoas, & Joyner, 2013; Cross, Pickering, & Hickey, 2014; Huang, O'Connor, Ke, & Lee, 2014). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1979) posited that all human needs to observe the essential ethical principles to protect the research candidates.

Professional association guidelines and United States government organizations offer researchers data for the ethical handling of human candidates in a research study. I used *The Belmont Report* to show the best way of implementing the ethical handling and safeguarding of candidates in this research study. Professional association guidelines and United States government organizations offer researchers data concerning the ethical handling of human candidates in a research study. I used The *Belmont Report* as a guide to implementing the best ethical methods of handling and safeguarding of participants in this research study.

The *Belmont Report* (1979) is the primary source that supports the ethical research for this study. The *Belmont Report* comprises ethical principles and procedures concerning ethical ideologies for the safeguarding of human subjects in a study (Brakewood & Poldrack, 2013). I used the suggested guidance set out by the Belmont Report and other ethical guidelines to ensure the ethical treatment of all participants in the study including the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (2012) procedures for safeguarding the privileges and wellbeing of study participants and their organizations.

Prior to commencing the interviews, all participants received several documents including an invitation letter to partake in the research (see Appendix D), a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix E), and a letter of cooperation (see Appendix C) as suggested by Angelos (2013), Barker (2013), Beskow, Check, and Ammarell (2014), Check, Wolf, Dame, and Beskow (2014), and Hammersley (2014). The invitation to participate consisted of a summary of the intent of the research, the purpose of the research, and an explanation of the steps used to ensure privacy (Hersh, 2014; Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014; Wallace & Sheldon, 2014). Additionally, I provided each participant the interview protocol (see Appendix A) member checking procedures (see Appendix F), and a consent form along with a cover letter. The consent form informed the participant that if they detected any personal danger from the study, they can stop participation at any time, that participation was voluntary, and that their privacy continued regardless of participation (Owen & Kemp, 2014; Thrope, 2014). All participants were required to acknowledge in writing they understood the guidelines of the study and agreed to participate.

Participants received a notice stating their participation was voluntary. I respected all decisions the participants made to participate in the study or withdraw. Every participant reserved the right to withdraw at any time and to asked questions before deciding to partake in this research. The participant could withdraw from the study at any time by telephoning the researcher or by email and any data collected removed from the researcher's files as described in Appendix A. Each participant received total confidentiality of all events and their actions.

All interviews were subject to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association *Publication Manual* and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1979). The rules were to warrant that both the questions and answers during the interview did not compromise the professional or individual wellbeing of the participant. Safeguarding the identities of the research participants as well as their companies should reduce concerns about confidentiality, as suggested by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. All participants were volunteers who reserved the right to withdraw from the research at any time, with or without reason (see Appendix A). Every participant who would have decided to withdraw from the research would have had their identities and all data destroyed by shredding or burning as suggested by Hadidi, Lindquist, Treat-Jacobson, and Swanson (2013) and in Appendix A. All researchers must assure the research study conformed to ethical practice and principles (Vanclay et al., 2013). I had the exclusive right to access all file naming conventions, data, coding, including all identifying data to guarantee personal and organizational anonymity. The only exception to my exclusive use of participant data was if there was a belief by a member of the Walden University administration because of concern for the well-being of the participant or organization, the administration could review all documentation.

The processes and procedures used to select participants for this study followed the U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical Research Regulations (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). A fire-resistant safe provided defense and privacy of the data acquired from participants while protecting consent forms, recordings of interviews, transcripts, interview notes, and individual logs. In addition to the fire-resistant protection of documents and other data, all data was password safeguarded using a flash drive accessible by only me. After 5 years, I will destroy all data and documentation. Borena, Belanger, and Egigu (2015) argued that information privacy included the protection of personal data and all other confidential data not available for public view.

The final publication of this study will not divulge any details of the companies or candidates. All interview participants in this research were assigned a pseudonym of P1, P2, and P3 and organizations a pseudonym of C1, C2, and C3, to guarantee privacy and confidentiality. Yin (2014) argued that the use of pseudonyms provided privacy to the participants and their organizations.

After receiving IRB approval for this study I used an individual in the United

States who was familiar with small businesses that use strategies to motivate sales employees who provided referrals of companies to participate in the research study. The referred business decision makers were asked to take part in the study if they had personal experience or managers with experience working with strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. Each company decision maker and participant in the study received an invitation to participate (see Appendix D).

An e-mail to all participating decision makers and interview participants summarized the reasons and methods of the study. Additionally, I provided participants time to ask questions and address concerns as well as requesting all participants' sign and return a copy of the informed consent document once they verbally agreed to participate in the study. Researchers must avoid extraordinary reward enticements to participants for participating in a research study (Devine et al., 2015). I did not offer any compensation to the participants in the research study.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher acts as the principal data collection instrument in a qualitative study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Lewis, 2015). I served as the primary data collection instrument. Additionally, Yin (2014) and Bourke, (2014) suggested that the researcher was part of the collection of information from every source in case study research. A qualitative study might consist of focus groups, document review, analysis, observations, interviews, videos, and artifacts (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson, 2013; Mertens, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Being the researcher and primary data collection instrument, I gathered data from participants using semi-structured interviews, documentation review, and analysis of documents made available by the company to explore the strategies used to motivate sales employees. Because I resided in Africa and the participants resided in the United States, I used Skype and GoToMeeting audio-visual products to conduct the interviews. Video conferencing provided an equivalent relational experience as face-to-face interviews for researchers who are not in the same geographical location as their interview participants (Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015; Hamilton, 2014; Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016; Oates, 2015). The online interview was asynchronous when provided by Skype or a similar service thereby serving as a convenient replacement for the traditional face-to-face interview (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013; Edje, Miller, Kiefer, & Oram, 2013; Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014; Seitz, 2016). Conducting interviews using the conventional face-to-face method often had considerable challenges because of logistical concerns (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013; Woodcock, 2016).

Elsawah, Guillaume, Filatova, Rook, and Jakeman (2015) posited that researchers used semistructured interviews to describe the participants thinking. The use of semi-structured interviews met the requirements of qualitative research when the interview protocol used open-ended questions allowing the researcher to find a comprehensive understanding of the responses to the questions and allowed the researcher the liberty to follow-up with supplementary investigation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; McIntosh & Morse, 2015; Nelson, Onwuegbuzie, Wines, & Frels, 2013; Oltmann, 2016; Onwuegbuzie, 2014). To assure a comprehensive understanding of the participant answers to the interview questions, I used a semistructured interview protocol.

Typically, the three types of interviews used in qualitative research are structured, unstructured, and semistructured interviews, which included open-ended questions (Owen & Noonan, 2013; Rowley, 2012). Structured interviews typically required shorter responses yet included more questions as compared to unstructured interviews that used fewer questions (Rowley, 2012; Wolgemuth et al., 2015). Additionally, structured interviews resembled a conversation as a collection method whereas a semistructured interview obtained more information about the topic of research (Yin, 2014).

Using semistructured interviews to guide the interview supported the flexibility of participants talking freely, provided insight to their discussion, and allowed clarification of responses with follow-up questions to gain more information from the interview, which was appropriate for a qualitative case study (Jamshed, 2014; Yin, 2014). Semistructured interviews used open-ended questions, reviewed, and analyzation of pertinent organization documentation formed the two forms of data into this multiple case study. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes, conducted at the participant's choice of locations. Elsawah et al. (2015) suggested not conducting an interview too long for fear of losing the participant's involvement. A semistructured interview with 6–12 questions requires approximately 1 hour for completion (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013),

All the interview questions were open-ended to avoid simple yes or no answers, as suggested by (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013). Interview questions obtained a greater understanding of the participant knowledge about the research topic than questionnaires (Irvine et al., 2013). Cridland et al. (2016) argued that interviews provided a significant element that may had challenging techniques at different times of the study process to increase for managing validity and reliability in case studies.

Castillo-Montoya (2016) and Yin (2014) recommended using an initial interview protocol, with essential questions for all participants, in a case study design. In this research study, I used suitable case study protocol methods to uphold participant attention and to help attain reliability and validity, as suggested by (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Platt & Skowron, 2013). The questions for this research study are in the research study protocols. The study protocols served as a guide for both collecting and describing the importance of the collected information (Silverman, 2013). Jacob and Furgerson (2012) and Yin (2014) endorsed the use of protocols for the information gathering procedure. Using an interview protocol was critical during the execution of the interviews to maintain focus on the topic of the study, thereby improving the reliability of the data collection process (Yin, 2014). Consequently, I diligently used the interview protocol included in Appendix A to mitigate bias and made use of additional probing questions to obtain more data for better insight into the participant responses.

Normalization of interview questions occured when using semi-structured interviews in a multiple case study (Hood, Hart, Belgrave, Tademy, & Jones, 2012). To attain normalization, I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions documenting all on a digital recorder, preserved, and secured all recordings in a personal secured fire-resistant safe to protect the information and assured the privacy of the interview participant. All participants received a summary of the interview and interpretations requesting their participation in member checking to assure the representations were valid and correct, as recommended by Morse (2015), Yin (2014), Morse (2015), and Yin (2014).

To validate information obtained in the interviews, each executive decision maker was asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participate and then asked who they recommended to participate in the interviews. In addition, the executive decision maker was asked to provide relevant corporate documents to support the strategies used to motivate sales employees' performance such as charts, graphs, or other internal records. I contacted all participants to assure they meet the qualifications to participate and advised that participation in the study was voluntary (see Appendix A). Mikene et al. (2013) and Silverman (2013) suggested all participants in a qualitative study select a convenient time, date, and place for their interview, which I assured occured. After audio recording the interviews and collecting the corporate documents I carefully reviewed all the data, transcribed the recordings into a summary, provided a copy to each participant for member checking of accuracy, and acknowledged they accepted the summary contents. The review of the interview summary and documents supporting the strategies used to motivate sales employees' performance provided two data collection sources for this study. Houghton et al. (2013) and Yin (2014) posited that two sources of information gathering allowed the use of methodological triangulation to substantiate the outcomes coming from information as well as improve the reliability and trustworthiness.

Triangulation was a data collection instrument used to ensure data corroboration and that the data was sufficient to answer the research question as suggested by (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Gorissen, van Bruggen, & Jochems, 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Kern, 2016; Modell, 2015; Silverman, 2013; Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2014). I reviewed and analyzed relevant corporate documents as a second source of data to discern the strategies small business managers used to motivate sales employees' performance. The authorized company decision maker approved all documents for release before use in this study, by executing the letter of cooperation (Appendix C).

Multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, document review, and observations formed part of methodological triangulation (Heale & Forbes, 2013; Hoque, Covaleski, & Gooneratne, 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Oesterreich & Teuteberg, 2016; Wahyuni, 2012; Wilson, 2014; Yin, 2014). I used methodological triangulation to enhance the confirmability and dependability of the data. A case study is a research design, which used several sources of data as is in this study, the methodological triangulation technique suited using the method for this study as suggested by Yin (2014) and Gorissen, van Bruggen, and Jochems (2013).

