

2019

Sustainability Strategies of Barber Salons

Kouassi Gilles Mevo
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Kouassi Gilles Mevo

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Sustainability Strategies of Barber Salons

by

Kouassi Gilles Mevo

MSc., Indiana Wesleyan University, 2014

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

February 2019

Abstract

Many barber salons and other small businesses in the United States fail to succeed beyond the first 5 years. The factors responsible for the low survival rate of salons may include the limited training and education levels mandated by state certification requirements. The purpose of this multiple case study was to identify business strategies successful barber salon owners use to overcome the business management and staffing challenges associated with a small pool of skilled barbers and the high turnover in a low wage profession. The theory of transformational leadership served as the conceptual framework. The data collection included interviews of 3 successful barber salon owners who met the study participation eligibility criteria of licensed, registered, operating a salon business in the Indiana region for more than 5 years, and over the minimum age of 25 years. The 4 themes emerging from the interview data analysis were (a) barber salon operating structures, (b) salon leadership and managerial strategies, (c) licensed barber skill enhancement, and (d) salon operating strategies effectiveness and sustainability. The data analysis also involved the triangulation of the primary research against secondary data from the Small Business Administration and barber industry reports. The expertise and knowledge shared by the interviewees could serve the quest of barber salon businesses in the Indiana region to overcome the profitability and financial sustainability challenges of this industry. The study findings may potentially contribute to positive social change by improving the economic standing and welfare of barber salon owners and professionals in the community.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research study first and foremost to God for the exceptional opportunity I got by coming to the United States to pursue my education. To my dad, Pascal Mevo, for the firm culture he gave me during my childhood. This study is also dedicated to the memory of my late beloved mother, Rosemonde K. Tossavi who has sacrificed everything so I could go to school and succeed in life. Unfortunately, she departed this world early, at the age of 51 years, many years before I moved to the United States. May your soul rest in peace and protect me forever.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The Small Business Administration (SBA, 2014) has indicated that the small business segment of the U. S. economy is growing rapidly. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS, 2018) also projected an increase of 13% in employment in the barbering industry from 2016 to 2026. Lee and Lee (2014) noted that the creation of a business also requires its founder's commitment to the process of entrepreneurship to build and grow the new firm. Lee and Lee also concluded that general educational and industry experience are essential prerequisites for entrepreneurial success.

Burnes, Devasagayam, and Clendenen (2016) had projected a precipitous post-2015 decline of 50% in salon sales, indicative of the state of the barbering industry. The mandatory requirements to become a licensed barber vary from state to state within the United States. The minimum age of 16 years old, a high school diploma, or equivalent, and graduation from a state-licensed school of barber or cosmetology, however, appear consistent requirements across all geographies (BLS, 2018). Arguably, the minimum education and age are insufficient to establish and run a barber firm, wherein entrepreneurship, knowledge, and business acumen represent critical success factors, also expressed by Hall and Pokharel (2016). The findings and discoveries from this study may help to identify the necessary pathways for enhancing the skills of employees, in ensuring steady profits to safeguard the sustainability of the barber salon business sector that serves the community.

Background of the Problem

The SBA (2016a) defined a small business as a private and independently managed firm with less than 500 employees. The SBA (2016b) also reported an establishment of 28,800,000 small businesses in the United States, in the third quarter of 2015. Hall and Pokharel (2016) observed that most barber salons are also sole proprietorships. The BLS (2018) indicated, however, that in 2016, at least 72% of barbers were self-employed and working full or part-time. In 2011, in the state of Indiana, the ratio of 39 barbershops for every 100,000 individuals appeared to be consistent with other regions and states within the United States (Hall & Pokharel, 2016). Barbers contribute to the positive physical appearance and wellness of customers (Linnan, 2014) and thereby serve to improve individual self esteem, with grooming services offered.

The BLS noted a change of 13% in the employment of barbers, which revealed a projected growth from 54,600 jobs created in 2016 to 64,000 in 2026. Hall and Pokharel (2016) noted, however, that the minimum qualification of a high school diploma required for becoming a licensed barber is perhaps insufficient for acquiring the requisite entrepreneurship knowledge and skills in managing a business. This required minimum level of education represents an educational problem, which affects the supply of barbers since other professions are more appealing (Hall & Pokharel, 2016). The imposition of regulation and fees by licensing authorities, as observed by Hall and Pokharel, makes the barbering profession unattractive to the establishment of new salons. The conclusion drawn from all the analyses of Hall and Pokharel is that the barbering business is usually considered a low-income and low-skilled profession.

Problem Statement

Excessive government regulations and problems associated with occupational licensing affect nearly 30% of U.S. small businesses and workers (Thornton & Timmons, 2015). Industries classified as low education and income, such as hair workers, consequently face diminished job creation and growth (Thornton & Timmons, 2015), which negatively affects the supply of licensed barbers (Hall & Pokharel, 2016). The general business problem is that the paucity of competent and skilled barbers limits the running of salon operations successfully and in achieving financial sustainability. The specific business problem is that some barber salons owners lack strategies to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the business management and leadership strategies that some successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. From the population comprising 69 active barber salons in Indianapolis, Indiana (Indiana Government, 2018a), purposeful selection of three successful owners who have, in 5 consecutive years, recorded stable profits constituted the case and study sample. Amaeshi et al. (2016) noted that small business growth yields positive social change for communities. The findings and knowledge from the study could contribute to the progress in economic and social welfare of the barbering professionals, employees, and customers in the Indiana region. Barbers fulfill an important social service in catering

to the improvement in physical appearance of customers through barbering services offered to customers.

Nature of the Study

The uniqueness of each study resides in the selection of an appropriate process for its effective achievement (Awasthy, 2015; Dasgupta, 2015). Using the qualitative methodology is suitable to collect, organize, analyze, and gain insights into the research question (Singh, 2015). To undertake the study, I chose the qualitative method over a quantitative or a mixed method study. Johnson (2015a) argued that a mixed method study is only beneficial in the context in which statistical data may fail in providing a full explanation of a phenomenon. Barnham (2015) noted that in a quantitative approach, a researcher typically uses a survey to obtain data for experimental, correlational, or quantitative descriptive studies. The reason for not choosing the quantitative approach was because exploring business strategies requires in-depth insights from barber salon owners, which was not possible by conducting a survey and analyzing data only quantitatively. McCulley and Osman (2015) argued that in a numerically oriented study, quantitative researchers often seek to determine causes and relationships or differences among variables within a phenomenon. Selecting a qualitative study with a multiple case study design was appropriate and suitable to fulfill the study objectives. Qualitative research was found significant in yielding and understanding practical knowledge and experiences of successful barber salon owners.

The qualitative method encompasses some important designs such as ethnography, case study, and grounded theory (Awasthy, 2015). In 1967, sociologists

Glaser and Strauss developed the grounded theory design, which involves a comparative assessment of a phenomenon through multiple cases, to study similarities and dissimilarities and develop theories. In the grounded theory design, researchers develop suppositions (Johnson, 2015b); however, developing theories was not the aim of this study. The ethnographic design entails researchers studying participant beliefs to achieve a profound and precise understanding of social life phenomena (Blell, Iqbal, Simpson, & Hampshire, 2014). The subjectivity aspect of the ethnographic design requires researchers to analyze a phenomenon in its natural context to collect appropriate and accurate social data (Blell et al., 2014; Larsen, 2014), which was beyond the scope and purpose of this study. A multiple case study design and semistructured interviews could facilitate identifying and exploring successful and profitable business management leadership strategies used by some barber salon owners.

Research Question

The central research question for the study was as follows: What strategies do successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond 5 years from business establishment?

Interview Questions

1. What leadership strategies serve you in running your barber salon efficiently?
2. What major challenges did you face in implementing leadership strategies for running the barber salon services?
3. How did you successfully address the key challenges to implement management and leadership strategies in running the salon?

4. How did you assess the effectiveness of your strategies for increasing the profitability of your barber salon?
5. What business strategies do you use to ensure retention of customers for your barber salon?
6. How effective are the business strategies implemented in increasing your barber salon financial sustainability during the last 5 years?
7. What training programs have you implemented for enhancing barber skills in the salon?
8. How would you describe your communications strategies with licensed barbers working in the establishment?
9. What monetary or other incentives do you use to motivate employees to achieve results?
10. What business management leadership strategies have we not covered, which you may want to discuss?

Conceptual Framework

The transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978) underpinned this research study and served as its conceptual framework. Burns introduced the theory of transformational leadership in 1978, which Bass and Avolio (1993) developed by framing the fundamental 4 I's, denoted as dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (p. 112). Transformational leadership theory appeared suitable to underlie the study since it aligned with the objectives of the study of management and leadership in barber salons.

Martin (2015) acknowledged that transformational leaders are most effective at improving the skills of followers. Martin also noted that in the marketplace, fostering a climate of innovation and managing change require leaders to stimulate followers intellectually and adequately to accomplish the goals of adaptability and sustainability. Gyanchandani (2016) added that knowledge is crucial to overcome the dynamic change of the organizational environment and guarantee the effective management of businesses, which transformational leaders typically exhibit by stimulating workers intellectually.

Gyanchandani (2016) argued that transformational leaders fulfill business missions by combining all these traits in a coherent way to challenge, develop follower skills, and increase team performances. Transformational leaders often display empathy and emotional communication with followers and subordinates (Gupta & Mathew, 2015), a skill needed in developing employees' efficiency and ensuring the profitability and financial sustainability of barber salon businesses. The theory of transformational leadership could serve as a valuable lens for understanding successful business management leadership strategies some barber salon owners implement to increase profitability and growth of business operations. The invocation of the transformational leadership theory helped in identifying the strategic training and other strategies salon owners use to address the paucity of skills of licensed barbers within the barbering industry.

Operational Definitions

The definition of key terms in this study may ensure clarity and understanding of the reader.

Barbering industry: The U.S. government defines the barbering industry as aesthetic services through which hair stylists supply customers with beauty cares without using any medical techniques (Census Bureau, 2015).

Green marketing: A global action set up as strategies to satisfy customers' needs and expectations to minimize destructive practices that could harm the social environment (Martínez, 2015).

Grooming industry: The grooming industry segment refers to the full beauty and cosmetology industry, which includes the barbering industry's activities and all personal care services (Census Bureau, 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions appear to be a discrete state of mind that may help to predict responses to a situation in which the final result could be either correct or incorrect (Chen, Starns, & Rotello, 2016). An assumption for the study was that the research study findings and discoveries could help barber salon owners identify the optimal leadership strategies to increase profitability and outperform and enhance the survivability of operations. A second assumption for this research was that participants in this study would provide accurate, honest, and useful information, which may help in identifying business management leadership strategies used by successful barber salon owners to ensure the financial survivability of the business.

Limitations

Limitations are issues that could affect the validity of a study, which are beyond the control of the researcher (Walden University, 2016). The first limitation envisioned was that involved participants in this study would not possibly recall precisely or accurately knowledge, experiences, and perceptions concerning leadership strategies favored and used to ensure sustainable barbering businesses. The second limitation was restricting the study to only barber salon business owners who have been successful in running operations profitably, sustainably, and beyond 5 consecutive years of operations from the initial business formation and registration. The final limitation perceived was selecting participants registered with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Department of Commerce, or Indiana Professional Licensing Agency (PLA), which may have resulted in the exclusion of collecting useful insights from others successful and experienced barber salon owners.

Delimitations

Delimitations are explicit geographic mapping that delineate the limits beyond, which a researcher will not go beyond while collecting accurate insights to address the central research question (Stewart et al., 2015). The delimiting elements included the objectives of the study, the research questions, the design, and the methodology. The theoretical concepts also included the factors of delimitation. The scope of the study entailed gathering information from three successful barber salon owners. Selecting participants beyond the Southwest Indianapolis area was not the purpose of this research. The research involved interviewing only participants who met the specific inclusion and

exclusion criteria carefully considered and earmarked for this study. Delimitation aspects, finally, included restricting the collection of insights concerning barber salons by excluding beauty products sales and hair braiding. The research study covered barber salons for men and women, as the aim included studying successful leadership strategies for operating, managing, and providing the necessary customer services while ensuring the financial sustainability of these businesses.

Significance of the Study

This study may be of significance because the findings could help increase the skills and capabilities of barbers in running businesses successfully. The identification of effective strategies in overcoming the limited technical and business skills of barbers may lead to offering high-quality services, acquiring more customers, and reducing high patron complaint rates by implementing the leadership strategies and practices from the knowledge and findings of this study. The methodological triangulation of data from the interviews against the financial performance figures of selected barber salon businesses and reports of industry trends from credible secondary sources and the theory selected, which underpinned the study, resulted in holistic analysis and possibly yielded results of value for grooming businesses.

Contribution to Business Practice

Research projects, as viewed by Hum (2015), make available needed learning experiences and beneficial findings. Gaining insights into the successful business strategies that some barber salon owners have used for leveraging human resources with limited education and barbering skills could be meaningful for improving the profitability

of barbering businesses. Organizations such as the SBA and the National Association of Barbers Boards of America (NABBA) could use the study findings to design specific training programs to improve the barbering skills of trainees so that more skilled employees are available for hire by barber salons and businesses can grow financially.

Implications for Social Change

The implication for positive social change from the knowledge and findings of this research study may include a contribution to offering higher-quality services at higher prices, thereby improving the lives and welfare of employees, families, and the local community. Amaeshi et al. (2016) noted that the success of small businesses leads to the improvement of the welfare and the prosperity of the community. The knowledge from the study findings could also lead to business sustainability, which could have a positive contribution to preventing unemployment. As job creation and growth increases in the U.S. national economy, the state of Indiana could maintain or lower its unemployment rate of 4.6% (National Conferences of State Legislatures, 2016). The barbering industry's actors could play a servant leadership role by participating in the wellness of the community members' psychological and physical advancement. Ganesan and Saravanaraj (2014) emphasized that barber salons are promising businesses where 82% of barbers engage in open communication with customers to foster community members' health.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play crucial roles in the national economic performance but also for its development (Gupta, Wilson, Gregoriou, & Healy, 2014). In

Sweden, nearly 98% of small businesses are private while employing 32% of the Swedish workforce (Larsson, Gunnarsson, Schill, & Josephson, 2014). The potential contributions to the national economy notwithstanding, some small enterprises struggle to survive because of the pressure in the local and global marketplaces (Krajnakova, Navikaite, & Navickas, 2015). A study conducted in Israel indicated, that when firms provide poor quality of products and services, it often leads to many dissatisfied customers (Sharabi, 2014). Some researchers have attributed customer dissatisfaction as reasons for the inefficiencies of small businesses (Kislali & Tastan Boz, 2015). Identifying such causes is relevant to understanding and improving the internal and external business environment (Iqbal, Long, Fei, & Bukhari, 2015).

A review of the literature in this study extensively covered the skills and background of leaders and the strategies implemented to run small business activities profitably. The literature review includes a critical analysis that aligns with the overarching research question of this study: What strategies do successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond 5 years from business establishment? To complete the critique analysis of the literature review section, I examined a total of 221 sources, included 210 peer-reviewed journals articles (95.02%), two textbooks (0.91%), eight national publications (3.62%), and one professional article (0.45%) pertinent to the research topic. For this study, the literature review includes 210 peer-reviewed journals articles from the total of the 221 sources examined. I selected 210 articles published within the last 5 years for my literature review. I considered 2018 as a

cut-off year, for choosing peer-reviewed journal articles for this literature review, which may denote the emphasis on recent, scholarly, and practitioner sources (see Table 1).

Table 1

Literature Sources Reviewed

Types of documents	Numbers	Percentages (%)	Years	
			Less than 5 years from 2018	Older than 5 years
Peer-reviewed	210	95.02%	✓	
<i>Articles</i>				
Books	02	0.91%		✓
Professional	01	0.45%	✓	
Governmental	08	3.62%	✓	
Total	221	100%		

Note. Table compilation of summary statistics of literature sources reviewed in this study. The check marks in the above table may denote that the literature sources in this review conformed to goal of recent, relevant and credible .

The Walden University library was the primary source for accessing journal articles in developing the literature review. The search strategies included keyword techniques in sourcing relevant literature, which aligned with the objectives of this study. The databases used in the research consisted of Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, Google Scholar, Google, Ebscohost.com, Emerald Insight, SAGE, and government websites and databases.

The key search words to source literature relevant to the aim of the study included *transformational leadership, business management AND/OR small business, corporate social responsibility, innovation, and quantitative and qualitative research and case*

study. The focus and emphasis of the literature included the concept of leadership and topics related to the administration of small businesses: (a) knowledge and background, (b) development strategies, (c) leadership, (d) transformational leadership, (e) vision, and (f) profitability. The factors examined in the literature also related to (a) customer satisfaction, (b) services quality, and (c) employee motivation. The focus of the literature review also included a review of pertinent information related to (a) the motivation, goals of starting a business and (b) social networking and other factors that influence business operations, customer satisfaction, and profitability.

A literature review is a fundamental area of the study where the researcher contrasts ideas gathered from diverse sources to seek a gap in the existing body of knowledge to build on through a research study (Mikelson & Liela, 2015). In this study, the conceptual framework was the transformational leadership theory propounded by Burns (1978), which served to understand the imperatives for companies effectively to enact strategies in a changing business climate. The principles of transformational leadership served to understand the qualities of business leaders needed for motivating, inspiring, and increasing employee commitment to fulfilling business goals and missions to achieve profits consistently. The review of the literature on the following topics helped acquire pertinent knowledge related to the theory of transformational leadership, with the following themes: (a) the concept of leadership, (b) the significance and critics of the theory of transformational leadership, (c) the origin and expansion of the barbering industry, (d) small business and barbers as microenterprises, (e) success factors for

running a business, (f) barriers to small business success, and (g) small business profitability.

Relevant Theories and Concepts

The theory of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) was the conceptual framework for this study. The transformational leadership theory was a potentially useful lens for analyzing and understanding the strategies barber salon owners implement to increase employee skills, in meeting customer expectations, which can ultimately influence profit and business success. Ghasabeh, Soosay, and Reaiche (2015) opined that transformational leaders achieve missions with efficacy by having a vision, innovating, training, and fostering cohesion and support among teams to assure business survivability.

Concept of leadership. Leadership refers to a person's capacity for influencing others to get the most out of them to achieve benefit for the entire community (Jaramillo, Bande, & Varela, 2015). The concept of leadership involves the recognition of an individual called a leader who should have followers to be in a leadership position (Thomas & Rowland, 2014). Leadership is a higher level of status, entrusted to accomplish activities within a group of human beings, not as a single operative (Landis, Hill, & Harvey, 2014; Thomas & Rowland, 2014). The notion of cohesiveness often spurs and galvanizes higher performance. Jaramillo et al. (2015) argued that leadership is a process involving interacting with others by displaying ethical behaviors, elegance, and attention to guide followers to serve the common goal of the society (Jaramillo et al., 2015; Thomas & Rowland, 2014). The postulation of leadership theory applies to any

economic field, even in social life. Barber salon owners or supervisors who use leadership principles can identify and improve the performance of errant barbers to meet or surpass the stated and implied needs of customers satisfactorily.

Landis et al. (2014) reported that leadership is an essential constituent of organizational success and involves the practice of styles based on situations, traits, and goals. Meuser et al. (2016) emphasized that the concept of leadership evolves and encompasses a wide range of theories such as servant, charismatic, strategic, transactional, and transformational to achieve growth and profitability of businesses. The leadership concept has evolved (Meuser et al., 2016) to include theories like emergent, visionary, leader-member exchange, pragmatic, situational, and ethical (Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2016; Pundt & Herrmann, 2015; Styhre, 2016; Thompson & Glaso, 2014; Will, 2016).

Significance and critics of the theory of transformational leadership. In business organizations management, leaders mainly expect to play crucial roles, which include inculcating ethical values at all levels within the firm, and must lead by example (Hood, Jacobson, & Van Buren III, 2014). Leadership behaviors may reflect individual traits, as well as the propensity to collaborate within organizational settings (Xenikou, 2014), which transformational leaders often exemplify. Transformational leadership, as defined by Nging (2015), is a process in which a visionary leader inspires followers to achieve more significant results than may be otherwise possible. Lee, Chen, and Lee (2014) argued that running a business activity with deft leadership styles positively influences employee outcomes.

Nging (2015) emphasized while citing transformational leadership principles that leaders manipulate worker performances by increasing employees' sense of significance, valuing contributions, and inspiring the workforce, leading to the achievement of higher results, which benefit the entire enterprise and community. Hood et al. (2014) stressed that going beyond the expected performances calls for employees' engagement, and transformational leaders are critical agents in engaging the workforce to accomplish organizational objectives. When barber salon owners exemplify transformational leadership, hired employees can also benefit from the inspiration and motivation, and in reciprocation, strive to satisfy customers enthusiastically.

Balwant (2016) posited that the practice of transformational leadership principles has limits within organizations. Pradhan and Pradhan (2015) observed that transformational leaders achieve organizational missions by challenging and engaging followers to display extra-role behaviors to meet and exceed expectations. These extra-roles behaviors include voluntary assistance or help to peers who fall behind in accomplishing tasks in the defined time. Balwant (2016) argued that organizational settings dictate transformational leader behaviors to fit the business context entirely. Boer, Deinert, Homan, and Voelpel (2016) noted that as firm representatives, transformational leaders develop leader-follower relationships to foster a culture of organizational commitment, which can influence job satisfaction negatively and only indirectly.

Pradhan and Pradhan (2015) added that transformational leaders urge followers to achieve organizational objectives rather than employee individualistic ones. Boer et al.

(2016) observed that transformational leaders develop high-quality and reciprocal relationships with employees to manipulate job performances positively. If the leader-follower relationship quality is low, the impacts should significantly reflect on work outcomes. Pradhan and Pradhan noted that transformational leaders create mundane activities to curb employees' commitment to the accomplishment of company goals. Barber salon owners should apply the theory of transformational leadership diligently. Salon owners need to display awareness of the barbering industry realities to be successful in implementing relevant business management leadership strategies used by peers. The aim of seeking these strategies is to help increasing profitability and achieving financial sustainability of operations.

Vision. The successful management of any firm requires the articulation of a vision and mission (Quintana, Sangwon, & Cabrera, 2015). The concept of vision as defined by Carton, Murphy, and Clark (2015) is verbal and dreaming speech about a future. Hood et al. (2014), however, portrayed vision as the setting of idealized goals and objectives for reaching the desired future as often sought by some transformational business leaders. Emphasizing Hood et al.'s perception regarding vision, Waddock, and Steckler (2016) argued that conceptualizing a vision also aids in the identification of market, or social needs, and leads to uncovering of opportunities in the business environment. Vision, as defined by Reid, Roberts, and Moore (2014), is the mental image of a firm that derives critical organizational conditions such as competitiveness, technological and financial development to impact its success. Reid et al. stressed that although vision applies to business management, it has a broad connotation and facets.

Reid et al. added that as a more general concept, the vision includes technology vision, project vision, product vision, organizational vision, and market vision. The previously mentioned diverse types of visions can produce a technology vision, which can help business leaders to pursue radical innovation, as the pathway to higher organizational performance.

Pradhan and Pradhan (2015) observed that vision is an appealing image that requires leadership to engage employees in challenging and transforming firms into an expressive and social unit. Lavetelli (2016), however, rejected vision as just an appealing image, and instead defined it as uncertainty about a system future, and its achievement needs engagement from all business members. The involvement of workers' demands the enunciation and communication of vision on behalf of leaders (Carton, Murphy, & Clark, 2015) to show direction and guide employees towards the accomplishment of the enterprise's future goals. Pradhan and Pradhan noted that organizational commitment necessitates a strong belief in all members of a firm, to generate projected outcomes. Lavetelli noted that leader and employee have to exhibit similar behaviors to achieve the vision or overcome uncertainty in business. Carton et al. (2015) clarified that vision setting and communication establishes a sense of shared purpose within the organizational workforce to alleviating uncertainty.

Carton et al. (2015) suggested transparency, role modeling, and trust building by leaders in having a clear and written vision, which must be available, applicable, and observable by all employees to avoid confusing organizational members. A clear vision, when shared at all levels within the organization; helps create the necessary cohesiveness

among the workforce to ensure reaching the mission efficiently. Mackie (2014) discussed that the prediction of positive results for firms requires a well-designed architecture, employee training, coaching, support by leaders, ensuring alignment to a vision, in sustaining activities. The lessons apply to the barbering business, as based on a vision, leaders and employees are likely to strive to meet short and long-term goals, strategies, process, and cultures to attain sustainable results. A vision is critical to expanding the business, and in achieving the required sustainability and growth.