Leonidou, Christodoulides, Kyrgidou, and Palihawadana (2015) posited that participant member checking was an acknowledged technique of validating and substantiating candidates' answers. I provided the participants with a summary of their interview responses and requested acknowledgment that the summaries and interpretations were accurate, as suggested by Silverman (2013) and Yin (2014). The interview questions are available to view in (Appendix B). I personally transcribed each interview and uploaded the transcripts and literature information into NVivo v 11 software to help in data organization and analysis.

Data Collection Technique

Doody and Noonan (2013) posited that creating a good and healthy relationship in advance and at the time of interview might establish confidence to warrant the participant was at peace, relaxed, and undisturbed. Bauman (2015), Bird (2013), and Bowden and Galindo-Gonzalez (2015) all recommend full disclosure to all participants. I strived to assure all participants were comfortable by providing full disclosure of the interview process.

Researchers may have found selecting a subset of a population was a benefit to providing a qualitative case study (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013; Bagnasco, Ghirotto, & Sasso, 2014; Matorera & Fraser, 2016). During this study, I used small businesses as a subset of all businesses that used sales employees. Responding to the research question of this qualitative multiple case study was accomplished using purposive and random sampling (Oppong, 2013; Palinkas et al., 2013; Robinson, 2014). Poulis, Poulis, and Plakoyiannaki (2013) defined purposive sampling as the process of choosing candidates grounded on the understanding or skill they posessed. Purposive sampling might help in choosing participants for the interviews (Bagheri, Yaghmaei, Ashktorab, & Zayari, 2016; Barasa, Molyneux, English, & Cleary, 2015). Random sampling was not acceptable for use to recruit research candidates in a qualitative study (Copeland, McNamara, Kelson, & Simpson, 2015; Robinson, 2014). Random sampling research design did not qualify participants for a qualitative study. Random sampling did not meet the needs of this study. I used purposive sampling to select participants with knowledge about the research question.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies business leaders use to motivate sales employees' performance. Data saturation depended on some factors the researcher did not have control, such as the participant's level of knowledge about the research question and whether the population included standardization (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2015). Malterud et al. (2015) argued that candidates in a study are unable to respond to the research questions fully will affect the sample size of answers thereby jeopardizing the possibility of data saturation. Standardization of a sample size required all participants answer the same questions, or a selection of questions, in the same manner (Malterud et al., 2015). Responses were analyzed in a standard manner, allowing a comparison of the performance of each set of replies. All the research participants answered a uniform set of questions given in the same format. Careful checking all the benchmarks for data saturation linked to the conclusion, which demonstrated that purposive sampling was the best option for this research study.

Data Organization Technique

Data organization assisted the researcher in mapping the outcome of the study for quality as well as the building of an audit trail, permitting the cross checking of additional sources of information (Oun & Bach, 2014; Soares et al., 2015; Yin. 2014). Woods, Paulus, Atkins, and Macklin (2015) suggested the use of NVivo software for data coding and organization of themes in a qualitative research study. I used NVivo software to assist in data coding and organization. Soares et al. (2015) argued that qualitative information establishing methods needed the use of information storage, information classification, and cleaning of information. The purpose of this study was to explore strategies that some managers used to motivate sales employees' performance.

Davies, Reitmaier, Smith, and Mangan-Danckwart (2013) posited that printed proceedings of researchers, known as reflective journals consisted of happenings, notes of concepts, or collaborations for a specified period to gather insights and knowledge. I used a reflective journal to provide additional insights to the interview data, as suggested by (Raffaele Mendez, Loker, Fefer, Wolgemuth & Mann, 2015). The interviews, reflexive journal notes, and corporate documents were loaded into NVivo v11 software to assist in organizing the data into codes and themes. Additionally, I maintained a protected safe to provide storage of information from this research for 5 years; after that, I will destroy all the information, materials, despite the type.

Data Analysis

Data analysis had something to do with gathering of information to back the conceptual framework of the research study, which was followed by coding, discovering, and recognizing themes, choosing of themes, establishing themes in ranked order, and connecting themes into the phenomenon under research (Graue, 2015; Petty et al., 2012b; Pierre & Jackson, 2014; Rabinovich & Kacen, 2013; Silverman, 2013). Data analysis permitted unearthing of expressive designs, themes, and explanations (Yin, 2014). To obtain the data for this study, I asked the decision maker of the company to participate in the study personally and to provide relevant corporate documents in support of the research question the executive decision maker deemed appropriate for use in the study.

I used Yin's 5-step analysis (Yin, 2012) for hand coding and data coding as follows. The first step of the hand data coding analysis was the compiling phase, which comprised organization of the data in a systematic manner, to build a database. The disassembling phase encompassed breaking down the collected data into fragments. This phase recurred several times to include it as trial and error procedure of checking the codes, as suggested by (Yin, 2010). The reassembling procedure forms were part of the second phase, which was characterized using fundamental themes or codes as well as clusters of codes to rearrange disassembled pieces in new sets and categorizations different from the first ones (Yin, 2010). The third stage was regarded as the reassembling phase where reorganization as well as remixing was enabled by illustrating data graphically using tables and lists, as suggested by (Fusch, 2015). The interpretation stage involved creating narratives from the sequences and groups for conclusions (Fusch, 2015). The fourth stage was comprised of using the reassembled material to create a different description, with additional graphical presentation in form of significant tables, which could be the vital investigative part of the rough script and forms part of the interpretation of reassembled information, as suggested by (Yin, 2010). The fifth stage was the concluding stage because it involved putting conclusions together for the whole study, as suggested by (Yin, 2010).

The next section discussed triangulation as a research method to manage bias and analyzed the collected data. Cope (2014) argued that methodological triangulation permit researchers match multiple information origins and come up with the results. Bekhet and Zauszniewski (2012) defined methodological triangulation as the use of several categories of information analysis to explore a research question. Black, Palombaro, and

Dole (2013) posited that the approaches of triangulation are methodological triangulation, theoretical triangulation, investigator triangulation and, data triangulation. Dependability of a complete research case study was improved using methodological triangulation to offer an excellent, highly comprehensive thoughtful of the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). For that reason, the use of methodological triangulation met the needs for this study. Mata and Portugal (2015) argued that researchers who make use of interviews and multiple data gathering techniques to explore organization documentations discovered that methodological triangulation was an appropriate analysis technique.

I made use of a three-step procedure to evaluate information by entering the information into NVivo software for improvement of the data analysis method, reviewed the information for excess by physically scrutinizing for correctness then searched to detect themes inside the information. NVivo software assisted in organizing and analyzing the data and reduced the time for thematic coding and the categorization of data during the analysis stage, as per (Al-Yahmady & Alabri, 2013; Bernauer, Lichtman, Jacobs, & Roberston, 2013; Blaney, Filler, & Lyon, 2014; Boddy & Boddy, 2016; Petty et al., 2012a; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2016).

I did not discuss any personal knowledge or experience about the employee sales area. Use of NVivo software to detect themes inside the information gathering followed entering the information in the software, as suggested by (Zamawe, 2015). After data input, I reviewed the data analysis carefully and manually checked the data from NVivo to ensure accuracy, validity, and reliability as suggested by Castleberry (2014) and Hilal and Alabri (2013). The use of triangulation assisted in analyzing the data, which strengthened the analysis of the data by clarifying and reducing researcher bias to assure the accuracy of all data, as per Black et al. (2013).

Researchers made use of coding to recognize themes from the interview transcripts, and additional information gathered to attain data saturation, whose job was to guarantee the credibility, validity, reliability, and of the research (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013; Davidson, Paulus, & Jackson, 2016; Derobertmasure & Robertson, 2014; Yin, 2014). Petty et al. (2012b) and Silverman (2013) argued that researchers could realize themes in the literature by making use of recurrent review of the thematic expressions including coded themes. Morse (2015) and Soares et al. (2015) posited that the data analysis procedure encompassed the explanation of the information by stripping, segmenting, cataloging, and repositioning to discover associations and to draw interpretations inside and amongst the information. I continually compared and coded all data to assist in the identification of categories.

The three participants had a code assigned of P1, P2, P3, as well a company code of C1, C2, C3. Coding provided the participant and organization confidentiality. The theoretical proposition of this study was that some managers used strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. O'Reilly and Parker (2012), and Yin suggested that proper analysis of data commenced by first reviewing the data collected and then generating theory from the data. Consequently, I reviewed all the information to guarantee suitable review of the central research question. Researchers analyze and interpret the data against the theoretical propositions that are the basis for the study and the research question (Yin, 2014). Initial analysis of data was a deductive approach because researchers began their analysis based on a theory or idea and used the data to support and confirm the theory (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014). I used the deductive approach to start the analysis of the central research question of this study.

NVivo v11 software assisted my coding and determining themes from the interviews, internal documents, and my reflexive journal. In addition, I searched to find and review external documents to collect and input into NVivo v. 11, which assisted to provide additional codes and themes. After identifying codes and themes, NVivo v. 11 assisted me to link the themes, interviews, internal and external documents, and reflexive journal notes, to the conceptual framework of this study. The themes derived from inputting data into NVivo v.11 software provided a link between the themes and the use of the conceptual framework.

Reliability and Validity

Yin (2014) posited that managing the validity and reliability of a qualitative research study at the time of planning, analyzing outcomes and reviewing the excellence of the research is very critical in qualitative research multiple case study. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) argued that the research methodology should have a clear outlined systematic flow that proved academic rigor in research for the researchers and other readers benefit. Houghton et al. (2013) argued that a research study has multiple elements, but the rigor with which the researcher conducts the study should be a priority because the rigor assured the quality of the research findings. I provided rigor and enthusiasm to conduct this research study. Importantly, Wamba, Akter, Edwards, Chopin, and Gnanzou (2015) argued the rigor of qualitative research studies determine the credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability.

Reliability

Yin (2014) posited that current research questions in the literature show reliability and uniformity across diverse researchers. Qualitative reliability and dependability depend on the rigor, enthusiasm, and dedication of the researcher to exhibit the highest standards of integrity and honor presenting their research (Cope, 2014; Hussein, 2015; Venkatesh et al., 2013; Wamba et al., 2015; Yin, 2014). I followed the guidelines of Cope (2014), Hussein (2015), Venkatesh et al. (2013), Wamba et al. (2015), and Yin (2014). A qualitative study valued the trustworthiness and reliability of the research outcomes to support the authenticity of the final presentation (Anney, 2014; Nobel & Smith, 2015). Elo et al. (2014), Houghton et al. (2013), presented additional pertinent discussion about reliability and Sandelowski (2015) who suggested that the intent of reliability in qualitative research was for the researcher to attain trustworthy outcomes, representing the steadiness of the information, including reduction of mistakes as well as bias in a research. The process of member checking was a critical step for qualitative research to substantiate the participant’s thoughts and ideas about the questions from the interview in a manner that the researcher can adequately convey in the research study (Harvey, 2015; Koelsch, 2013; Simpson & Quigley, 2015; Vance, 2015).

I used a coding process to establish a controlling list following the procedural evaluation of the participants’ answers. The coding process encompassed detecting frequently used words, key terms, and expressions representing data from the interview questions, company documents, and other related information. Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016) discussed that the expressions, words, and key terms are essential components to capture the essence of the interview (Vaismoradi et al. 2016). Beginning with a control list of words, statements, and concepts from the interviewee, I categorized the codes into primary clusters using color-coding the clusters to detect phrases, key terms, and words. Yin (2010) argued that researchers make use of color-coded themes to monitor and regulate the information for analysis, simple identification of the themes, including subthemes, to assist the researcher during the gathering of information phase into the analysis phase. Consequently, I carefully collected and analyzed all data to assure proper assessment of the data did not exclude any critical themes or subthemes.

Validity

Validity is the link between honesty, genuineness, and credibility to the research data (Griffith & Montrosse-Moorhead, 2014; Leonidou et al., 2015). Validity substantiates the research assertions, and deductions of the study (Leighton, 2016; Yin, 2013). Long (2015) and Leung (2015) posited that the concept of the research validity related directly to the level the research mechanism correctly showed the primary matter or phenomenon projected to be analyzed. Validity was the appropriateness of the apparatus, and procedures, as well as information, gathered for evaluating the research question (Aravamudhan & Krishnaveni, 2015; Kihn & Ihantola, 2015; Leonidou et al., 2015). I used data to check, verify, and ensure this research met the standards of reliability as well as validity.

Malterud et al. (2015) argued that data saturation end when the gathering of information provides no new data. Attaining data saturation was more likely when making good use of documentation analysis of secondary sources (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Interviews provided some of the data collected for this study as well as published literature and documents provided by the participating companies. A researcher that attained data saturation increased the dependability and validity of the research study (Frambach, Van der Vleuten, & Durning, 2013). To reach data saturation, I interviewed three participants knowledgeable about motivational strategies for sales employees by asking questions until no new data emerged.

Credibility. Yin (2014) conducted studies to determine the accuracy of qualitative research findings and the ability to demonstrate the study's credibility through verification. Credibility is a practice which demands candidates examine the review and the outcomes of the contained data to weigh if the review and outcomes are correct likenesses of their answers (Birt et al., 2016; Mclaggan, Bezuidenhout, & Botha, 2013; Trainor & Graue, 2014). I made use of expert research techniques to guarantee the credibility of this research, including triangulation and member checking.

The use of triangulation of multiple sources of data provided credibility to a study (Yin, 2014). Marshall and Rossman (2016) argued that triangulation was an important technique to warrant the data analyses are trustworthy and qualitative research must use member checking to improve the soundness of the research. To guarantee that the study outcomes are reliable, researchers should use methodological triangulation to give a comprehensive appreciation of the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Thus, I used methodological triangulation and member checking for this research as recommended by these skilled researchers.

Confirmability. Confirmability occured when a researcher showed that their study data accurately reflected the participant's answers and not the researcher's biased views (Cope, 2014; Hussein, 2015). This research study correctly showed the candidates' opinions. Most qualitative researchers connected confirmability to dependability in pointing to the neutrality and correctness of the information (Houghton et al., 2013). Importantly, the maintenance of an audit trail in both data collection and analysis will demonstrate confirmability of the approaches employed (Wamba et al., 2015). I preserved a comprehensive audit trail of information collection, reviewing techniques, member checking outcomes, and study outcomes to guarantee confirmability.

Transferability. Black et al. (2013) and Soares et al. (2015) posited that the excellence of qualitative research anchors on reliability, trustworthiness, transferability, and confirmability. Soares et al. (2015) argued that transferability needed precise descriptions of every research procedure from information gathering, the background of the research, and ultimate outcome of the study. I provided comprehensive and correct descriptions of the research procedures, the background of the research, and a concluding report to guarantee the research met the necessities of transferability. Cope (2014) argued that transferability of a qualitative study was vital if the research outcomes were to make sense for readers not involved in research. Hussein (2015) stated that transferability provided a window to outside viewers that the findings could apply to other settings or groups. The findings of this research are suitably transferable to outside viewers, settings, and groups, which aligned with the suggestions of Anyan (2013), Black et al. (2013), Cope (2014), Hussein (2015), and Soares et al. (2015); however, transferability is left up to the reader to decide (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies some managers use to motivate sales employees' performance. In Section 2, I researched and used the following in this study: the role of the researcher, participants, research methodology and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, data collection instruments, data collection technique, and analysis. Furthermore, discussion followed about reliability and validity processes, stress on reliability, trustworthiness, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation for this study. Section 3 has the findings of the completed research and the value of the results to small businesses that need motivational strategies to increase sales performance. In addition, Section 3 includes strategies to motivate sales employees' performance address the outcomes, the significances on social change, recommendations for action, additional research proposals, thoughts on the research study, and conclusions of the research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In Section 3, I provided an overview of the research study, a summary of the findings, possible implications for social change, how the study applied to professional practice, recommendations for further research, and recommendations for action. Section 3 concluded with my reflections on the study and a summary of the study conclusions.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies some managers use to motivate their sales employees' performance. De Almeida et al. (2016); explored strategies to motivate sales employees as a quantitative research study. Yin (2014) directed that a qualitative method case study design allows in-depth explanations and the use of multiple sources of information. This study is a qualitative multiple case study using various sources of information.

A summary of the study findings follows. Specific data collection instruments used in this study included semi-structured interviews, using open-ended questions. In addition to the interviews, the study contains a collection of relevant business documents, charts, and other records as well as public information and notes from my reflective journal.

I gathered, reviewed, and analyzed interview data, reviews of documents, and reflective journal information before processing the data using the triangulation technique. NVivo v11 software assisted my data evaluation after review of the triangulation information, to enhancing the accuracy of the data. Four main themes resulted from analysis of the data. The conceptual framework for this study was the TLT. The conceptual framework provided guidance and an understanding of the critical nature of managers of sales employees that provided motivational strategies to enhance sales performance. All of the interview participants agreed that the TLT was vital to understanding the strategies to motivate sales employee performance. The findings of this research adequately answered the research question: What strategies do some managers use to motivate sales employees performance?

The following section demonstrates the results of the findings, which provided the emergent themes and subthemes discovered from analysis of participant interviews, document analysis, and from notes from my reflective journal. Quotes from the participants supported many of the findings and backed by related literature information.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this qualitative multiple case study was: What strategies do some managers use to motivate sales employees' performance? Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, and Robertson, (2013), Mertens (2014), and Yin (2012), suggested that data collection instruments for qualitative studies can include interviews, videos, existing documents, observations, focus groups, and relevant artifacts. The findings of this study identified and displays discovered themes and subthemes, as well as discusses the relationship between the findings and each theme. In addition, this section provided information concerning the findings confirming and disconfirming aspects as well as how the findings extend the research subject knowledge. Also, this section linked the findings to the conceptual framework and used peer-reviewed literature to connect the findings to efficient business practices.

The conceptual framework for this research study was the TLT developed by Burns (1978). All four main themes aligned with the conceptual framework because each theme suggested a transformational strategy sales managers can use to motivate and transform their sales team through the appropriate use of the strategies found in this study. Analysis of the data determined what strategies were used by managers of sales employees to motivate their sales performance and the application to small business. Analysis of the study data consisted of reviewing information from literature, interviews, and company documents. In addition, some data from public records added to this research.

The data collection process for this study consisted of three interviews with small business managers in the United States who used strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. In addition, I collected relevant company documents supporting the manager's strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. Also, I used the Yin (2010) 5-step analysis for hand coding and data coding as follows. The first step of the hand data coding analysis is the compiling phase, which is the organization of the data in a systematic manner, to build a database. The disassembling phase encompassed breaking down the collected data into fragments. This phase recurred several times to include it as trial and error procedure of checking the codes, as suggested by (Yin, 2010). The reassembling procedure forms were part of the second phase, characterized by using fundamental themes or codes as well as clusters of codes to rearrange disassembled pieces in new sets and categorizations different from the first ones as suggested by Yin (2010). The third stage is the reassembling phase where reorganization as well as remixing was enabled by illustrating data graphically using tables and lists, as suggested by (Fusch, 2015). The interpretation stage involves creating narratives from the sequences and groups for conclusions (Fusch, 2015). The fourth stage was comprised of using the reassembled material to create a different description, with additional graphical presentation in form of significant tables, which could be the vital investigative part of the rough script and forms part of the interpretation of reassembled information, as suggested by (Yin, 2010). The fifth stage was the concluding stage because it involved putting conclusions together for the whole study, as suggested by (Yin, 2010).

The three managers of sales employees represented three separate businesses, that provided products and services such as high-tech software, agriculture sales, and service, and business-to-business (B-to-B) consulting services. Each interview participant provided relevant documents to support their company's strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. The use of several sources of data assisted the triangulation technique of data analysis. Cronin (2014) pointed out that triangulation enhances the research and gives a concise understanding of the findings by reducing the possible errors of a single method for data collection. I used triangulation of the interviews, company documents, and reflective journal notes to add to the fullness and the validity of the study data.

The use of purposive sampling supported the creation of a comfortable relationship with potential interview participants because I purposely selected the participants and called each participant asking their permission to interview them using a Skype teleconference internet facility on a convenient day and time of their choice.

Doody and Noonan (2013) noted that setting up a healthy relationship *before* and *during* the interview develops trust between the interviewer and the interviewee ensuring the participant is at ease, comfortable, and relaxed. All the interviews occurred over a 10-day period. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, and the three participants opted for an audio-recorded interview. I transcribed all interviews then summarized all responses using Microsoft Word software. I gave all participants a copy of their interview summary. Additionally, I requested participants to review their summary results and to assist in member checking by providing feedback about the authenticity by commenting on their interview summary. Upon completion of the summary review, I asked each participant to provide any changes they thought necessary and to sign and acknowledge the correctness and accuracy of their summary. Upon receipt of a signed acknowledgment, the summary was acceptable and member checking completed.