Characteristics of transformational leadership. Balwant (2016) argued that business organizations are a social system where individuals with diverse skills, experiences, and knowledge interplay to define and achieve common goals. The efficient achievement of a company's goals and objectives drives the desire of working with power, or authority, and leadership. Khalili (2016) viewed the concept of leadership as a process through which a leader influences group members and followers intentionally, to reach a desired or higher performance for an organization. Long, Yong, and Chuen (2016) recommended that leaders embrace a proper leadership style to obtain desired results. Transformational leadership, as a theory of leadership, and as defined by Balwant, referred to an interactive system in which leaders develop four diverse and complementary characters; precisely charisma, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, to accomplish goals efficiently. Each of these four traits of transformational leaders was a focus in the subsequent paragraphs for understanding the significance of running a business profitably through transformational leadership principles.

Charisma. The term charisma is a Greek word, which means gifted or favored and reflects on leaders' ability to express a sense of mission, and to cultivate values of success among a workforce (Balwant, 2016). Charisma, as conceptualized by Long et al. (2016), refers to the idealized influence exerted in the workplace. Long et al. espoused Balwant's view of charisma by developing it as leadership, a trait through which a leader expresses goals, challenges, and motivates followers to achieve results beyond the boundaries of stated and implied expectations. Balwant stressed that articulation of the mission helps leaders to foster a culture of trust within organizations, to gain respect and trust from followers that transcend self-interest fulfillment, in efforts to meet organizational goals. Long et al. indicated that leaders with idealized influence challenge employees profoundly, to the point of inspiring the achievement of common goals and objectives. Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou (2016) observed that with charisma, transformational leaders commit employees to the well-being of companies.

Long et al. (2016) added that leaders with a charismatic trait or who exude charisma, idealized influence, often earn the trust of employees who in return, accept taking risks, behave similarly, to reach organizational goals. Cheng, Bartram, Karimi, and Leggat (2015) emphasized that transformational leaders encourage employees to accomplish extraordinary results, consistent with corporate vision and goals, by these individuals displaying charisma or idealized influence. The outcomes of barber salons highly depend on the extent to which owners motivate employees, by exploiting personal charisma to complete its individualistic roles or tasks. Challenging barbers in putting significant efforts to contributing to business success, therefore, should be the

considerable role of barber salon owners. In the barbering industry, charisma is vital and of significance to persuade and increase customer regularity to a salon.

Inspirational motivation. Boer et al. (2016) stated that transformational leadership is a multifaceted attribute of an individual and manifests when inspirational motivation comes to the fore in guiding employees. Cheng et al. (2015) defined inspirational motivation, as a role model trait, the characters of determination and confidence that transformational leaders display within organizations, to motivate workers to surpass regular performances. Balwant (2016) held a different view and noted that inspirational motivation represents an engaging vision that transformational leaders articulate while being optimistic, enthusiastic, setting high outcomes for employees, and using emblems to keep the focus on efforts and commitments. Long et al. (2016) viewed inspirational motivation, as the second trait of transformational leaders that refers to inspirational leadership.

Inspirational motivation, based on Long et al. (2016)'s conception, is also a character, which leaders use to enthuse and motivate employees to commit to accomplishing the goals of the organization. Long et al. held a similar view to Boer et al. (2016) and Balwant (2016) arguing that through leaders' enthusiasm and optimism, followers receive inspiration and look at goals as challenges, commit to work and perform beyond expectations. Long et al. added that to achieve results transformational leaders use inspirational motivation as an idealized influence to directly or indirectly inspire followers to accept and invest in vital mission and goal accomplishment while sacrificing individual interests to reach organization's as high and top priorities. As an

artistic activity, the perfect satisfaction of customer expectations requires barber salon owners to instill optimism and self-confidence in employees to succeed in running the barbering organization sustainably.

Individualized consideration. The third dimension of transformational leadership is an individualized consideration, which Long et al. (2016) described as a value or attention leaders pay to each employee needs satisfaction. The trait of individualized consideration requires leaders to act as mentors, and provide support, empower and coach followers to develop. Balwant (2016) held almost the same perspective as Long et al. and indicated that individualized consideration appears as the specific attention of leaders to followers for unique and individual needs achievement. The strong support of leaders is essential to help reach the fullest level of employee capacity, which would aid in fulfilling organizational objectives. Long et al. stressed that for leaders to develop employees to full potential, they need to recognize each follower's needs, and provide the necessary coaching and mentoring programs to fit the growth opportunities, with businesses profitably in mind. Dabke (2016) argued that in a collectivistic economy arena, leaders satisfy followers' individual needs to secure and sustain the future of companies and stakeholders.

Feng, Huang, and Zhang (2016) reinforced the diverse views shared about individualized consideration when stating that it is an adequate factor for matching the unique pattern of followers, to enhance employee self-efficacy, gain superior results, and safeguard the business survivability in a fast-paced environment. In an evolving barbering segment, the effectiveness of salon owners resides in valuing and protecting

talents acquisition, to avoiding losing these employees to rivals, and therefore to surrender and squander a competitive edge.

Intellectual stimulation. Cheng et al. (2015) considered intellectual stimulation as the last and fourth characters of transformational leadership. Intellectual stimulation refers to leaders' encouragement of employees for being innovative in challenging and solving problems creatively. Balwant (2016) seemingly concurred with Cheng et al.'s definition, by observing that intellectual stimulation implied actions implementation to entice workers in finding solutions to solve business problems innovatively. Feng et al. (2016) stated that intellectual stimulation is a crucial factor that ensures transformational leaders enhance organizations innovative capacity. Long et al. (2016) also emphasized intellectual stimulation as the way leaders generate and promote a new and creative process for handling problems through employees. Encouraging employees to handle tasks creatively and the intellectual stimulation of employees often improve the effectiveness of firms in raising profitability and performance. Marques de Lima Rua and Costa Araújo (2015) identified intellectual stimulation as a critical factor to gain employee commitment and productivity.

Marques de Lima Rua et al. (2015) found, also that the effectiveness of leadership derives from intellectual stimulation, a decisive factor in meeting job satisfaction and to avoiding the repeated way of accomplishing tasks during a prolonged period. Khalili (2016) noted that through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders energize and moderate employees' creativity and perspectives in embracing a new climate of innovation to affect business development positively. Stimulating barbers intellectually

will likely aid in building contributions to the business, and improve the capacity to innovate, to meet and surpass customer trends and needs, while also outperforming rivals.

In summary, the transformational leadership approach fits the vision of improving low skills of employees in the segment of the barbering industry. Transformational leaders have a complementarily, and intrinsic four traits, precisely inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and charisma to challenge workers moving into the stated and shared level or direction for the sustainability of organizations and wellness of business stakeholders. Quintana et al. (2015) claimed that companies face fewer uncertainties and anxieties when leaders possess and exploit traits holistically to boost the competency of employees and maintain the satisfaction level of customers.

Critical Analysis of Important Leadership Theories

Pradhan and Pradhan (2015) stated that leadership is a unique factor in improving organizational performances and sustainability. The concept of leadership, as needed in running a business successfully, has become a center of debates. Such an evolution of the idea of leadership makes researchers have different perceptions regarding the approach of the definition of leadership and have led to the formulation of different styles and theories in this domain. Thomas and Rowland (2014) stressed that with the development of the concept of leadership, new styles emerge to generate different ideas and thoughts related to this discussion. The concept of leadership comprises various styles and theories, such as: transactional, transformational, charismatic, emergent, strategic, pragmatic, visionary,

situational, servant, and leader-member exchange (Burch & Guarana, 2014; Lindblom, Kajalo, & Mitronen, 2015; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015; Thomas & Rowland, 2014).

A critical review and analysis of the different leadership theories may be helpful to understand the phenomenon studied in this research endeavor, where the focus is on the business of barber salons. Pradhan and Pradhan (2015) argued that the exploration of relationships among leadership styles is interesting to demonstrate the suitability for operating a choice for potential organizational benefits. The analysis of the leadership theories and styles may aid in determining from a theoretical standpoint, the methods that are necessary and essential for managing barber salon businesses effectively.

Transactional leadership. Kark, Katz-Navon, and Delegach (2015) defined transactional leadership as rewards exchange for conformity, which Zareen, Razzaq, and Mujtaba (2014) also saw as an arranged system of rewards between leaders and followers. Rowold, Borgmann, and Bormann (2014) extended the concept of transactional leadership by citing the propensity of these individuals for *quid pro quo transactions* with employees. Zareen et al. stated that the outcomes of the arranged or exchanging system of leaders and employees could turn out to be negative or positive. The avoidance of negative or failure of subordinates in accomplishing organizational goals often forces transactional leaders to display three different but complementary characteristics: contingent rewards, management-by-exception active, and management-by-exception passive (Doucet, Fredette, Simard, & Tremblay, 2015). Transactional leaders exhibit the first characteristic of contingent rewards by setting idealized behaviors or goals to monitor employees to achieve results. The second character of management-

by-exception active refers to subordinate errors monitoring actively to avoid failure (Gregersen, Vincent-Höper, & Nienhaus, 2014). Through the above two characteristics of transactional leadership, Gregersen et al. digressed from the three dimensions of Doucet et al. to combine the characteristics of active and passive management-by-exception. Breevaart, Bakker, and Hetland (2014) argued in favor of three dimensions of transactional leaders. The three aspects of transactional leadership discussed were helpful in evaluating to what extent, these traits may be useful for barber salon owners to manage employees and meet business goals.

Breevaart et al. (2014) suggested that transactional leadership includes multidimensional components. The first constituent of transactional leaders is the contingent reward, which refers to incentives and rewards extended to employees for accomplishing tasks efficiently. Zareen et al. (2014) argued that upon performance with satisfaction, workers receive incentives and rewards, which Breevaart et al. found to be materialistic, such as bonuses. In respect of the management-by-exception active approach, Breevaart et al. and Doucet et al. (2015) held similar viewpoints, which is a management strategy to prevent employees from making errors. Zareen et al. noted that in case of mistakes or failure, punishment is often a consequence for employees. The sentence as viewed by Zareen et al. is a strategy that leaders utilize to adjust behaviors and re-orient workers in the right direction. Breevaart et al. suggested that for transactional leaders to show management aptitude, the standard using management-by-exception passively is an option, which is the third and last trait of this leadership principle. Some leaders may manage business enterprises by exception and although

display considerable span in control of operations, depict a departure from expected and standard contemporary management approaches of transformational leadership. Rowold et al. (2014) stressed that the management-by-exception often represents a passive approach, and perhaps implies a *laissez-faire* leadership style, in challenging followers to achieve the organizational and business vision diligently.

In summary, the application of transactional leadership theory may be a mismatch between the strategy required to improve the skills and aptitudes of employees in the barbering business. The essence of transactional leaders is to reward followers for displaying conformity to a particular way of functioning and in the achievement of business objectives. Behavioral norms setting and punishment pressure may not be suitable to increase employee skills, aptitudes, and efficiencies in retaining customers and in sustaining barber salon businesses. Bos-Nehles, Bondarouk, and Nijenhuis (2017) argued that the success of an organization relies on strategies that leaders implement to remove barriers, generate more sales and profits.

Charismatic leadership. Parry and Kempster (2014) declared that the concept of charismatic leadership, by essence, is a gift not from God, but from followers who espouse the vision of leaders. The notion of a gift is a mystery, shifting from God to followers or employees. Charismatic leaders display a compassionate and emotional relationship with workers in achieving common organizational goals. Horn, Mathis, Robinson, and Randle (2015) noted that to attain goals, charismatic leaders clarify situations by communicating openly with followers, instilling faith, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and acknowledge the worth of employees. Barnes, Guarana, Nauman, and Kong

(2016) reinforced Horn et al.'s perceptions about charismatic leadership by viewing it as a process in which leaders infuse pride among followers, to cultivate a climate of exceptional aptitude. Charismatic leaders, therefore, often exert intellectual stimulation in employee and influence, inspire the workforce to meet and surpass goals.