Three small business companies operating in the United States agreed to participate in the research study and each provided one interview participant. The interview participants were three Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). The first CEO identified as participant P1 from company C1 provides business consulting to small, medium and large companies using sales employees. The second CEO, identified as participant P2 from company C2, provides agricultural products to domestic restaurants using sales employees. The third CEO, identified as participant P3 from company C3, manages sales employees to sell proprietary software. All of the participants possessed adequate knowledge about strategies to motivate sales employees’ performance. The three participants P1, P2, and P3, have 40, 18, and 20 years of experience motivating sales employees. Each participant received information that the nature of the study was voluntary, and all willingly participated in the study answering open-ended questions within a semistructured interview setting. The interview setting suggested by each participant was secure, quiet, and private. Each participant suggested the time and place for their interview. All the participants answered the interview questions (see Appendix B) based on their personal experiences and feelings of strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. The design of the questions allowed the participants to address the central research question, provided additional comments to enhance their answers, and provided new comments related to strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. I completed the three interviews within ten days. Five days after the interview, each participant received a summary of their interview answers so that I could go over interpretations to perform member checking.

Additionally, I collected company documents about strategies and protocols to motivate sales employees' performance from each of the participants. Participant P1 provided company documents that described their interview process to hire sales personnel, the personality types they deemed appropriate to succeed, the type of references expected from previous employers, procedures to increase the probability of selling the company products and services, and a list of motivating strategies to increase sales. Company C1 provides consulting services to national and international corporate executives how to reduce or avoid economic losses resulting from a defective product. In addition, participant P1 provided copies of procedures to assure each salesperson makes a minimum number of outbound calls per day and tracks the comments using SalesForce software.

Participant P2 allowed viewing of their web portal for receipt of inbound and outbound processed products, as well as purchase orders, and the area of responsibility for each salesperson. Participant P2 also provided copies of the terms and conditions of service, shipping rates for freight providers and copies of the sales agreements. The sales agreements contained payment terms and general information about what each salesperson should say to prospective customers about processing and shipping time to the customer location. Additionally, the sales managers provided strategies to motivate the sales personnel for domestic and international sales employees, with a discussion about different cultural strategies within specific countries. In addition, I reviewed and selected online press releases about C2 and the awards they have received for their products and services.

Participant P3, from company C3, provided company documents about the strategies used to motivate sales employees at domestic and international locations. Additional information about sales strategies used for current customers as well as potential customers in the pipeline for short and long-term sales, documents outlining the amount of time each customer should receive post-sale, and finally the motivation tools used to increase sales performance for different cultural environments.

NVivo v11 software aided my analysis of the data as an analytical tool in the review of the literature, which highlighted some of the most frequently, used words. The words *motivation*, *marketing*, *spiff*, *self*, *merit*, *transformational*, *theory*, *pay*, and *scale* were some of the most frequent words provided by the NVivo software from the literature data. Comparing the most common words between the NVivo software analysis of the literature and interviews resulted in several repetitive words and terms. The similar data between the literature, interviews and company documents supporting the use of strategies to motivate sales employees performance included information about initial contacts with a prospective customer, soft and hard selling strategies, discounting, spiffs for sales, revenue sharing and other significant words and terms. Other terms and words supported the selection of themes and subthemes for this study, all of which aligned with the conceptual framework and the research question of this study.

The analysis of the corporate documents supporting the strategies to motivate sales employees' performance found some of the same words as found in the literature search. Some of the similar words were *spiffs, sales, performance, merit pay,* and *revenue share*. The first step in the formal analysis of the data used a deductive approach concerning the interviews, documents, and journal notes allowing the commencement of coding of the information into multiple main themes. I used an initial broad-brush technique of coding by grouping the themes into three main categories.

Three managers of sales personnel took part in the interviews and provided the corporate documents relevant to the interview questions. Four main themes evolved from coding the analyzed data in support of the research question. The first theme was sales personnel with self-motivation exhibit enhanced sales results earlier than non-self motivated personnel. Theme two was: setting mandatory guidelines and continuous checking to observe results motivates performance. Theme three was: financial rewards enhance the performance of sales employees, and theme four was: sales employees receive motivation by recognition within their peer sales group and the organization.

Identification of themes The first main theme demonstrated that self-motivation increases the company return on investment of the costs to hire and pay a new salesperson. Theme one was essential because sales performance of self-motivated sales personnel occured faster than non-self-motivated personnel. Subthemes for main theme one are: a rapid return on investment of salary and costs to employ, less time spent to guide processes and strategies to sell, and awareness of the competitive landscape between peers to achieve quicker financial reward. The second main theme of managers providing mandatory guidelines and continuous monitoring of sales to motivate sales performance suggested three subthemes. The subthemes for main theme two are: sales personnel need various backgrounds of experience to enhance sales to clients from different cultures, specific guidelines allow managers to verify the effectiveness of strategies to improve performance, and guidelines for performance allows the salesperson to standardize their strategies for peak performance.

The third main theme of providing financial rewards as a strategy to enhance sales performance suggested subthemes; understanding the amount of reward to improve sales performance, and when to provide performance recognition. The fourth main theme was sales employees recognition within peer groups, and the organization was a motivational strategy. A review of the fourth main theme provided three subthemes. The subthemes were: noncash incentives using recognition within the sales peer group, recognition within the entire organization, and combining financial and recognition strategies. The rationale for selecting all of the subthemes resulted from the analysis of interviews, literature review, company documents, and journal notes

Analysis and findings of themes Literature and interview participant information affirming theme one and the subthemes follows. Panagopoulos and Oglivie (2015) noted that salespeople that use self-monitoring strategies have a direct relationship with self-leadership and self-motivation and salespersons with self-leadership positively produce more for the company and motivate their peers to produce more efficiently. Berson et al. (2014) suggested managers should develop and communicate with their sales employees to maximize their motivation effect because the two established approaches to employee motivation are vision communication and goal setting. Also, vision communication entails formulating abstract, long-reaching goals whereas; goal setting provides challenging, yet time-constraining objectives to motivate employees (Benson et al. (2014). The following interview participants provided information concerning their strategies to motivate sales employees.

Participant P1 stated: "…. the very best one can hope for when hiring a new salesperson, is that they are self-motivated. Self-motivated salespeople usually give a quick return on their cost to hire because they produce sales quickly". Participant P2 stated:

> We have specific guidelines all salespeople must adhere to for domestic and international sales. Our managers check each sales person's activity daily using Salesforce software. Checking the sales people daily allows us to motivate each person depending on what is lacking in their use of the guidelines we provide.

> What we found to be very interesting is that salespeople love financial rewards, but they also have egos that enjoy recognition from their peers and the company. We provide a combination of financial and company recognition to motivate our sales group.

Theme two included setting mandatory guidelines and constant checking to monitor the sales results, motivates performance. Lin (2017) discussed that performance-prove goal orientation (PPGO) provides positive sales results and performance to sales employees through positive person-focused feedback from their managers. Performance-avoid goal orientation (PAGO) results from negative feedback from sales managers. The Lin (2017) information is like strategies to motivate sales employees provided by the interview participants.

The following quotes from interview participants supported theme two and the subthemes. Participant P3 stated: " Our company trains the sales personnel using specific guidelines to assure the message is clear to a potential client thereby creating a higher probability of a sale. Also, the guidelines we provide become the standard practice for the sales process, which is a motivation factor because the salesperson does not create a new process for each sale". Participant P1 stated: "Motivating consulting salespeople requires specific guidelines to assure legal and ethical standards. We find that alleviating guesswork is a motivational factor to increase sales performance". Participant P2 stated:

> While we use guidelines to train and check our salespeople's success, it is critical to our mission to have different guidelines for different international clients cultures. Our findings show that guiding salespeople early in their sales process

provides a system for success, allows our managers to verify results and use of strategies and gives the salesperson a system that maximizes their motivation to sell.

The third main theme has subthemes of understanding the amount of reward to enhance sales. There is an abundance of information about strategies to motivate sales employees from authors who have no experience and, therefore, provide general theoretical strategies. This research study focused on authors with experience motivating sales employees performance. Kurian and Chacko, (2013) provided information to motivate sales employees' performance based on experience and additional research. Kurian and Chacko, (2013) suggested performance management involves managing and motivating employees because their performance has a significant impact on company success. Also, sales recognition and financial incentive programs can produce a measurable outcome for sales employees. Kurian and Chacko, (2013) went on to say incentive programs offer a direct measurement of cost related to sales outcomes and that a sales incentive program can increase performance from 10 to 44 percent.

Participant P2 stated: "It is often a matter of the sales objectives and goals as well as the sales pipeline that determines what we provide as a financial incentive motivation. We may provide a motivational reward monthly, quarterly, or yearly, depending on the strength of the sales pipeline". Participant P1 suggested: "Providing a service as we do, requires many hours to seed the pipeline for ultimate sale to a customer. Providing a financial incentive for sales employees is a motivational program that is measurable and typically results in increased sales of 15–50% over nonincentive sales performance".

Participant P3 stated: “ sales performance is usually enhanced when we use financial based sales incentive motivational strategy. However, to maximize the specific incentive plan, it is critical to explore when to provide the reward”.

A comprehensive review of the themes and subthemes revealed that each directly aligns with the conceptual framework and research question. Yamoah (2013) explored factors that affect sales personnel performance in the insurance industry with a focus on motivational strategies and self-motivation of the salesperson. The Yamoah (2013) research recognized the challenge of sales managers to obtain more sales effort from fewer available qualified salespeople. The research findings concluded that there are many factors affecting sales performance. The Yamoah (2013) performance factors are motivation, self-motivation as resourcefulness, product knowledge, aptitude, and others of which motivation and resourcefulness contributed the most to enhanced sales performance.

The fourth main theme provided information about sales employees motivation from recognition within their peer sales group and the organization. De Almeida et al. (2016), mentioned knowledge concerning the competitive environment is a critical factor for successful sales and that sharing of knowledge within peer groups motivates the group and that managers can increase the sharing of information as a motivational factor to increase sales performance. De Almeida et al. (2016) go on to say that recognition within the sales group and from the organization are excellent motivators for sales employees. Reid, Plank, Peterson, and Rich (2017), posited that there are differences across 68 sales management practices (SMPs), but regardless of the numerous sales practices, the SMPs have limited change because self-motivation and financial incentive plans appear the defacto standard for excellent sales performance. This sort of information provides a guide for sales managers to focus on specific self-motivation strategies and financial incentives to maximize sales performance.

Stamov RoBnagel and Biemann (2012) explored aging and work motivation and determined the motivation for generativity-related tasks is age related but not related to task-specific motivation. This information is an essential finding for recruiting senior age sales personnel. This information may assist managers to hire seasoned salespeople and alleviate any stigma that older personnel are unable to provide the energy and self-motivation of a younger salesperson when selling.

Participant P3 stated: "… it has been my experience that financial bonuses motivate salespeople, but also forms of recognition within the sales group and company is a great motivator for success. We openly congratulate sales on a daily basis to assure the salesperson receives affirmation for a job well done". In addition, participant P2 stated: " We found that it is almost as important to salespeople to receive recognition for a job well done as it is to receive financial rewards. Our sales managers provide financial incentives to sales employees and regular affirmation from company gatherings and smaller sales groups". Validation of all themes and subthemes resulted after analysis of the interview quotes, documents excerpts, and peer-reviewed literature. In addition to the interviews, each participant provided company documents in support of the strategies some managers use to motivate sales employees performance.

Validation of the four main themes and subthemes resulted from careful analysis of interview information, documents, and peer-reviewed literature. Each participant provided company documents supporting the strategies used to motivate sales employees performance. Participant P3 stated that "...each of our salespeople is motivated by different stimuli yet all salespeople are motivated by competition to achieve a goal, to receive recognition within and outside the organization, and certainly all enjoy the financial reward for a successful competition". Participants P1, P2, and P3 suggested that the personalities and individual circumstances of their respective financial status and self-motivation determine the ultimate success of a salesperson. Each interview participant also agreed that it is up to the sales managers to maintain a dynamic, competitive environment that allows all salespeople to have success in some fashion. The emergent themes served as a lens to reveal that specific strategies would likely improve the sales performance of a sales team if used correctly.

The following demonstrates the ways the findings confirm, and disconfirm, some of the information obtained from peer-reviewed studies, as well as providing additional knowledge about strategies used to motivate sales employees performance. The first main emergent theme explored self-motivation of an individual as a determinant of success versus non-self motivated employees. Theme one explored the idea that sales personnel with self-motivation exhibit enhanced sales results earlier than non-self-motivated personnel. The following represents the further identification of the themes resulting from the data analysis.

Emergent Theme 1: Sales Personnel with Self-Motivation Exhibit Enhanced Sales Results Earlier than Non-Self-Motivated Personnel

Review and analysis of the data revealed subthemes that enhance the main themes. The data revealed subthemes for main theme one of (a) rapid return of investment in newly hired self-motivated personnel, (b) better awareness of the competitive landscape between sales peers to achieve personal financial incentives, and (c) less time spent by managers to guide successful sales. Each of the subthemes supports the main theme and provides strategies to allow management of sales personnel to determine the best candidate s to fill sales positions.

In support of main theme one, sales personnel with self-motivation exhibit enhanced sales results earlier than non-self-motivated personnel**;** participant P1 stated that self-motivated employees reduce time to retrain and allows faster recouipment of training.

> We continuously review pertinent articles and journals to find new innovative strategies that will enhance our sales team's productivity. We believe that a self-motivated employee reduces our time to recoup the start-up costs to train and develop techniques for successful selling. We are also aware that a self-motivated salesperson assesses his peers to determine what is necessary to be the best salesperson, thereby producing faster sales results, and our managers use less time to assist the self-motivated salesperson, which saves time and money for the company.

Subtheme (a) self-motivated sales employees provide a more rapid return on the investment of salary and employment costs than those who are not self-motivated, as affirmed by participant P1, P2, and P3 in their interview comments as well as supporting company documents. Lin (2017, and Yamoah (2013) suggested that a self-motivated employee will provide faster-increased sales results and maintain their position of superiority when measured against their peers, on an ongoing basis. The rationale for choosing subtheme (a) resulted from the interview participants responses to the interview questions, as well as relevant company documents to support the subtheme.

Subtheme (b) self-motivated employees require less time to guide processes and strategies to sell. Both the literature and interview data supported this subtheme. Panagopoulos and Oglivie (2015) suggested a company that hires self-motivated salespeople has a higher probability of quicker sales results than a non-self-motivated person, thereby reducing the time for the self-motivated person to add revenue which also results in increased profitability for the organization. Participant P3 stated "… it has been our experience, selling complicated software solutions, which a self-motivated sales employee requires a lot less time than one who is not self-motivated. The results from a motivated sales person show up in the immediacy of sales and additional revenue to the company". Participant P1 discussed the positive corporate attributes of hiring self-motivated employees

> Over the years I have personally witnessed many salespeople state they are experienced and self-motivated only then to find self-motivation was lacking. However, hiring a real self-motivated, energetic salesperson allows fewer hours of

training, providing much faster sales results and typically continue to provide excellent sales results for their tenure with the company.

Subtheme (c) self-motivated salespeople have a greater awareness of the competitive landscape for selling than their peers and achieve quicker financial reward is essential for sales managers to know that they can reward and guide their personnel (Benson et al., 2014). The most motivated personnel usually understands the competition between salespeople is dynamic. In addition, a self-motivated salesperson has an advantage because they are timely, aware of the hurdles to reach a goal, and put added time and energy into understanding what is necessary to obtain the financial goals and bonuses set to obtain selling goals (Stomov-RoBnagle & Bieman, 2012). Reid et al. (2017) suggested that self-motivation is difficult to determine in an interview process and that managers must observe self-motivation.

Participant P2 provided the following quote that discusses self-motivated sales-employees are difficult to determine in an interview setting alone.

> Many of our domestic and international salespeople provide descriptions of their self-motivation, yet few command the skills of self-motivation. It is challenging to determine self-motivation from an interview. However, our sales managers quickly determine those that are self-motivated by observing the dedication to their learning about the sales process, working extra during the training period. In addition, asking frequent questions to assure they understand the program and process is essential.

Participant 3 provided the following quote discussing the managers quest for self-motivated sales-people and that they are best determined through observatoin on the job.

> We are always looking for self-motivated salespeople. The time necessary to determine a person is self-motivated is a function of observing the meticulous nature of learning the procedures we require, as quickly as possible. Observing the self-motivated individuals allows our managers to set goals for sales performance and provide spiffs for obtaining sales goals. The self-motivated salesperson usually understands the competitive landscape quicker than those not self-motivated and obtains bonuses faster than others.

Participant P1 shared similar thoughts about subtheme (c) by discussing the competition between salespeople is firece and self-motivated sales pople often are the top performers.

> The competition between salespeople is sometimes fierce. When we hire a new person in sales, we are cautious not to throw them into the experienced group of sales personnel because they will become discouraged at not attaining bonuses and sales goals. We initiate the new salesperson into a group of same type new people and observe their competitive personality. It is our experience that self-motivated salespeople meet their sales quota faster and achieve bonuses quicker than nonmotivated individuals. Without question, we believe the self-motivated salesperson adds to our profitability faster than nonmotivated individuals and, therefore, deserve a financial bonus for performance.

Table: 2

Theme 1: Interview Review

Theme 1: Self-motivation	No. of sources	No. of references
Sub-themes:		
Rapid return of company investment	3	11
Less time to train	3	12
Aware of landscape for reward	3	10

Table 2 illustrates confirmation and affirmation of the use of strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. The ability to identify self-motivated sales employees as early as possible provides time and financial benefits to the company at an accelerated rate when compared to non-self-motivated employees.

Participant P2 commented about the numerous ways a self-motivated salesperson contributes to the organization.

> The ability to obtain self-motivated sales employees helps our company in numerous ways. Yes! We do believe there is significant financial benefit to hiring self-motivated employees because they do not require as much training as non-self-motivated personnel, they become aware of the peer landscape in sales to reach bonus thresholds faster, and our management time is much less, thereby freeing up valuable time to increase company performance in other areas or to address other employees' needs.

Each of the interview participants was aligned with theme one and the subthemes as well as adding personal comments which added to the affirmation of strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. Participant P1 commented about the use of self-motivated salespeople in the international consulting services business sector,

> Understanding salespeople is a psychology lesson. While sales seem simple, the art of sales involves many attributes that are difficult to determine in a resume or interview. We sell consulting services to international clients. To assure success in an international environment needs self-motivation to maximize understanding the different customs and people. The self-motivated individual will seek references and materials that provide guidance on working with the particular culture. We, as a company, cannot provide all the tools to guarantee success selling our client services. In addition to the training on how to sell, we provide methods to utilize cheerful, positive tones, body language, and words. A salesperson that can be flexible in demeanor is very valuable to our mission and success. Our sales managers enjoy working with self-motivated individuals because they can provide an idea or concept and the self-motivated employee takes it and expands the requirements to exceed expectation.

Review of the documents provided by the three participating companies provided corroboration of the interview responses because the documents showed a similar distribution of the responses as the interview participants. Table 3 is a summary of the subthemes found during the document review, along with the number of responses, and the number of times the subtheme appeared in the documents. In addition to the subthemes, several documents illustrated the difficulty determining self-motivation and that new ideas and strategies should be investigated to find such self-motivated employees.

Table: 3

Theme 2 Document Review

Theme: Self-motivation	No. of sources	No. of references
Sub-themes:		
Rapid return of company investment	8	12
Less time to train	5	16
Aware of landscape for reward	5	12

The analysis of the number of responses mentioning self-motivation, less time to train, and awareness of the landscape to obtain a financial reward by self-motivated employees aligns favorably with the interview responses. The document review confirmed the interview responses. Emergent Theme 2 follows.

Emergent Theme 2: Setting Mandatory Guidelines and Continuous Checking to Observe Results, Motivates Performance

Analysis of the interview data revealed several references were discussing main theme two and the various subthemes. A constant thread throughout the analysis was the mention of managers working with all sales employees to create emotional and social well-being. The subthemes for theme two are; (a) sales personnel various backgrounds of experience to enhance sales to different cultures, (b) specific guidelines allows managers to verify the effectiveness of strategies to improve performance, and (c) guidelines for performance allows the salesperson to standardize their strategies for peak performance. Participant P2 is a purveyor of an agriculture product that sells to global clients. Participant P2 discussed that multi-cultural knowledge has great advantages in an international organization.

> The value of having multifaceted salespeople allows us to reach into many international markets as well as the U.S. markets. We have salespeople from many different cultures with diverse backgrounds and experiences. To ensure our sale strategies are carried out in the manner for which we intend, our sales managers constantly provide feedback to the salespeople to guide their activities and monitor their success. We have determined that manager feedback and monitoring increases sales results and the sale people feel such guidance provides a feeling of emotional comfort they are working in the manner management prescribe for success. Of interest to our managers are remarks from the salespeople recognizing that standardization of their sales pitch assists to selling better in all cultures.

Kemp, Borders, and Ricks (2013) suggested that continuous feedback and monitoring provides emotional support to salespeople allowing them to confidently progress using the company standards and strategies for selling. Participant P3 provides software to Unites States and international customers. Participant P3 expressed the complexity of motivating salespeople using several methods.

> There are many ways to motivate salespeople to increase their performance. There is a difference between a seasoned salesperson who has worked for the company for some months or years versus one who is new to the organization. Our managers are constantly monitoring the sales force to assure they are emotionally comfortable and understanding of the strategies we use as well as the expected results. Providing specific guidelines about the sales process allows each person in to present a proposal that is congruent with all others. Failure to provide specific guidelines for our sales team would propagate many forms of offers, which could create chaos among the customers. We know that sharing information between managers and salespeople create a positive impact on sales performance.