Parry and Kempster (2014), however, defined charismatic leadership as a simple set of behavioral process, through which leaders often challenge employees to reach objectives and goals while displaying unselfish love, attraction, desire, in striving to surpass organizational objectives. Xu, Cadwell, Glasper, and Guevara (2015) concurred, by stating that charismatic leadership refers to a generation of personal connections between leaders and whom they intend to lead. Charismatic leaders typically exploit followers remarkably to improve outcomes, which may benefit the enterprise. The altruistic character of charismatic leadership often reflects on an ethical, shared vision achievement, empathy, and compassion, similar to the aspects mentioned by Parry and Kempster, and evident also when leaders interact with employees to create and distribute values for customers. Charismatic leadership, nevertheless, is often a manifestation of power authority, and a disposition to reach a shared vision. Horn et al. (2015) espoused Parry and Kempster's perspective by arguing that charismatic leaders articulate a shared vision and develop a position of dominance to enhance the ability of employees to reach higher outcomes. The practice of the charismatic leader's power is likely to pressure employees to contribute to the achievement of the shared vision of a barber business owner, notably in surpassing client expectations, with superior customer acquisition and retention.

Charismatic leadership may not in itself be an adequate style to developing the skills and capabilities of licensed barbers. Charismatic leaders exploit interactions, love, empathy, and authority to empower employees and attain positive results. Charismatic leaders, must however also possess the intellectual ability to stimulate, train, and coach followers to develop skills, which are relevant to the art and science of barbering, notably in developing employees with the requisite professional skills and knowledge to meet and exceed customer expectations. Bos-Nehles et al. (2017) observed that leaders intensify professional experiences sharing with staffs, the aptitude, and skills, in the quest to improve business performance. Arguably, transformational leaders display charisma, and these elements were appropriate in the broader context of leadership attributes necessary to increase business performance. The charismatic leadership, meanwhile, may be an unfitted lens to evaluate and compensate for the low skills of some licensed barbers to retain clients and operate successful business salons.

Strategic leadership. Strategic leadership is a derivative of the concept of leadership and may represent a small and top team that has the responsibility of running an organization (Strand, 2014). Malewska and Sajdak (2014) emphasized the definition of strategic leadership as an ability to combine a functional vision and management with a focus on ethical behaviors, and values to make sound decisions. The operational visionary aspect of the strategic leadership enjoins leaders to harmonize business activities daily and develop strategies simultaneously to implement long-term objectives. Strand argued that strategic leaders occupy the top positions of management to affect its overall outcomes. Norzailan, Othman, and Ishizaki (2016) endorsed Strand's idea of

strategic leadership to view it as the ability of a firm's top management to address common issues. Norzailan et al. added that strategic leadership requires imagination and creativity to achieve organizational goals. The innovative and imaginative aspects of strategic leadership as opined by Norzailan et al. involves the implementation of new resources in responding to changes from the company's external environment. Ryan (2015) noted that strategic leaders should not just rely on pre-planned decisions in acting strategically to meet objectives and must also demonstrate adaptability to any business situation.

Norzailan et al. (2016) argued that with the rapid change in the external environment, business leaders face challenges and discontinuities that often endanger the attainment of the organization's strategic visions. Malewska and Sajdak (2014) stressed that organizational leaders should adjust strategies to ensure survivability of business operations, by sharing secret knowledge at the levels of employees and organizations. Strategic leadership, thereby, appears to be an ability to cope with stressful situations, which may challenge the *status quo* and lead to an improvement of future performance for organizations. Norzailan et al. detected that the prediction of future outcomes requires strategic leaders the skill to see, explore, and size market opportunities cognitively to overcome challenges and threats. Malewska and Sajdak rejected this vision of strategic leaders' capability and mentioned that the essence of the strategic leadership is intuition. Strategic leaders, quite often, act on intuition, instead of analytically using data, to make informed decisions. Simsek, Jansen, Minichilli, and Escriba-Esteve (2015) described four traits that typically characterize strategic leaders. The characteristics of strategic leaders

often exemplify a keen understanding and alignment of the external and internal arena of businesses, ability to break down and decipher ambiguity, complexity, and overload of information exhibition to complete missions. Malewska and Sajdak contended that strategic leaders are key agents involved in adjusting, reorienting, and improving organizational performances by working under pressure and exploiting an impressive amount of information instantly. The sustainability of the barbering industry will depend on the ability of barber salon owners to formulate, maneuver and adjust strategies to overcome the challenges encountered and identified in the barbering industry.

In conclusion, strategic leadership appeared upon an exhaustive review herein, as inappropriate for developing the skills and capacity of licensed barbers in the barbering business. Salon owners often cannot survive the fierce competition in the haircut marketplace if they run operations intuitively. Intuition following to run a company is likely operating without a vision, which typically characterizes the disposition of strategic leaders. Malewska and Sajdak (2014) stressed that with the increasingly fast-pace of the environment, the concept of management by intuition needs an upgrade. Intuition is a fallacy to put at the core of managing in the current demanding environment of business and may jeopardize the steady development of improving current market shares and gaining a sustained competitive advantage over rivals.

Servant leadership. Ling, Liu, and Wu (2016) noted that in 1977 Greenleaf developed the concept of servant leadership, theory and postulated that leaders perceptibly behave as *servants* and *stewards* while running a business. Leaders, therefore view themselves as servants to others first, in an approach and style to meeting customer

wants and needs. Jaramillo et al. (2015) endorsed the perspective of Ling et al. but added that leaders with a servant leadership style achieve organizational objectives in the long-run. Leaders, demonstrating a servant leadership style, focus first on the individual progress of followers and growth, to ensure organizational well-being. Schwepker and Schultz (2014) emphasized that servant leadership is a process in which leaders place the needs of subordinates above the organization and even themselves'. Servant leaders focus primarily on helping followers to reach success and serve as a useful means to implement increasing performance and effectiveness in organizations. Carter and Baghurst (2014) extended the view of Schwepker and Schultz on the fulfillment of employees' needs, first while noting that servant leaders lack the ability for prioritizing and satisfying self-interests and pursuing power. Carter and Baghurst, subsequently, viewed servant leadership as a philosophy, in which, the unique, authentic approach is serving others, and not in leading. Ling et al. observed that servant leadership differs from other styles, as it is less about running organizations. Jaramillo et al. (2015) endorsed views of Carter and Baghurst and Ling et al. strongly when noting that servant leaders are types of leaders valuing the needs of followers, instead of completing the goals and objectives of organizations.

Schwepker and Schultz (2014) suggested that servant leaders display seven traits of emotional healing, creating value for the community, empowering subordinates, conceptual skills, helping subordinates grow and succeed, placing subordinates first, and behaving ethically to lead a business company. The characters mentioned above constitute the essence of servant leaders that helps influence the workforce behaviors

positively in achieving more magnificent performances for organizations. Liden, Wayne, Liao, and Meuser (2014) contended, therefore, that servant leadership reflects a philosophical approach, wherein the aim is to influence followers and achieve organizational and business outcomes by serving customers and employees first. A servant leadership style requires the inculcation of a service culture, to rally followers to also adopt in individual effort and behavior in serving the customer, which ultimately ensures reaching desired goals and outcomes of the enterprise. Carter and Baghurst (2014) added that servant leadership is a guiding philosophy through which leaders supplant an organizational culture to address the concerns of ethics, engagement of employees, and customer experiences. Subordinates often accomplish organizational goals and objectives, when leaders display a service orientation, rather than wield excessive power. The absence of the coercive power implies trust, loyalty, empowerment, and relationships building with workers to achieve success in business activities. Schwepker and Schultz argued that servant leaders build positive work relationships with followers to manipulate behaviors and achieve desired organizational performance and goals. A servant leadership approach is ideal for a service-oriented business, and to run barber salons. Salon owners, in this industry using this leadership disposition and style, will undoubtedly meet customer needs, however, could fail at making profits. With only a service culture, barber salon owners may fall short of financial resources to train, retain, and develop the skills of employees. The argument is that leaders need transformational skills to improve customer relationships and service, while also delivering profits.

Servant leadership theory was not a theoretical reference to analyze the limitations discussed. The application of servant leadership principles is excellent in valuing, exceeding, and in retaining customers, however financial management and acumen is also an imperative for business success. Panaccio, Henderson, Liden, Wayne, and Cao (2015) argued that servant leadership is a psychological mechanism, which connotes valuing the welfare of employees, to the detriment of organizational success.

Emergent leadership. Charlier, Stewart, Greco, and Reeves (2016) observed that emergent leadership is a concept that emanates from the evolvement of organizational operations. The shift in the individual based performance approach of organizations to team-based, lets a leader emerge instead of being appointed. Emergent leadership, perhaps reflects an important and deterministic process involving motivations, typical behaviors, and group culture maintenance, to reach a system's objectives. Kalish and Luria (2016) built on the perspectives of Charlier et al. (2016) and suggested that individuals emerge as leaders based on demonstrated ability. In such a system approach, emergent leaders and followers share the same and salient norm of performance orientation, which places pressure on individuals often, to accomplish the goals of an entire group. Larsen and Rieckhoff (2014) emphasized the idea of emergent leadership when defining it as an *integrated framework* within which an influential individual emerges in leadership positions. In this integrated system, subordinates value considerably emergent leaders' ways of thinking and behaviors as a role model and guide for handling tasks and completing the purpose of a group. Chreim (2015) similarly, observed that emergent leadership is an *overemphasis* of the leader's positive

characteristics, which serve and benefit organizational members commonly.

Charlier et al. (2016) noted that the accomplishment of the organizational objectives depends on the mutual interaction displayed by emergent leaders and subordinates. In the process of emergent leadership, some leaders fail at having and practicing a reliable power but interact actively with followers through text-based approach or verbally. Van Der Voet, Groeneveld, and Kuipers (2014) indicated that communication helps emergent leaders highlight the role models and institutionalize the new leadership style to motivate employees to reach missions efficiently. Emergent leadership, meanwhile, often means a process of change, distributed leadership where a higher number of employees perform cohesively by combining individual experiences, qualities, and capacities. Will (2016) stressed that emergent leadership entails a dynamic interaction between organizations' members through the set of commonly and collectivistic behaviors, to generate harmonized and excellent outcomes for all. Chreim (2015) rejected the collectivistic view of Will about emergent leadership, noting that this type of leadership could be a source of conflicts among members of a company with the lack of a central authority. Analyzing the common or collectivistic behaviors characterizing emergent leaders, Chreim defined such a leadership approach as a dispersed, dynamic, and power authority between organizational actors to affect business operations. Will (2016) emphasized that emergent leadership consists of an agent-based model providing an individual employee with opportunities to speak up freely to challenge the situations at hand with efficacy. As indicated, the problem the barbering industry is encountering arises from the low skills of employees, which potentially

reduces the competency at speaking up to challenge the status quo and emerge as leaders. The immediate consequence could be the continued poor financial performance, to endanger barber salon activities' life cycle.

As rationalized herein, emergent leadership theory was not suitable as a theoretical underpinning for this study, in also evaluating solutions to overcome the low trade and skills of the available pool of employees in the barbering industry. Although emergent leaders are likely to understand the needs of a group and offer a chance for followers to voice up intentions to benefit business operations, these leaders may lack the inherent teaching trait of inspirational motivation in turning the limited skills of employees into a competitive edge. Chreim (2015) noted that emergent leaders lack having all the essential traits to exhibit and play inclusive roles to assist followers in accomplishing organizational goals successfully.

Visionary leadership. Pathardikar and Sahu (2014) stressed that the concept of visionary leadership entails a long-run goal of accomplishment; it is also a strategic perspective developing and extending over time. Visionary leadership portrays an ability to handle complex situations while playing key roles. Leaders of vision, foresee an organizational desired future, formulate, and communicate this projected future to employees, whom they empower to fulfill that vision successfully. Styhre (2016) held a different view to that of Pathardikar and Sahu and even saw it as a possibility in specific settings; as the ambition of creating social and economic worth for a more substantial number of organizational members. Margolis and Ziegert (2015) and Styhre defined visionary leadership as a collective system. In this collectivistic administration,

individuals work together, motivate, and inspire each other to achieve a mutual strategic vision. Visionary leadership often modulates typical behaviors for organizational members from the top to low levels within organizations. Painter-Morland and Deslandes (2014) rejected the notion of visionary leadership before adding that the term of leadership is all about relationship, which Margolis and Ziegert found in a collectivistic leadership approach, often leads employees to have and share mutual feelings. The resistance to power or sense sharing with supervisors could generate conflicts to influence the outcomes of business operations adversely. Based on the characteristics of visionary leadership espoused and analyzed herein, by the cited theorists, this feature may be less favorable to serve the barbering industry. Salon owners feel reluctant to share a vision with new or established employees, which potentially may result in conflicts.