De Almeida et al. (2016) suggested that sharing of knowledge between salespeople creates a stable emotional platform for the salespeople because the feedback from peers reinforces they are giving sales offers in the same manner as their peers.

Table: 4

Theme 2 Interview Review

Theme 2: Guidelines and monitoring	No. of sources	No. of references
Sub-themes:		
Various backgrounds of experience	3	10
Specific guidelines improve performance	3	15
Standardization for peak performance	3	10

The results of the data analysis confirmed main theme two that managers who set mandatory guidelines and provide continuous checking motivates performance. Review of the numerical responses displayed in Table 4 illustrated that the subthemes are similar in the number of responses gathered from the interview participants.

Participant P2 affirmed the benefits of using less time to train salespeople in multicultural backgrounds and that the use of specific guidelines are easilly embraced by multicultural salespeople.

> Our company serves many organizations in numerous countries. Training of salespeople is a critical part of our business to assure the culture of each client is understood and professionally utilized. Salespeople with multinational experience and various backgrounds allow less training and faster emersion into the sales arena. Our managers are firm believers in setting specific guidelines because their guidlines continuously demonstrate improved sales performance. Perhaps our

most significant training exercise is to standardize the sales presentation. Regardless of the culture or location standardization has continually shown that peak performance by allowing each salesperson to feel confident they do not need a new script to sell in different geographical areas.

Participant P1 pointed out the necessity to use a standardized sales approach to maximise efficiency and productivity.

Without standardization of presentations, we found that the closing rate of our consulting services drops dramatically. We strive to train our salespeople in a standardized manner so that they have no confusion in their presentations to any company in any part of the world. A dividend our managers try to find are salespeople with a varied background of experiences selling to different cultures and different products and services. The dividend to our company from finding such individuals with various backgrounds is that we spend far less time to educate the salesperson about cultural differences and why some techniques to sell are not acceptable in certain cultures. Our managers check on the progress of the domestic and international consulting sales team to assure they are meeting their expectations and the companies. The outcome of monitoring the sales team is that a strong sense of community evolves and the salespeople recognize the managers are there to make them the best they can be. We cannot guarantee peak performance from any salesperson, but our methods work well when selling various consulting services to many different organizations and countries.

Table 5 shows the results obtained from the document review that support Theme

2. The table is similar to all previous tables displaying the main theme on the topic, with subthemes, the number of sources, and the number of responses. The data included in Table 5 corroborates the findings from Table 4.

Table: 5

Theme 2 Document Review

Theme: Guidelines and monitoring	No. of sources	No. of references
Subthemes:		
Various backgrounds of experience	5	8
Specific guidelines improve performance	6	15
Standardization for peak performance	6	11

The document findings align and corroborate the findings from the interviews and literature. The number of responses for all the subthemes is similar to the number of responses from the interview results. The documents and interviews provided similar numbers of responses, which allowed the selection of each subtheme. In addition the participants participated in member checking by reviewing their summaries and providing feedback during the interviews to support the theme selection.

Emergent Theme 3: Financial Rewards Enhance the Performance of Sales Employees

Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the interviews and documents data provided by participants who discussed the merits of using financial incentives to motivate sales employees' performance. The results of analysis of interviews and documents revealed two subthemes evolved. The first subtheme provides an understanding of the amount of financial reward to enhance performance, and the second subtheme is when to provide a financial reward to improve performance.

Lin (2017) suggested that sales employees' performance prove goal orientation (PPGO) provide positive person-focused feedback from their manager's triggers orientation and negative person-focused feedback can trigger performance-avoid goal orientation (PAGO). Participant P1 stated: Once the standards are integrated and understood the next task is determining what financial reward motivates the team as an additional incentive to increase their productivity?

Participant P3 provided information about their company's strategies to motivate sales employees' performance by commenting:

> Our company provides rigorous training and communication between managers and the sales team. The communication encourages the salespeople to feel confident they can ask questions and get answers. We found that regardless of the training and communications a salesperson is incented by the possibility of attaining additional financial reward for peak performance. Our management dilemma is when and how much financial incentive to provide. The strategy works well with all our salespeople, and typically the incentive is $500 to $1000 per quarter.

Participant P2 argued about financial rewards as incentives to motivate salespeople, by saying:

> Financial reward to salespeople always garners excitement and enthusiasm within the sales team. The timing of when to introduce a financial incentive is critical. We usually provide a sales performance incentive when sales are slower than desired or at the end of a quarter. The amount of the reward is typically $500 to $2,000 for a set goal achievement and fractional if 80% of the goal is reached. We do not want one salesperson reaping all the reward and the rest of the team feeling they were not successful.

Participant P1 provided additional comments about the use of financial reward strategies and the potential negative outcomes over time if not carefully used, by stating:

> There are many opportunities to use financial rewards to motivate sales personnel during any given year. We do not want to get the sales team to think they will receive a financial reward each quarter automatically because the natural tendency to be the best they can be will be subliminally suppressed to obtain the additional reward for mediocrity. So! We put financial incentives in place at various times of the year. To avoid full disclosure of what the bottom line acceptable sales results should be we often inflate the goals to assure each sales person is doing their best based on the compensation they receive. However, the use of financial reward is a great strategy to enhance sales employees performance when used intermittently.

Berson, Halevy, Shamir, and Erez, (2014) discussed how managers construct and communicate their messages to effectively motivate their sales employees. Vision communication and goal setting are the two motivational features found to be effective within a sales team found by Berson et al. (2014). Vision communication involves formulating abstract, far-reaching messages. Goal setting involves formulating specific, challenging and time-constrained objectives. Providing financial incentives to salespeople is a method to motivate and enhance sales employees' performance (Berson et al., 2014).

Table: 6

Theme 3 Interview Review

Theme: Financial rewards	No. of sources	No. of references
Subthemes:		
The amount of reward	3	21
When to reward	3	18

Analysis of the literature responses showed a strong number of responses referring to financial incentives as well as when to provide the incentives. The use of financial incentives is a strategy used by all the manager participants, but each participant determines when to use the incentives and the amount of the incentive. Table 7 provides information on the relevant documents provided by the participating companies. The table displays information about the subthemes, the number of sources, and the number of responses to each subtheme. Kemp, Borders and Ricks (2013) discussed that sales manager support is negatively related to emotional exhaustion but positively associated with managers positive working environments and belief in future opportunities, which include financial incentives for beating sales expectations. Kemp et al. also suggested that there is a direct link between a positive working environment and customer-oriented selling due to and a friendly work environment and inversely related to emotional exhaustion. Table 7 displays the results of the document review provided by each interview participant.

Table: 7

Theme 3 Document Review

Theme: Financial rewards	No. of sources	No. of references
Subthemes:		
The amount of reward	5	32
When to reward	7	28

The strategies listed above aligned with the central research question: What strategies do some managers use for motivating sales employees' performance? Additionally, the documents and interview results aligned with the conceptual framework of TLT because the use of financial reward as a motivating strategy also transforms salespeople's motivation for selling through transformational leadership. The high number of references related to the amount of financial reward and when to provide the reward is significant because it shows a direct concern for both areas. All of the participants felt strongly that a financial reward is a good strategy to motivate sales employees under certain criteria, but also suggested that such tools could create adverse effects if not carefully used.

Reid et al. (2017) suggested that their empirical findings indicated that several differences were evident across the 68 sales management practices (SMPs) items gathered relative to sales employees’ motivation strategies. Careful consideration of the timing and reasons for financial reward is critical to successfully implementing financial reward as a motivational strategy. Although the initial reward may be motivational, subsequent rewards could prove de-motivational especially when considering the size of the sales force.

Participant P2 discussed the management problem of demotivating sales people if a reward is unattainable.

> The worst thing a sales manager can do to demotivate a sales team is to deploy financial rewards that seem unattainable to most of the team. Additionally, deciding when to and why a financial reward is appropriate to motivate the sales team is also critical. All sales managers must carefully consider the amount of a financial incentive and the appropriate time to provide such incentives.

Emergent Theme 4: Strategies to Enhance Sales Performance Through Recognition

While each of the interview participants used financial motivation strategies at different times and under different circumstances, all of the participants stated that they recognized sales employees amongst their peers and within the company as a motivatoinal strategy. Lin (2017) suggested that praising sales personnel for talent or effort provides as much personal satisfaction as any form of recognition. Furthermore, Lin (2017) provided research focusing on the person versus process-focused feedback and goal orientation as a strategy to enhance sales performance.

Moberg and Leasher (2011) discussed that salespeople from Western cultures, such as the United States appear more motivated by the needs for achievement, relationships, and power than salespeople from Eastern cultures are. The Moberg and Leasher research aligns with the findings of this research study because the data in this study indicates that sales people from the U.S enjoy financial incentives as a challenge, but recognition within the organization and sales peers is equally valuable as a motivation strategy.

Participant P2 provided discussion about salespeople communication feedback loops as an important tool to assist the salespeople:

> Our corporate ethos is that each sales manager creates a communication feedback-loop between each salesperson that gives positive feedback to each. The sales managers must decide the level of feedback for the individual salesperson. While positive feedback is a general motivational strategy, the amount and timing of providing such feedback allows managers to determine the needs of the salesperson. We arrange an annual corporate meeting that focusses on the achievements of the sales team as a form of recognition. The corporate recognition typically results in the highest honor for the salespeople and feedback after the event demonstrates the corporate recognition of a goal during the year.

Participant P1 talked about the competitive nature of salespeople and the diversity of possible management teachniques to maximize sales production.

> Salespeople are like racehorses, each one wants to win, and each one has a different personality. All organizations centered on selling products or services rely on the sales team to carry the company to profitability. A good sales manager relies on a compbination of positive recognition and at times financial motivation. However, good comments are always the main motivation strategy because financial strategies are only used during specific times of the year, whereas positive reinforcement with compliments for a job well done is weekly.

Kurian and Chacko (2013) suggested that sales incentive programs warrant the additional attention because they rank among the very few employee motivation programs whose costs can be directly related to outcomes. Furthermore, the research data showed that a majority of employees in their study scored performance motivators of high importance to sustain consistent sales efforts.

Participant P3 had opinions that aligned and affirnmed the Kurian and Chacko (2013) remarks concerning sales employees beliefs that motivators were esential to achieve consistent sales results. Participant P3 suggested his company observes the emotional highs and lows of salespeople to determine when and if financial rewards are possible.

> Our company has focused on training our managers to communicate with the sales employees on a daily basis. The emotional highs and lows of a salesperson are like a roller coaster. If the roller coaster gets too high, it goes off the track into the air, while if it gets too low, it crashes into the ground. After many years of providing sustained motivational talks, financial and nonfinancial motivational

rewards, we believe motivational rewards provide our company the best possible benefit financially and for sustainability. All of our sales employees have acknowledged the “at-a-boys” lift them up when they are down and that working in an environment full of positive reinforcement allows them to be the best they can be.