Pathardikar and Sahu (2014) observed that to reach positive results for organizations visionary leaders display six different characters namely, the management of the trust, self, risks, feelings, attention, and meaning. Margolis and Ziegert (2015) noted that visionary leadership exemplifies a cascading process where effective leaders interact with followers collectively as no single level of organizations, somewhat linked through vision, characters, and behaviors, in sharing to perform a collectivistic and strategic vision. Pathardikar and Sahu noted when observing visionary leaders in teams, that these individuals are likely to exhibit behaviors going beyond the expected boundaries of job function and responsibility, to be effective.

Pathardikar and Sahu (2014) also opined that visionary leaders display three different layers of characters. The first level is relevant to personality traits, including

intelligence, creativity, honesty, confidence, forcefulness, friendliness, persistence, and patience. The second layer of visionary leaders' behaviors involves listening skills, feelings sharing, coaching, feedback giving, power delegating, extended support providing, and credit giving to others. The third and last level of traits of visionary leaders encompasses seeing a big picture of organizations, seeking detailed information, attention giving, and commitment to others to handle a situation with consideration of its context. Painter-Morland and Deslandes (2014) viewed the traits of visionary approach as complex, which could lead to the miscomprehension of the identity of supervisors to impact reciprocal relationships development with followers. Leaders are individuals with specific traits, which are advantageously leveraged to improve the identity, image, and performances of businesses.

Visionary leadership as a concept or theory offers limited value in understanding the specific business problem of the barbering industry. The six characters of visionary leaders: management of the trust, fears, risks, and meaning is distant from required strategies to address the low trade and skills of barbers to help meet the needs of barber salon customers, as businesses strive for acquisition and retention of customers in successfully operating and sustaining these enterprises. Having a long-term goal and vision is crucial. The practical realities, however, demand immediate actions based on behaviors and strategies, and less of dreaming of what long-term goals should be. The pressing need may lie in enhancing employee skills, as arguably the most appropriate quality a visionary leader should also have to sustain a business. Feelings or shared emotions could not lonely contribute to the active development of a company where

employees face a challenge of lack of knowledge or skills. Margolis and Ziegert (2014) found that visionary leaders have a perfect and collectivistic view of the business in the future, however, may lack the strategic traits and practical realities and current day in management.

Leader-member exchange leadership. Burch and Guarana (2014)

acknowledged that leader-member exchange (LMX) principles root in the interpersonal exchange and related tasks achievement, within the space of organizations. Performing tasks, leaders play essential roles in communicating meaningfully with followers to fulfill the growth objectives for-profit companies. The most important tactic leaders use in developing a reciprocal and fruitful relationship with employees often lies in humor, an ingenious method to tell stories, amuse, and challenge the workforce to commit to efficiently accomplishing business goals. Pundt and Herrmann (2015) portrayed the theory of LMX as the maintenance of active and high-class relationship nurturing between leaders and employees. The humor tactic is not only for communicating, sharing funny events or amusing followers, but to also solidly increase attention of cultivating productive and professional relationships among members of enterprises. Karanika-Murray, Bartholomew, Williams, and Cox (2014) noted that in the logic of LMX approach, leaders set up a high and healthy relationship, which affects the psychological dimension of employees to amplify organization outcomes. The vitality of this unique role played by management, often resides in the ability to influence organizational members creatively, socially, and individually, to reach reliable results for companies. Hassan and Hatmaker (2014) stated that leaders and followers use LMX principles to

solidify supervisor and subordinate's interactive relationships and to affect job performances positively.

The quality of LMX is an essential approach to reaching business goals, and objectives by a leader, for a project (Zacher, Pearce, Rooney, & McKenna, 2014). Leader-member exchange quality, as enunciated by Anand, Vidyarthi, Erdogan, Liden, and Chaudhry (2014) reflects the characteristics leaders should embody within business space to generate positive behaviors and results. Zacher et al. (2014) indicated that personality traits like openness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness are essential in predicting the culture of active and outstanding relationships among the workforce members, to impact organizations. Karanika-Murray et al. (2014) argued that employee perceptions of the workplace shape the quality of relationships with leaders to facilitate the promotion of social exchanges and to affect job satisfaction, tasks handling, including performance. Zacher et al. acknowledged that leaders should have the ability to control emotional intelligence, precisely regulate one-self emotions and those of employees, in shaping and influencing behaviors, with the aim of achieving results. Zacher et al. also held that transformational leaders develop and optimize quality, professional relationships, and thereby leverage the wisdom of employees at any level, to create sufficient value for business stakeholders. Even though new or established barbers in business may comprehend the value of trust, respect, confidence, the paucity of skills with the limited training of employees prevents useful contribution to the business purpose. Pundt and Harrmann (2015) added that leadership plays a central role in advancing the success of organizations, and astute leaders often

hold all resources and know opportunities to seize in ensuring the attainment of predetermined organizational objectives, with the contributions of the workforce. The vivid characteristics needed in the context of LMX include trust, respect, and mutual obligations of staff and employees towards company missions and vision accomplishment.

In conclusion, the LMX represents the application of essential principles in fostering dynamic behaviors among the workforce to serve customers with creativity and quality. When leaders optimally use talent, creating an air of trust, respect, and mutual obligations, by avoiding conflict, they challenge employees to outperform.

Organizational leaders, nevertheless, need to increase skills of employees to seize marketplace opportunities and generate consistent performance and profits. Pundt and Harrmann (2014) advocated that the humoristic and positive relationships with leaders positively affect organizational social life, however, have limited value in spurring employees on to meet and surpass business and profit related goals. The LMX theory did not appear to represent a suitable theoretical reference for this study in the analysis of the barbering business.

Ethical leadership. Ethics are crucial factors that may impact the effectiveness of organizations (Shin, Sung, Choi, & Kim, 2015). As an essential and social aspect of business management, ethics go beyond organizational set norms to be at the core of those that community members have or share intrinsically (Graham, Ziegert, & Capitano, 2015). Ethical leadership reflects the art through which leaders demonstrate and promote normatively perfect conducts within businesses to reach durable outcomes. The active

promotion of ethics requires for leaders, to exhibit personal and ethical actions, interaction, communication, and compliance to social norms, and therefore to not jeopardize the interests of the organization (Shin et al., 2015). Bouckenooghe, Zafar, and Raja (2014) stated that ethical leadership is an essential modeling process of organizational behaviors with the objective of reducing harmful, unethical practices of corporate members, which also can prevent punitive and other costs associated with misconduct and ethical violations. Ethical leaders demonstrate moral management behaviors, by communicating ethical values, rewarding employees for complying with ethical norms, which ultimately benefits the organization in financial terms. Graham et al. (2015) argued that an ethical workforce displays the ability to avoid immoral actions and embrace good conducts to benefit an organization.

Bouckenooghe et al. (2014) noted that ethical leadership is a process related to exhorting employees to display higher moral conduct and standards. Ethical leadership includes two dimensions: the moral person and moral manager. Considering the aspect of the moral person, ethical leaders embody characteristics such as honesty, trustworthiness, and integrity to commit employees to work. The second dimension is relevant to the moral manager, a proactive process in which leaders influence employee behaviors while communicating well, developing a real sense of purpose, treating followers fairly, respectfully, and holding employees accountable for goal attainment. Shin et al. (2015) held that ethical leaders formulate standardized behaviors and code of conducts to shape ethics and impartiality in the internal climate of organizations. Bedi et al. (2016) noted that ethical leaders exert fairness and honesty as traits when operating a business

company. Ethical leaders also are principled individuals who exploit different methods, including punishments, rewards, and communication system to monitor employee conducts. Lam, Loi, Chan, and Liu (2016) highlighted that ethical leaders use the mechanism of relationships, two-way communication, punishment, and rewards to cultivate desired conducts among followers and achieve job satisfaction. Wang, Gan, Wu, and Wang (2015) stressed that ethical leadership reflects a social learning process that offers, as mentioned by Lam et al. (2016), a way to adhere to a high standard norm; develop positive attitudes to reach projected performances for organizations. The barbering business from the research undertaken, was found compliant with the associated ethical norms in operating a business; however, the major problem found, was that the paucity of skills stemming from the limited pool for barbers in the job market, often constrained employee ability in some entities to develop businesses and to satisfy and retain customers.

In summary, implementing an ethical leadership style within the barbering business is not the solution to improving the limited skills of the pool of barbers seeking employment. Ethical leaders display and foster standardized attitudes to engage workers moral behaviors positively. Ethical supervisors, however, may lack the needed stimulation capacity in increasing the savoir-faire of employees in the barbering industry. Graham et al. (2015) noted that ethical leaders focus on self-interests fulfillment at the expenses of followers. The selection of ethical leadership approach may be however crucial for advancing the image and reputation of barber salons without helping in

customer acquisition and retention to safeguard the sustainability of the barbering businesses.

Situational leadership. Kerns (2015) defined the situational leadership theory as the art of interacting with individuals in situations, displaying standard behaviors to handle a particular task and to get results. In this specific process of leadership, leaders need clearly to understand the contextual and relevant factors to consider in complying with the situation and solve it efficiently. Singh (2014) reinforced Kerns' view, arguing that situational leaders strive to identify and select the best course of action. Singh preferred the contingency leadership theory, instead of situational, because various factors like personality traits, situation variables, and interactions between supervisors and co-workers may help to lead operations contextually. Thompson and Glaso (2014) conceded that situational leadership is likely a dynamic system where leaders interact with followers, showing directions to have jobs done quickly. In this promised interactive process, leaders may need time to enhance new employee skills and achieve a standard level of competency before getting tasks done as projected. Experienced employees, however, may not need guidance from supervisors or managers. Leaders, therefore, should significantly supply new workers with strong direction to ensure the necessary competency development to attain organizational goals. Kerns observed that the effectiveness of leaders highly depends on situational elements: behaviors, personality, and available resources to influence organizational outcomes.

Kerns (2015) declared that situational leadership theory reflects a style in which leaders interplay roles based on situational contexts within an organization. The expected

results of the interactions of leaders impose a system thinking approach about how well to handle tasks, orient social and physical relationships to set productive contexts. Perna (2016) observed that situational leadership approach also reflects an increasing level of maturity of employees in accomplishing specific tasks. The attainment of the maturity on behalf of followers implies that leaders reduce task-oriented behaviors to the detriment of relationships. Bos-Nehles et al. (2017) argued that with a capable workforce, the role of supervisors is typically influential. Perna amplified that the maturity of employees is a moderate and acceptable capacity that leaders consider in setting attainable goals to reach. The maturity of followers also requires the willingness and ability to take responsibility, to gain education and experience from leaders. The traits situational leaders exemplify in elevating the maturity of followers include trust and confidence. Kerns stressed that an increase of maturity of followers ensures leaders understand in fully individualistic characteristics of organizational members to set behavioral options and run successfully across cultures and situations. Perna noted that the level of maturity serves a pathway for leaders to engage one-way, two-way, high, or low leadership styles to fit the needs of organizations adequately but to match a situation. The level of experience, the maturity of employees of barber salon could not serve as a pathway in addressing the unstable margin profit issue the industry is facing. The increase of salon profitability will require improvement of employee skills through the adoption of situational leadership theory by engaging one-on-one training section with the workforce.

To sum up, situational leadership principles did not upon extensive review and analysis, appropriate to serve as the theoretical underpinning of this study, as this style

did not seem congruent with addressing the challenges of the barbering industry management. Operating a business by contextual factors is an ideal option for managing with efficiency, as requires a robust capacity of discernment from leaders and workforce. Although many leaders have abilities in identifying internal or external factors to judge before deciding the course of actions, they may make incorrect or biased analysis to affect the lifespan of organizations. Perna (2016) found that leaders could be ineffective when attempting to decide the type of situational leadership to implement. Instead, when leaders develop strategies to stretch new employee skills, it is likely not enough to improve the barber salon performance and profitability. Factual situations differ from low skills that barbers possess, and the enhancement imposes continuous training programs, which salon owners may fail at designing.

Relevance of transformational leadership theory. The discourse herein is to present views on the relevance of transformational leadership theory in contemporary management. The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. The central research question for the study was: What strategies do successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond 5 years from business establishment? Quintana et al. (2014) noted that leadership is a fundamental component for running a business with success. The leadership style, thereby, becomes essentially precious for engaging employees to achieve effectiveness for the firm and outperform rivals. The performance employees attain mostly depends on

the degree of the knowledge that leaders possess. Hairon, Goh, and Lin (2014) suggested that leaders develop knowledge with staff to maintain a prosperous relationship within organizations. Quintana et al. added that the capacity that leaders utilize to educate followers while sharing information could transform weaknesses into strengths is also crucial for a profitable business. Krajnakova, Navikaite, and Navickas (2015) observed that leaders' ability to influence workers knowledgeably, usually provides a competitive edge, as employee development and in motivating to enhance meeting customer needs, increasing satisfaction and thereby, influencing and contributing to elevating business profitability.

The invocation of the transformational leadership principles may serve as a theoretical reference to study the needs of barber salons as small business leaders, seeking adequate strategies to implement to improve the skills of employees. Hairon, Goh, and Lin (2014) argued that the survivability of businesses depends on how leaders manipulate followers towards the development of the common and shared vision through culture building, which is the essence of transformational leadership. Graham et al. (2015) noted that the multiple facets of transformational leaders are congruent to overcome any uncertainties relevant to the management of business organizations. Uncertainty, as defined by Teece and Leih (2016), represents difficulties, barriers, or challenges leaders encounter in the operation of business, and if not resolved may endanger its lifespan. Coping with uncertainty requires a different approach. Low skills of barbers constitute uncertainty or barriers, if not enhanced may affect customer satisfaction adversely, and therefore, the barbering businesses profitability.

Arguably, no single leadership theory is appropriate for running organizations, and a blend of different approaches achieves better results compared to a directive and authoritarian demeanor. The principles of transformational leadership in the form of the four integral characteristics of (a) charisma, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) individualized consideration, and (d) intellectual stimulation, however, may yield perspectives in understanding the imperatives to run a business, beset with unique challenges (Graham, Ziegert, & Capitano, 2015). The specific norms setting, such as situation and rewards contingency for leading business with efficiency make transactional leadership outdated (Thomas & Glaso, 2015), to the detriment of transformational leadership as a favorable approach. Quintana et al. (2014) contended that transformational leader traits correlate with any other leadership theory. Graham et al. (2015) stressed that the previous four traits mentioned, ethical, and the relationship building with followers are essential factors to select transformational leadership theory over than any others. Thomas and Glaso observed that organizational development needs the across-jobs characters of leaders to survive the dynamic change in the business environment. Krajnakova et al. (2015) indicated that the multiple dimensions of leaders give opportunities for companies to meet the marketplace expectations to gain profits. Graham et al. emphasized that transformational leaders are efficient because they set higher goals and share (Thomas & Glaso, 2015) knowledge, experience and communicate the vision to followers. Krajnakova et al. noted that firms grow through the sharing of knowledge because it ensures building competency and self-efficacy among the workforce. As Galloway, Kapasi, and Sang (2015) stated that transformational leaders

are intellectually proficient in educating employees per the vision, communicating uncertainties, unexpected behaviors, and goals while displaying role model approach to achieve sustainability of the business. Hairon et al. (2014) noted that transformational leadership implies an educational approach to develop companies broadly.

The improvement of employee skills constitutes an imperative task because of the uncertainty or barriers that transformational leaders could resolve through continuous training and knowledge sharing, to improve the profitability for barber salons. Quintana et al. (2014) argued that leadership improves employee performances for businesses through a process of learning. The barbering industry needs an innovative knowledge and innovation to overcome the fierce competition from rivals within the haircut services market. Galloway et al. (2015) expressed that in most organizations, the transformational leader position as a key factor in setting a culturally innovative climate to enhance value creation for business stakeholders.

Origin and Expansion of the Barbering Industry

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. The central research question for the study was: What strategies do successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond 5 years from business establishment? Decades ago, the term barbershop reflected the art of singing in real harmony in the socio-musical context in the United States (Dohl, 2014). Over the years, the barbershop concept has evolved, and its content has

significantly changed. Dohl noted that many roots derive the conception of barbershops. Mills (2014) held a different view of the definition of barbershops. Mills indicated that the history of barbershops began with slavery in America. With slavery, African-Americans served as barbers for personal appearance services, specifically for cutting hair and trimming, or shaving beards. Richter and De Coninck (2015) observed that with poverty, needy individuals succumbed to domination. Mills declared that after the Civil fight of 1875 in America, African-Americans benefited with equal rights. African-Americans gathered in a single space by races, religious to discuss political, economic issues of a local community to avoid repressions from white peers. Wilson et al. (2014) argued that barbers and barbershops represent a profound connection with the local community.

As in the twentieth century, laboring white patrons became unpopular, the concept of barbershop drastically changed. The establishment of immigrants Italians and Germans barbers helped professionalize the barbering function through the setting of competition, renewal of its process, unionization, and regulations (Mills, 2014). Barbershops became a neighborhood place where only African-Americans (Wilson et al., 2014) operated exclusively for non-African-American patrons (Mills, 2014). African-Americans viewed barber jobs as a considerable life balance experience to improve social and living conditions (Richter & De Coninck, 2015). Modern barbershops rose as commercial entities with African-Americans entrepreneurs (Mills, 2014), which the SBA (2016a) defined as small businesses. Hall and Pokharel (2016) portrayed barbers as self-employed firms that have to comply with regulations in the United States to satisfy the

grooming need and expectation of customers. The professional license requirements for licensing of barbers mandate a minimum age of 18 years old, and a high school diploma, with the attending of barbering or cosmetology schools, and passing the state exam. Indiana Government (2018b) notified that these circumstances vary slightly across the different states, which have resulted in discrepancies in the training hours. In the state of Indiana, barbering schools require 1,500 hours of professional study and training to license professional barbers, whereas, in other states, the minimum requirement is nine months (Hall & Pokharel, 2016).

Across the United States, the industry of the grooming businesses has developed vertiginously with 56,400 jobs created in 2016. The projected employment growth rate of 13% implies the increase in barbering profession by 64,000 in 2026 (BLS, 2018). The barbering industry evolution has led to the setting of the identification code of 821111 by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), and 39-5011 by the BLS (BLS, 2018; Hall & Pokharel, 2016). Barbering business owners generally hire at least two employees (Bawany et al., 2014). Barbers receive a median pay of \$12.38 per hour, and an annual salary of \$24,300 in May 2016 for the entire personal appearance services profession (BLS, 2018). The barbering salary, however, varies from one state to another; high-quality services may generate great tips from satisfied customers (BLS, 2018). In Colorado, the hourly pay in May 2016 was \$16.54, with an annual remuneration of \$34,390 (BLS, 2018). Considering regulation and payment factors, Clark and Douglas (2014) argued that there is a rise in small business growth in America, precisely in the segment (Mills, 2014) of barbering services. Arguably, the evolution of the industry can

be traced to the early days of slavery, which thereafter led to economic opportunities for enterprising African-Americans who took up this profession, albeit (Bawany et al., 2014) with limited business education, training, and skills.

Small Business and Barbers as Microenterprises

In Europe, the established micro, small and medium-sized firms created an added value of 50% to 75% to the economy (Clark & Douglas, 2014). SMEs, as viewed by Clark and Douglas, are a concept that includes micro, small and medium-sized businesses. Small and medium enterprises differ from the larger ones, by the size and the level of annual revenues. Considering the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) standards, the SMEs are micro-enterprises with less than ten employees and earn under €2 million in annual income.

The smallest SMEs, nevertheless, could hire or employ up to 250 workers or reach a yearly income of €50 million and operate like large firms (Clark & Douglas, 2014). In the United States, the SBA, a free trade agency considers as small firms any established organization, operating for profits within the local or federal environment (SBA, 2018). In the United States, some SMEs contribute to the national economy by paying taxes, using products, or labor locally made (SBA, 2018). The SMEs leaders or managers are independent operators (SBA, 2018). Clark and Douglas noted that the SMEs owners are self-employed who often operate at or from private residences.

Barber salons, in the United States, may fit the SBA (2017) definition of SMEs, by employing fewer than 500 workers. Hall and Pokharel (2016) informed that the state of Minnesota was the first to license the barbering profession, to meet the barber

licensing law enacted in 1897. Alabama, meanwhile, was the last state to conform to the barbering profession rules by passing a barber licensing law only in 2013. Bawany et al. (2014) noted that barber operations are small, and big road salons with three necessary facility conditions for the physical premise required for meeting requirements: electricity, water, and ventilation. The salon owners hire and employ some workers, and also operate within a standardized square feet area and the BLS (2018), classify salon owners as self-employees. Hall and Pokharel observed that the barbering industry operates under high regulations. In the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), 812111 is the standard code for the identification of barbershops or salons. As established businesses, barber salons are workplaces where trained and licensed barbers engage in trimming, cutting hair and styling, or trimming, and shaving beards. The BLS considered barbers as entrepreneurs who operate in the haircut services marketplace to enhance customer appearances. Barber salon owners perform duties of hiring, supervising, firing workers, advertising, supplies ordering, inventory records, and managing the business.

The BLS (2018) noted that a qualified licensed barber is an individual who complies with the U.S. barbering industry regulations, of a minimum 16 years of age, with a high school diploma, and graduation from cosmetology or a state-licensed barber school. The training program occurs under the frame time of at least 1,000 hours in Alabama (Thornton & Timmons, 2015) or 1,500 hours for barbers, in the city of Indianapolis (Indiana Government, 2018b), which evidently shows variance from a state to another. Hall and Pokharel (2016) stressed that the requirements for barbering profession vary across states in the United States, with even no educational qualifications

is acceptable in some cities. Bawany et al. (2014) stated that the barbering profession has bearing and consequence to the lives of 2.7 million individuals yearly in respect of grooming and self-esteem, which the BLS emphasized by requesting continue education for licensed barbers. Instead, the BLS insisted that licensed barbers, willing to run barbering businesses, should take additional courses in sales and marketing to be effective. The SBA (2018) has indicated that the operation of the haircut services usually commences after the establishment of a business, which could be in the form of a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or any legal firm but matching the specific industry requirements. Bawany et al. indicated that although barbers are self-employed businesses, they often employ at least two to ten individuals, and (BLS, 2018) significantly contribute to the U.S. economy by generating, 56,400 jobs in 2016 with a projected growth rate of 13% for the year of 2026.

Success Factors for Running a Business

Lekhanya and Mason (2014) described success as the ability of business leaders to stay in the marketplace while generating more sales, and profits continuously. Christensen, Mackey, and Whetten (2014) added that success is a firm's continuous financial and social performances improvement, expressing a vision and commitment of organizational supervisors in fostering customer's welfare, to sustain business and organizational activities. Lekhanya and Mason argued that the measurement of success is sales growth, which derives from a large customer base and share acquisition, to positively impact the lives of the business, and other affiliated stakeholders.

External success factors of small business. Lekhanya and Mason (2014) stated

that small firms are essential factors in the structure and improvement of social and economic lives of individuals around the world. Hayes, Chawla, and Kathawala (2015) confirmed that the U.S. and Mexican economies highly depend on the development of small businesses that contribute to the improvement of living conditions of individuals of both respective countries for 99.9% and 99.8%. Governmental and local authorities have, therefore, a critical role to play in setting adequate rules and necessary assistance in helping small businesses to succeed and to prevent failure. The discussion of some of the major success factors that relate to the external business environment is herein:

General business laws and regulations. Nwoke (2015) revealed that to maximize profits for shareholders, business leaders may sometimes engage in destructive actions. Such decisions and actions by leaders could hurt the entire economy, and often also devastate lives of people. The management and prevention of disruptive actions in the business environment by individuals and firms require the set of rules and laws and compliance by leaders. King (2015) acknowledged that in Australia, the Council for Competition Policy (CCP) set up by local government was to guarantee a healthy rivalry among firms. Nwoke (2015) observed that the practice of neoliberal policy as a socio-economical option by administrative authorities was to free and intensify the market process, and championship of businesses, and to maximize wealth aggregate for nations. Glabiszewski (2016) noted that in Poland, the laws established by the legal power for merging freely, and fruitfully two companies reflect the critical involvement and engagement of government, to secure the cooperation, and sustainability of economies.