Table 8 provides the number of sources and responses for main theme four from the interview participants. Main theme four is strategies to enhance sales performance using recognition from within the sales team peers and company.

Table: 8

Theme 4 Interview Review

Theme: Sales team motivation	No. of sources	No. of references
Subtheme:		
Recognition within peer group	3	30
Recognition of company	3	35
Combined recognitions	3	35

Table 8 illustrates there were a significant number of references from the three interview participants, when viewed in conjunction with the literature data, to support and affirm the main theme and subthemes. Information obtained from participant interviews affirmed that recognition of sales employees is essential for sustained positive sales results. The forms and timing of recogntion vary amongst the participants, but the use of recognition is cobsistent. While recognition within the peer group had fewer references than recogbition from the company and the combination of financial and company recognition, it is a very small difference. The probable reasons for the difference shown between the three subthemes are discussed in the summary section of this study.

Assuredly the research data supports recognition as a needed strategy to enhance sales employees peerfromance. The data also demonstrate that the timing and amount of recognition are different amongst participants. An important note to the affirmation of using recognition strategies to motivate sales employees is that demotivation can occur if the strategies are ot properly utliized.

Participant P2 commented: "…we are extremely vigilent about the timing and use of motivatuional strategies to enhance sales perfromance. Using too much of any form of recognition becomes like crying wolf. With too much recognition the results become de-motivational".

Participant P1 provided discussion about monitoring the emotional state of salepeople as a group and individually to asses the possible use of incentives.

> Our corporate policy on motivation enhancement to our sales employees is to monitor the sales team as a group and individually to assess the emotional and mental state of the sales personnel. While such monitoring requires diligent, and more sales managers than a typical organization, we know the results of our program enhance sales productivity. Each year we have a retreat of our sales managers and representatives from the sales teams to brainstorm and reflect on current and future motivational methods and strategies. Regardless of the number

of past retreats the outcomes are the same. Using a combination of well-timed motivational strategies composed of verbal, written and financial components allows our team to sustain a level of sales commensurate with our annual target goals for sales.

The following table illustrated the frequency of responses from the company documents for theme four and the thtree associated subthemes. The number of sources discussing motivational strategies to enhance sales employees performance is limited, but the results are comparable to the interview responses in favor of using motivational strategies. The number of references concerning strategies to motivate sales employees performance aligns with the interview participant responses except that there are fewer written comments concerning the outcomes compared to those provided by the interview participants.

Table: 9

Theme 4 Document Review

Theme: Sales team motivation	No. of sources	No. of references
Subtheme:		
Recognition within peer group	5	10
Recognition of company	5	11
Combined recognitions	5	8

Review of the interview data and comparison to the relevant company documents demonstrate that the research question; what strategies do some managers use for motivating sales employees, is answered in a congruent manner within the three participants and their associated company documents. The resulting data from this research study aligns with the conceptual framework and the research question. The following discusses the disadvantages of using strategies to motivate sales employees' performance.

Disadvantages of Using Strategies to Motivate Sales Employees' Performance

The designs of the interview questions for this study allowed the participants to question and suggest disadvantages of any strategies they deemed unacceptable. All the participants indicated that the timing of using any form of motivation could prove a disadvantage if not adequately planned. All of the participants explicitly discussed the de-motivational aspects by saying that using financial rewards too often causes the salespeople to hold back on delivering their best efforts because they knew a sales promotion would occur. The results of the de-motivation were that sales during the regular sales period slowed and productivity declined. Similarly, the use of verbal and nonverbal recognition too often ultimately had little effect on sales because the salespeople became passive in accepting the commentary was genuine.

Summary

Yamoah (2013) discussed that several factors affect the performance of sales employees. The factors include motivation, resourcefulness, product knowledge, aptitude, job satisfaction, and role perception. Additional factors include personal factors like age, sex, ego drive, and empathy towards the customers.

Participant P3 summarized his company's thoughts concerning motivational "spiffs" to increase sales employees' performance by stating the following:

> There are many ways to incentivize sales employees to deliver more yet we feel the self-motivated salesperson produces regardless of the spiffs [incentives] or verbal positive reinforcement motivations. However, not all salespeople are self-motivated, which causes our sales managers to use other techniques. We typically use financial rewards if we are behind our sales goals at the end of a quarter or year-end but use such rewards sparingly on a quarterly basis to assure we are not causing the sales team to slow down their production knowing that a financial incentive is coming. We use financial incentives as motivation at year end if we are behind our sales goals, but equally, we provide year-end bonus rewards along with company recognition to show the salesperson our appreciation and to provide company-wide recognition. The salespeople who receive the financial bonus often say the company recognition is as motivational as the financial reward. Perhaps the most crucial use of motivation comes in the form of weekly communication from the sales manager affirming the salesperson is on track to accomplish the sales goals set at the beginning of the year.

This qualitative case study demonstrated the strategies some managers use for motivating sales employees. As previously shown in this study, the analysis of the interview and literature data, yielded four main themes. Analysis of the document data corroborated and confirmed the results of the interview data as well as the literature. The interview findings provided in-depth discussion about what strategies sales managers use to motivate sales employees, whereas the literature findings provided some explicit information but little data of when, how, and the amount of motivation necessary to motivate and sustain sales employees.

I analyzed the research findings through the lens and perspective of the Burns (1978) TLT. The ability to interview successful executives from different business environments all involved with sales allowed for an in-depth view of what is necessary to motivate sales employees effectively. The interviews, company documents, and documents from the public domain validated the choice of the Burns (TLT) as the conceptual theory for this study. Results of the study provide evidence that answers the research question: What strategies do some managers use to motivate sales employees?

The themes outlined in this study provide strategies managers use to motivate sales employees and demonstrate the use of specific strategies. The knowledge gained through this study should allow sales managers an improved understanding of the different strategies to motivate sales employees as well as when to use specific strategies.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore practical strategies that some managers use to motivate sales employees. The applications to professional practice provided in this study focus on the strategies some sales managers use to motivate sales employees' performance and the timing to implement the strategies. The results of this research can provide sales managers insight about the use of strategies to motivate salespeople well as when to use the strategies.

Using the analysis of the data from the semistructured interview responses and a review of the company documents, I found that all of the participants use strategies to motivate their sales employees. All of the participants stated that information from this final study would be beneficial to assure they are familiar with strategies they are currently using and to gain knowledge about the timing of implementing specific motivational strategies. Moreover, the participants discussed that implementing new motivational strategies was often based on the results of use of past strategies and the success associated with their strategies. The three interview participants knew all the main themes. Since the timing to implement specific motivational strategies was a concern with some sales managers I believe, the information in this study allows sales managers to use specific strategies at the most opportune time to increase sales and sustainability in the sales force.

The subtheme strategies to motivate sales employees follow the main themes. Analysis of the interview data combined with research literature displayed insight into the exact strategies used to motivate sales employees and the critical nature of timing when to use the strategies. Participant P2 commented that "…regardless of the strategy we use to motivate our salespeople, the most critical item was the timing of implementation of the strategy to assure the strategy adds to the sales success". The Participant P2 comments are typical for all the participants. Panagopoulos and Oglivie (2015) suggested that self-monitoring activities in salespeople are positively related to thought self-leadership strategies, but that added monitoring and providing motivational assistance from sales managers reinforces self-monitoring activities provided the timing of the sales managers motivational strategies are strategically presented to maximize results. Lin (2017) noted that job performance for salespeople is broken down into outcome-based and behavior-based components, the process by which goal orientation influences performance is more easily determined. The outcome-based results often center on motivational strategies provided by the sales managers to enhance sales performance.

All of the strategies suggested in this study assisted in answering the research question: What strategies do some managers use for motivating sales employees performance. In addition, the strategies aligned with the Burns (1978) transformational leadership theory, used as the conceptual theory for this study. Sales managers should consider using verbal motivations carefully to avoid de-motivation (Berson et al., 2014).

Implications for Social Change

There are many implications for social change possible from this research study. Sales managers who are aware of the strategies to motivate salespeople as well as the timing to use the strategies should be better prepared to analyze the increased productivity and positive revenue results from the strategies and timing. I believe this research gives sales managers the tools and techniques to enhance sales performance, which will benefit the company and the salespeople. Whereas most all for profit organizations have sales employees who are the engine driving sustainability of the company that in turn keeps jobs and adds revenue to the surrounding community, this research should add great value to many organizations and communities in the United Sates and internationally.

Recommendations for Action

Companies involved in sales of any business have the concern with how to maintain and increase profits that the company is sustainable. Analysis of the data from the literature, interviews, and relevant company documents revealed that enhanced sincere, meaningful, communication between sales managers and sales employees aids in increasing individual and company success. Holden (2016) pointed out that the ability of sales managers to elevate the sales team is a direct result of their ability to communicate a message that provides the salespeople motivation to do more than they currently produce. The ability to interview executives from various sales sectors provided insight that gathering executives together in an open conference platform to discuss their use of strategies, increases insight for sales managers about what, how, and why specific strategies are viable to stimulate sales employees performance.

Using the interview information, I determined that some managers used strategies to motivate sales employees’ performance and the timing when to implement the motivational strategies. Review of the literature provided information about general practices of motivating sales employees but lacked specific discussion about timing or the messages used to motivate. The publication of this doctoral research study provides explicit data about the strategies some sales managers use to motivate sales employees’ performance. In addition, the study shows explicit information about the timing of when to implement the strategies, and the motivational and de-motivational aspects of incentives to enhance sales employees’ productivity. In addition, publication of this study allows managers, and interested individuals, to observe evidence that open discussion within an organization and sharing the findings with other organizations could add to increased sales performance in many organizations. In addition to conferences to gather sales managers to discuss specific strategies used to motivate sales employees' performance, I suggest the use of webinars and blogs that could also be methods to reach interested parties.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies some managers use for motivating sales employees' performance. The results of the research yielded qualitative and quantitative information about the use of strategies to motivate sales performance, as well as the time to use specific strategies. The procedures I used in this research study were necessary to conduct the study, which could allow future researchers to discover different viewpoints than expressed in the literature. Additional future research could use the information from this study to expand the number of cases, possibly increase the geography to a global area, and increase the diversity of management positions for the interview participants. In addition, using a survey technique to gather initial information, thereby increasing number of sales managers, may determine that more sales managers are using the same or other motivational strategies than the interview results demonstrated.

Furthermore, expanding the geographic area of the study domestically or internationally may enhance the knowledge of different strategies used in various cultures. The scope of this study was limited to determining what motivational strategies some managers use to enhance sales employee performance in the United States. A quantitative study might be appropriate to determine a more precise percentage of managers using strategies in the Unites States.

Reflections

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program at Walden University has been a long emotional, physical, intellectual, social, and financially difficult journey. The DBA course curriculum was valuable because of the methods and insights about why and how to compose an APA style research study. Reading numerous resources about how to write a literature review provided useful insight to answer my research question and gain knowledge in unexpected areas that added to this study. The information in this study increased my understanding of the number and kind of strategies, as well as the timing to use the strategies to motivate sales employees' performance.

Knowledgeable business professionals from three companies provided their time, expert opinions, and data about their use of strategies to motivate sales employees. The ability to link the data from the literature review to the interviews and related documents from the interviews created the path to answer the central research question of this study: What strategies do some managers use for motivating sales employees' performance? This study represents a base of strategies for current and future sales managers to motivate sales employees, the use of proper timing to implement the strategies, increase company profitability, and provide sustainability for the organization.

The multiple case study approach involved exploring participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the strategies some managers use to motivate sales employees' performance. I used the bracketing technique to assist in describing the participants' perceptions and experiences objectively. In addition, the bracketing technique was used to mitigate any personal bias by identifying and reflecting on preconceptions, assumptions, limitations, and personal views while strictly adhering to the study protocol. Using a strict, comprehensive discipline to follow the study protocol resulted in the protocol guidance of the questions rather than giving personal beliefs to the participants in the study.

Additionally, I used member checking to verify the accuracy of the collected data as well as the summary of the participant interviews. All the participants received a copy of their interview summary to review and participate in member checking. After careful member checking, all participants acknowledged the accuracy of the summary by attesting with their signature.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Overcoming the barriers associated with English, as a second language was the most significant hurdle to leap during the journey to complete this qualitative multiple case study. The concepts and strategies presented in the literature, interviews, and documents concerning strategies to motivate sales employees' performance aligned with my expected results before beginning the journey to complete this study. This research provided interesting strategies to motivate sales performance, but it also uncovered issues of timing as strategies not anticipated. Importantly I examined the contents of the data in an unbiased attitude and method.

The breadth of the use of strategies evolving from the research was far greater than expected. Each participant had numerous strategies to motivate sales, but each participant also viewed the timing to implement the strategy as important as the strategy itself. The timing of implementing a motivational strategy became a strategy. Importantly, all of the organizations, combined with the research information, demonstrated that managers use strategies to motivate and enhance sales performance. In addition, the research data provided information about the implementation and scope of each motivational strategy, and the circumstances such stategies are implemented. Moreover, the literature review implied and the interview participants confirmed that some managers do not share sales strategies with other organizations.

Importantly, all the participants mentioned the desire to obtain self-motivated salespeople but admitted it was difficult to determine self-motivation before hiring. Hiring self-motivated sales employees is a strategy itself because the self-motivated employees need less guidance and produce results faster than a non-self-motivated sales employee produces. The similarity between the literature review and the three case studies was that both showed a desire to seek and hire self-motivated sales personnel. A difference between the interview participants and the literature review was that some of the interview participants did not implement the motivational strategies in the same time frame or circumstance as the others. Of particular relevance was the difference in using financial rewards to incentivize the salespeople. Financial rewards to enhance sales performance was deemed as much an asset as it was a liability. The positive outcome was that financial rewards can enhance performance if used sparingly to complete specific profitability and revenue goals. The potential negative outcome of using financial strategies to motivate sales employees performance is that it becomes expected and lower production occurs because the salespeople understand that less production provides the opportunity to receive the financial reward.

A careful review of the literature research, interviews, and evaluation of supporting documents proved that saturation occurred because no new explicit data appeared. The lack of information about explicit strategies from the literature about strategies to motivate sales employees' performance demonstrated the need to provide explicit information about the strategies and timing of the use of strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. The research from this study gives explicit strategies to motivate sales employees' performance. This study proves and confirms that sales managers can serve an important effective role in enhancing sales employees' performance, which will also increase company profits, add more jobs, protect the existing jobs, and provide sustainability for the organization. This research study, when shared, should enrich the knowledge of all parties interested in using strategies to motivate their sales employees because it discusses the proper timing of the use of motivational strategies, as a strategy unto itself, as well other methods of motivation.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The aim of this interview is to answer the research question on strategies business leaders use to motivate sales employees' performance in small business enterprises.

I will complete the following steps during each interview.

1. The interview will begin with a brief overview of the research, the purpose, and the time required for the interview.
2. Thank the participant for agreeing to participate in the interview. Thank the participant for agreeing to participate in the interview.
3. Present a copy of the informed consent form and review the contents of the form with the participant. The items included in the consent form are: (a) the expected length of time to participate in the interview; (b) the interview will be audio recorded and if a participant chooses not to be recorded, handwritten notes will be taken; and (c) a summary of the interview will be presented to each participant to validate my interpretations of their responses to each interview question.
4. Explain that their participation is voluntary, and they can withdraw from the study at any time without prior notice and through a verbal or email request, even after the completion of data collection.
5. Provide my contact information to each participant in case a participant decides to withdraw from the study.
6. Obtain the participant's signature on the consent form as an indication of their agreement to participate in the study.
7. Collect the signed consent form and provide the participant a copy of the consent

form for his or her records.

8. I will use a sequential coding system to identify the participants during the interview recording without using their names. For example, I will assign each participant an identifying pseudonym, such as A1, B1, and C1. I will explain that I will be the only person with access to the name of each participant associated with each pseudonym and that data from their interview will be identified in my database using only their assigned pseudonym.
9. I will record the interview after a participant signs a consent form. The interview will begin with open-ended questions, which may include probing additional questions to expand on the participant's responses.
10. At the end of the interview~~,~~ I will remind the participant that they will be provided a summary of the interview and my interpretations of their responses to review and validate.
11. Request documents related to the use the interview discussion such as schedules, charts, graphs, or other internal records related to the use mitigating strategies that the organization is comfortable sharing. All document requests and received have been approved by the authorized representative of the company in the letter of cooperation.
12. I will end the interview and thank the participant for taking the time to participate.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What strategies do your managers use to motivate sales employees’ performance in your organization?
2. How do you measure the outcome of your strategies for motivating sales employees?
3. What challenges did your managers encounter in the implementation of employee motivational strategies?
4. How did your organization address the key challenges to implementing the motivational strategies for increasing sales employees ‘performance?
5. What strategies have you found to be repeatable and measurable?
6. What additional information would you like to provide as it relates to strategies and motivation in sales employees’ performance?

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

Dear Research Partner,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University seeking a Doctor of Business Administration degree with a specialization in Human Resources Management. I am conducting a research study entitled "Strategies for Motivating Sales Employees' Performance within Small Businesses." The purpose of this research study is to explore strategies business leaders use to motivate sales employees' performance in the small business enterprise.

The requirements for eligibility of employees and management of the companies selected are as follows:

- The company must operate in the United States.
- The company must be in the small business enterprise.
- Participants must be at least 18 years of age.
- Participants must be a manager or an employee with at least one-year of experience as a manager in the small business enterprises.

As the researcher, I will request voluntary participation by eligible personnel within your organization. This requested participation will involve answering open-ended questions in face-to-face interviews. The participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw from participating in this study at any time without penalty or forfeiture of benefit to the individuals. The results of this research study may be published, but neither the organizations' or the participants' names or positions will be disclosed, and the identity of the participants, will not be compromised by the participants' responses. To ensure the confidentiality, each participant's responses will be assigned a letter and numeric code to protect the participant's identity, and I will maintain the master transcript of each interview in confidence. I will use any company documents released to me exclusively for this research and not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.

I have included a research partner letter of cooperation for obtaining your permission to invite participants, conduct interviews, and request participants to review the summary of interviews to ensure I have summarized the information accurately. In addition, I am requesting your permission to use and reproduce documents related to your company's strategies to motivate sales employees' performance materials that you are comfortable sharing. These documents can be schedules, charts, graphs, or other internal records related to the strategies you use to motivate sales employees' performance.

Please complete and return the attached form if you agree to participate in this research. You may contact me at any time if you have questions regarding this research study. A copy of this letter of cooperation is herewith provided for your records.

Sincerely,

Wesley C Chishimba

Appendix D: Invitation to Participate in the Study

Date:

Re: Doctoral Study Research

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Wesley Chishimba, a doctoral student in the Business Administration Program at Walden University. As part of this doctoral research study, I invite you to participate in this research study on “Strategies for Motivating Sales Employees’ Performance within Small Businesses.” If you accept the invitation to participate in this study, I will arrange for a skype video conferencing interview in a private and comfortable place at a time and date that are convenient for you. The interview will be recorded and will last approximately one hour.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time, even after the interview. I will contact you at least 48 hours in advance of the interview to explain the study. You will have the opportunity to ask questions before deciding to participate in this study. I assure total confidentiality of all the information communicated between interviewer and participant during the interview as well as the identity of the participants and their organization. The interview will be recorded for analysis, and the summary is reported in the study. Your individual responses will not be disclosed or published. I will also request you to review the summary of the interview to ensure I have summarized the information accurately, which may require approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

I have received permission from your organization’s authorized representative to request participants to provide copies of documents related to the strategies to motivate sales employee performance materials such as schedules, charts, graphs, or other internal records related to strategies to motivate sales employee performance that your organization is comfortable sharing. I will share the results of this study with individual participants only as to their information, the leaders of the participants' organization, and other scholars. The requirements for eligibility of employees and management of the companies are as follows:

- The company must operate in the United States.
- The company must be in the small business enterprise and knowledgeable about strategies to motivate sales employee performance.
- Participant must be at least 18 years of age.
- Participant must be a manager or an employee who has one-year of experience in managing employee sales performance that has the potential of demotivating sales employees.

I hope you will participate in this study. Please feel free to contact me by phone or by email. I will contact you within the next 10 days to answer your questions about this research and to ask for your participation. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Wesley C Chishimba

Appendix E: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer: ____

During the course of study in collecting data for this research on strategies for motivating sales employees' performance within small businesses I will have sole access to information that is confidential and should not be disclosed. If a circumstance occurs that causes Walden University to request confidential data, such data will only be released to an authorized official of Walden University. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose your name or your business name in the final report. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter, or destroy any confidential information except as requested by properly authorized Walden University officials.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modifications, or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after completion

of the research study that I will perform.

6. I understand that a violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices that I am officially authorized to access, and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.
8. I will ensure confidentiality is maintained by ensuring the research records are maintained in a locked container for 5 years.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement, and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Researcher Signature:_________________________

Date:__________________

Appendix F: Member Checking Protocol

I used the following steps during my member checking process for clarity and successful outcome.

Member Checking Protocol

1. Interviewed participant taking notes and recording interviews
2. Transcribed recording
3. Critically analyzed transcript and interview notes
4. Synthesized interpretation for participant answer by question
5. Member checked interpretation by sharing a paper version of the question and synthesis
6. Noted and recorded any additional in-depth data from the participant
7. For a third interview I repeated 2 through 6 if needed for more in-depth data collection.