The SBA (2018) indicated that to operate firms in the United States, entrepreneurs have to choose a name and register with the local state agency, protect it, obtain a license related to the field, select location, write a business plan, file and comply with hiring, tax reporting policies. The SBA also reported that an entrepreneur could avoid registering a business when using a personal name. Collaborating with the public authority will be useful for barber salon owners in understanding and complying reasonably with general business environment regulations, and also striving to be transparent and efficient in creating value for clients.

Nwoke (2015) declared that the establishment of laws and regulations facilitate transparency for conducting business activities. Glabiszewski (2016) argued that the standard of the supply chain by European Committee for Standardization (ECS) was for the integration of all actors, ranging from suppliers to end customers and to guarantee cooperation, quality, and satisfaction to the whole marketplace. The BLS (2018) indicated that the training, mandated high school education, and the management skills required are critical success factors in succeeding in the barbering profession. These regulations should aid in enhancing the effectiveness of salon owners, and all employees.

The BLS (2018) added that the projected growth rate of 13% from 2016 to 2026 for the barbering industry reveals the vitality of this business and the potential for business growth and sustainability. The commitment of governments to creating stable and unbreakable laws, rules, and regulations to observe by the barber salon owners will likely safeguard the promotion of haircuts services. Compliance with the rules should abet in enhancing business growth, and benefit entrepreneurs. Ratajczak-Mrozek (2016)

indicated that skills acuity often leads to steady value creation in augmenting business margin profits. The barbering industry will earn the trust of patrons and increase its margin profits when salon owners and new employees act with transparency and efficacy.

Financial systems and support programs. Szumniak-Samolej (2016) noted that business is social and economic activity through which leaders aim at promoting human living conditions. The accomplishment of such an ambition implies as observed by Thapa (2015) an impressive availability and investment of capitals, including financial funds. Negro, Visentin, and Swaminathan (2014) said that commercial banks offer loans to small firms at high-interest rates, which inhibits the level of profitability. The eligibility conditions: short-term and volume of credit lines are factors set by borrowers to guarantee the reimbursement of loans. Lekhanya and Mason (2014) held a different view from Negro et al. (2014) and declared that the loan application process complexity and conditions limit the small firm leaders' access to long-term funds. Lekhanya and Mason added that almost 80% of new or small businesses need the high frequency of financial supports but face restrictions. The same financial system, however, offers or guarantees capital resources for large companies because of the ability to offset borrowing through the floating of substantial equity by inviting investments and capital share offerings. The survival of the barbering industry would require equitable financial support for both small and large businesses. Failure to do so could result in shortening the lifespan of some barber salons and to the detriment of many businesses.

The challenges of funding of small businesses are universal and examining in light of international settings may be useful in comprehending business and resource

management strategies of entrepreneurs globally. Nwobu, Faboyede, and Onwuelingo (2015) noted that governments often seem aware of restrictive lending conditions from banks. The monetary fund's support program, precisely fiscal incentives: taxes exemptions, reduced corporate income taxes rates implemented in Nigeria appear framed to alleviate difficulties of small companies and ensure equal access to all entrepreneurs. Despite many incentives, many small business leaders still perform poorly because of the lack of availability of capital resources. The access to loans and funding by barber salon owners is an opportunity for the barbering industry to have the needed assistance in term of capital resources for development. The complexity of financing conditions secures the repayment of loans but endangers the efficient operation of grooming businesses. Lekhanya and Mason (2014) opined that small firm leaders had encountered the shortage of financial resources, which hinders the potential growth of activities. The scarcity or lack of funds could disrupt the management of a barber salon to tarnish its reputation and threaten survival.

Technology advancement. Lekhanya and Mason (2014) stated that telecommunication influences the health of small businesses, and as noted by Ghobakhloo and Tang (2015), regarding performance improvement, sustainability of the competitive edge, and long-term success. Greenwood (2015) emphasized that the increase and efficient utilization of the Information System (IS) also require a holistic educative program to enhance the technical skills of managers, which provides through the completion of training programs by public power. The primary benefit, as a result, for barber salon owners in using technology advantageously, could lead to the advancement

and enhancement of advertising and the promotion of haircuts services in the mind of the social environment. Ghobakhloo and Tang suggested that through IS, managers could increase the capacity of an organizational supply chain to understand, mass customizes, and fulfill the marketplace needs with efficacy. Technology can serve in customer relationship for barber salons, as can facilitate collecting customer choice and behavioral data on the needs of a customer so that creative solution can emerge.

Internal success factors of small business. Hayes et al. (2015) opined that the critical success factors for business are relevant to its internal climate. Thapa (2015) observed that the internal success factors could include education, previous experiences, skills of leaders, and the foreseeing of entrepreneurial performance. The internal elements of organizations are also applicable to leaders' capacity to handle risks, strategize under uncertainties, gather information to decide and lead workforce cohesively towards goals fulfillment. Principally, the internal success factors for running a business, in this research study, are as follow:

Leader educational background and role model. Ikpefan and Agwu (2015) declared that organizations achieve results through leadership that uses the ability to leverage employee talents and skills. Ney, Whitaker, and Zentes (2015) held a similar idea, arguing that customer value generation is a complex system, called for robust and efficient leadership. D'Netto, Shen, Chelliah, and Monga (2014) elucidated that as of 2012, the know-how of managers has contributed to the generation of \$106 billion in revenue for the Australian economy. Galloway et al. (2015) stressed that educated leaders are effective in sustaining operations by innovating, communicating, developing

strategies to acclimatize, or to overcome uncertainties. Effective leaders often rely on the intellectual capacity to display idealized behaviors in guiding followers to espouse organizational cultures and values to exceed customer expectations consistently. Mittal and Sangwan (2014) observed that the solid background of leaders often ensures the transformation of barriers into opportunities, astutely and advantageously for businesses.

With educated barber salon owners, the barbering industry may still have to contend with a deficiency of skilled barbers, with the wage attractiveness of other professions. The level of satisfaction of customer in the haircut services market can increase with more skilled employees, which will serve to reduce complaints and increase a loyal customer base. Ney et al. (2015) opined that economic success is the outcome of comprehensive strategies, carefully formulated and implemented, as the aim is to satisfy and retain clients persuasively and competitively.

Business policies and strategy implementation. Hayes et al. (2015) declared that business success is an outcome of leaders who implement policies and strategies to set directions for the workforce. Hirsch and Cha (2017) defined policies as an implementation of standard measures that regulate the workplace routines and promotes the occurrence of best practices. Ahn and Kim (2014) emphasized that policies reveal a set of rules, governing the ways of organizational performance strategy while basing on values and vision to exceed customer expectations. Leonidou, Christodoulides, Kyrgidou, and Palihawadana (2015) portrayed strategies as an entrepreneurial and internal orientation of business, serving a pathway for leaders to wisely use available human and other resources, in meeting and surpassing expectations for business leaders.

Martinez (2015) indicated that with environmental changes and scarcity of raw materials, organizational leaders often adopt green marketing policies to acquire and retain customers, displaying awareness and caring about living conditions. D'Netto et al. (2014) added that supervisors who embrace the diversity of the workforce, are likely to value diverse cultures as a source of competitive advantage. In Australia, from 2009 to 2010, the diversity policy to manage human resources resulted in \$381 billion in sales and \$52 billion in paid salaries to employees. Martinez argued that a well-crafted green policy to engage customer loyalty has turned out to be a strategic goal for managing businesses.

Nwobu et al. (2015) suggested leaders based on a code of conducts and corporate social events accomplishment, to guide ethical behaviors in organizations, and to attain profits. Dempsey (2015) held an opposite view, stating that the realization of excessive profits can promote unethical conduct and harm business. Ethical organizational culture is essential in inculcating moral, values, and responsible actions of each team member, to potentially improve financial performance. Employees need clear guidance from leadership and policies to improve the quality of decisions. Organizational policies should, therefore be explicit, innovative, and consider business realities, to ingrain ethical values and aid employees in improving efficiency and profitability. Adaptive and ethical strategies enacted by leaders with vision will ensure barber salon owners have the flexibility to adapt to change and while also increasing the skills of employees over time.

Training and coaching programs for employees. D'Netto et al. (2014) observed that employees potentially constitute a crucial source of competitive advantage for

businesses. Harnessing employee skills and talent can efficiently improve the success of organizations. Valuing and improving the quality of the workforce should become an essential priority of company leaders in constructing and implementing forward-thinking policies. Martinez et al. (2016) indicated that the improvement of employee skills could also ensure filling a gap in knowledge. The transfer of competency requires leaders to implement a continuous program of knowledge sharing for employees. The knowledge transfer could occur through consultancy, training, and coaching. Ikpefan and Agwu (2015) emphasized that as small companies face limited access to financial support and funding, the improvement of employee skills should become an essential factor in achieving business growth and performance. The intelligent management and allocation of financial resources display the sagaciousness and financial wisdom of leaders. The acuity in financial management comes with education, training, experience, skills, technical expertise and ability. Educating employees should be a strategic vision that successful barber salon owners implement to increase the quality of haircuts services and differentiate from rivals.

Audretsch, Coad, and Segarra (2014) stressed that innovation lies at the core of economic growth; and is contingent on the knowledge, education, and development of employees. Vranceanu (2014) noted that in the capitalist world, the essence of creating a business is economic profit, which is the marketplace's ability to generate more financial resources for investors. Sharabi (2014) observed a shift in the business arena, which should drive the emergence of a quality culture increasingly favored by leaders. The strategic plan for achieving over 95% quality and a minimum of errors, will likely

improve customer satisfaction and confidence, and generate business. Through this strategic approach, organizational leaders should educate and train employees continuously to avoid complaints by a microscopic number of unsatisfied clients and thereby increase loyalty. In the quest to increase market growth and sustainability, barber salon owners should innovate to exceed market expectations and ceaselessly strive to minimize complaints.

Ghandour (2015) argued that the long-term survival and sustainability of financial performances of companies require leveraging online technologies. Implementing e-business, supervisors could interact, provide bidirectional communication to access expectations, and create more value for customers. Successful business leaders often utilize websites as strategic tools to reduce operational costs, create more visibility, and generate traffic an approach, which some rivals can find difficult to imitate. Barber salon owners likewise can increase the frequency and loyalty of customer visits, by optimizing the use of technologies and communications. Through employee training and coaching in the realm of computer technologies, barber salon owners should also be able to boost the skills of employees and increase customer satisfaction.

Corporate social responsibility activities. Arend (2014) portrayed corporate social responsibility (CSR) as activities that add to the socio-economical sustainability of businesses. The accomplishment of social responsibility implies firm leaders to pursue policies, actions, and decisions, which contributes to value adding to the community. CSR initiatives and engagement may include educational support and the constant interest in the local governance of society as activities, which are likely to strengthen the

competitive edge of an existing enterprise. Taylor (2015) noted that organizational leaders must donate to charities and endeavor to develop a high profile for products and services, avoid negative publicities, thereby increasing business reputation, and also more extensively networking with customers. Goyal, Sergi, and Jaiswal (2016) argued that with the complexity of the marketplace, the success of a business often hinges on organizations display socially responsible behaviors. Ikpefan and Agwu (2015) observed that leaders' competency requires an ability to express solidarities with customers by transforming values to actions, and separateness into commonality. Nwobu et al. (2015) argued that social responsibility completion by small businesses calls for astute financial management, which can lead to more jobs creation for communities. The services of skilled accountants could help in improving business performances, notably in budgeting, reporting taxes, and avoiding financial pitfalls. Prudent and guided financial management by barbers should be crucial in increasing the profitability and financial sustainability of salon businesses.

Wilson et al. (2014) indicated that the social responsibility of a firm entails active participation in the community welfare fulfillment. Goyal et al. (2016) stressed that a mix of indicators including financial performances, social impact, local capacity building, and commitment helps to ensure the measurement of organizational effectiveness. Sharabi (2014) noted that engagement in the community interests influences sales of products and services within the market. Lauritsen and Perks (2015) indicated that the CSR is a persuasive power to engage ethical and socially responsible activities to benefit a firm's self-interests and those of customers. Arend (2014) emphasized that company supervisors

exploit CSR, precisely green activities to reduce costs, differentiate products, improve safety and quality, and shrink violations of regulations and laws. When barber salon owners engage in CSR activities, the experience may serve to train employees in leadership and customer service, foster a healthy image and reputation among the community and the pool of customers within.

Barriers to Small Business Success

Rahman, Uddin, and Lodorfos (2017) defined barriers as significant constraints that often obstruct the economic growth of companies. Such barriers could include limited knowledge, restricted access to funds, a lack of real entrepreneurship skills, a willingness to learn deficiency and the absence of flexibility. Mittal et al. (2014) noted that barriers are concerns, precisely the lack of proper planning, the paucity of organization coordination, a dearth of new ideas, inadequate rewards and incentives. Elmahgop, Abdel Wahab, and Edrees (2015) observed that although small businesses contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of nations, many encounter severe obstacles in the establishment, functioning and running. These barriers are multi-faceted and vary per environments, and industry segments. Barriers, however, included two broad groups. The first sort of problems, relevant to the external arena, includes the uncontrollable variables, such as political, economic, environmental, and social concerns affecting the development of a business. Cvilikas, Kurschus, and Sarapovas (2015) argued that improper cooperation with partners, namely suppliers, creditors, and the local community members can lead to crisis, which constrain performance. Elmahgop et al. added that the second and last group of obstacles small businesses are facing consist of

internal environment issues but mostly relate to the management rules, or policies, and resource optimization and exploitation. Ayadi and Ojo (2014) argued that financial malpractices in a developing economy like Nigeria, often reveal employee ethical misbehaviors, including violating a code of conducts to harm organizations from the inside.

External obstacles to business management. Elmahgop et al. (2015) noted that the outer barriers of business organizations are universal, inclusive, and harmful. Rahman et al. (2017) noted that the external obstacles lead to 80% or 90% of small business failure within the first 10 years. The external problems undoubtedly may be as follows:

Political barriers. Nwoke (2017) indicated that quest and pressures for profitability and value generation for shareholders often result in misconducts in the marketplace. Governmental authorities set ideologies, politics, and even economic neoliberal philosophies to prevent and regulate destructive actions or decisions of the corporate think tank. King (2015) stated that in the mid of 1990 to 2000s, Australian government effective implementation of political and economic policy reforms set an exemplary ideology for other nations. Nwoke held a different view, arguing that the implementation of ideologies by local authorities constitute barriers against corporate social responsibility program achievement to curb the efficient development of organizations. Mittal et al. (2014) declared that although the adoption of green policies by governmental authorities restricts social responsibilities of organizations, many participate in developing appropriate behaviors to safeguard the ecosystem.

Economic barriers. Rahman et al. (2017) observed that in the international marketplace, challenges that small businesses face, vary from country to country. Vokina, Zima, Sinyavsky, Meshkov, and Sultanova (2016) stated that the unification of an economic system is almost impossible, and business leaders encounter difficulties in running commercial enterprises. Rahman et al. (2017) argued that in Bangladesh, nearly 82% of entrepreneurs contribute to the economic development, and employ a diverse workforce across the country, but face insufficient or lack of information about entry into new markets. Mittal et al. (2014) stressed that the lack of sufficient economic information consists of barriers to limit organizational leaders' ability in making effective decisions.

King (2015) reasoned that the immediate consequence of leader inefficiency is the restriction of competition, reduced productivity, and low economic performances. Mittal et al. suggested that for leaders to help in alleviating the disproportionately and poor performances of economies, governmental authorities need to set standard management principles and methods for companies. The BLS (2018) indicated that the hourly pay of \$12.38 as of May 2016 as salary for barbers, (\$24,300 as yearly earnings) was inadequate to attract talents from the same, or different industries, and may limit the success of some barber salon businesses. The construct of various entry barriers, in the United States, in the barbering marketplace disrupts the successful operations of barber salons to impact the quality of services. The immediate result is the discrepancy in the level of profitability among barber salons in same geographic areas or within different states, which may affect survival and curb value addition to shareholders and patrons.

Environmental obstacles. Onyido, Boyd, and Thurairajah (2015) noted that as dominant socio-economic organizations, businesses impact negatively human environments. The increasing need for generating profits leads to soil and water degradation, pollution of the atmosphere, habitat loss, inequalities, and even conflicts endanger the living conditions of individuals. Onyido et al. (2015) declared that some leader malpractices in operating business activities have resulted in the protection of socio-environments, which has led to curbing the organizational performances. Cosimato and Troisi (2015) argued that probable actions for organizational leaders would be to develop, or observe eco-friendly policies, precisely green marketing to reduce wastes, emissions of noxious gas, and damages. Although these green practices facilitate customer satisfaction, acquisition, and retention does not directly correlate with business success. Rahman et al. (2017) stated that friendly practices are additional risks that will augment the inability of small business to continue coping with insufficient resources. Cosimato and Troisi added that leaders must also follow a multiple steps process to act ethically, safely, and to meet new environmental standards. The regulations to refer to often may range from the mandates to the adherence of international environmental protocols, namely Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol), to Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard, and Corporate Value Chain Accounting and Reporting Standard. Organizational leaders also need to orient activities to comply with the requirement of ISO-14001 Certification standards of sustainability. Rahman et al. explicitly added that certification programs would lead to risky collaboration and knowledge sharing at the international level, often resulting in conflicts. As the legal environment is constantly

shifting to impose protocols, certifications, and standardized norms, barber salon owners should observe this trend to secure the barbering industry expansion. Preferably, the compliance with the stated norms will be useful in reassuring customers about the satisfaction of the social environment needs.

Social obstacles. Rahman et al. (2017) defined social barriers as attitudes, languages, tastes, beliefs, behaviors, lifestyles, and relationships that form the socio-cultural environment of a country to impact the way of running businesses, growth demands, and consumptions. Mittal et al. (2014) articulated that social obstacles are concerns related to the living conditions of individuals, threatening positively or negatively business development. Rahman et al. stated that cultures and education shape the consumption approaches of people. When business leaders comply with educative and cultural ways of consumption, they are likely to meet marketplace needs, increase production, and grow economically. Ayadi and Ojo (2014) observed that there is a valid correlation between economic development and business activities, which viewed by Herzallah, Gutie´rrez-Gutie´rrez, and Rosas (2014) who noted that leaders have seriously considered customer quality and satisfaction meeting as a core of a business. Herzallah et al. (2014) stressed that quality management, meanwhile, is costly, and implies financial and regulatory constraints, and complying with ISO Certification, which most of the small business leaders do not seem to respect. Pham and Nasir (2016) clarified that with the reduced financial power of customers, organizational leaders embrace the production of poor quality of products to fit demands. In some social environment like the United Kingdom (UK), the growth and consumption of illegal, low-priced counterfeit goods by

customers in meeting daily needs, disrupts the competition at local and international levels, often causing barriers to business sustainability. Herzallah et al. argued that differentiating strategies implementation to help leaders cope with customers' sensitivity towards price results in barriers, causing disruption, and unethical behaviors in the business arena. The effectiveness of salon owners in the barbering industry necessitates a communication based on cultures, products quality, or features, and price sensitivity with the marketplace, a skill that licensed barbers often need to learn to develop the salon businesses.

Internal obstacles to business management. Elmahgop et al. (2015) observed that the inner group of business obstacles relate to staff management. Rahman et al. (2017) emphasized that small businesses' common barriers include skills shortage, lack of knowledge and experience, inability to use advanced technology, the absence of competition, improper record keeping, and limited availability of financial funds. All these previously stated constraints reflect on difficulties that hinder the proper operation of the business to afflict its growth. Onyido et al. (2015) regretted that up to 70% of small business leader problems encompass an entrepreneurial spirit gap, limited resources, and capabilities. Importantly, internal difficulties small business leaders or owners often encounter result in:

Lack of administrative and technical experience. Ikpefan and Agwu (2015) viewed capacity as a crucial factor for the successful management of a business. Capacity may be synonymous with ability and often derives from education, training, skills, experience, and technical knowledge relevant to the business management ability.

Martinez (2015) noted that almost 75% of small business leaders could not manage resources efficiently, which damages social environment severely and results in the soil, water pollution, wastes, scarcity of raw materials, and deaths. Elmahgop et al. (2015) argued that leaders of small enterprises face difficulties in obtaining inputs for manufacturing semi or final goods. The subsequent effect is the high selling prices of products, causes as Cvilikas et al. (2015) stressed loss of demands and risks to contract or repay credits lines from banks. Elmahgop et al. clarified that managers of small companies lack proper competencies in fields of accounting, marketing, and operational activities organization or storage. Jurinski, Down, and Kolay (2016) argued that the incapacity of leaders to manage efficiently cause the loss of millions of jobs and reduces the growing power of new businesses. The successful operation of entrepreneurial ventures necessitates proper bookkeeping, payroll process, and hiring of financial experts to anticipate and overcome any cash flow issues. Barber salon owners must train employees in bookkeeping, or hire an expert to proactively control, mitigate and address current, or future financial risks.

Shortage of skills and advanced knowledge. Ikpefan and Agwu (2015) noted that effective leaders exploit characteristics of team members in furtherance of meeting business goals. Organizational leaders or managers, therefore, must be skillful in setting attainable goals, communicate effectively, and train employees, in the pursuance of value creation for customers. Barbera, Bernhard, Nacht, and Mccann (2015) added that the succession, continuous operation of the family business requires knowledge, ability, and advanced training, and leadership skills to achieve credibility among workers. Ikpefan

and Agwu indicated that current business challenges call for the combination of extensive resources, such as innovation, active leadership style, and technological advances but through standardized norms setting within a workplace. Schaupp and Bélanger (2014) observed that only 20% of leaders have the knowledge, skills, and value the use of the Internet and social media for running businesses. Szuamnik-Samolej (2016) suggested that in the 21st Century global environment, significant changes and megatrends have surfaced. The Internet and technology development have significantly influenced the current virtual, networked, and customer-centric business model. Ecological, social responsibility and well-being of customers are more at the core of running a business currently than merely making a profit. Bigliardi and Galati (2014) suggested that entrepreneurs implement a holistic Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy of continuous improvement to engage organizational performances. Liebesman (2015) argued that in the modern financial operation, innovative technology matters, but small company leaders fall behind in using it. Szuamnik-Samolej stressed that organizational leaders have to reshape the concept of the business model to fit the change in the marketplace, achieve environmental protection, and earn profits. The accomplishment of profits for the barbering businesses would necessitate owners and employees to commit to delivering outstanding value to clients and quality in the service offering. The expectation of quality requires barber salon owners to hire skilled barbers, and thereby reap the benefits of unique competitive advantage; from service excellence offered by competent and customer-oriented and trained staff.

Low production and reduced financial funds. Szuamnik-Samolej (2016) viewed a firm as an interactive process in which leadership and employees behave towards the accomplishment of projected goals. Kuratko et al. (2015) portrayed business as a dynamic system with the aim of creating values to a marketplace where organizational members exploit factors of marketing, management, technology, and vision to grow. The growth of an enterprise derives from the successful exploitation of existing market opportunities. Zanwar, Deshpande, Modack, Gupta, and Agrawal (2015), however, stated that some small business managers may fail at grasping opportunities and hence face uncertainties. Inefficiencies of employees combined with poor or lack of preventive maintenance of equipment, absenteeism, and scarcity of material have resulted in many losses.

Ikpefan and Agwu (2015) opined that the productivity in business requires the transformation of value into actions, barriers to opportunities and innovations, and vision into changing realities. The efficiency of the system of production sometimes forces organizational members to act collaboratively instead of in isolation, take risks, and rewards risk-takers who outperform projected goals. Supervisors could neglect or not adequately value the importance of previously stated factors for running micro-enterprises. Greenwood (2015) observed that operations suffer from the escalating inefficiency of leadership skills and knowledge that affects productivity adversely.

Barnes and Westrenius (2015) declared that the major concern of small enterprises is the use of private funds as start-up and operating capital. Nearly 70% of small company owners use credit cards, loans from friends, or family members to run a

business. Such capital obtained and used for business often reflects on strategies to procure investments from unsecured sources to fund and ensure the growth of business activities. Bellingkrodt and Wallenburg (2014) added that small company managers miss networking, concentrating on customers, innovating, which results in a reduced level of productivity and financial capacity. The lack or limited access to financial funds often affects barber salon owners to create value for patrons and other business stakeholders and can damage innovation capacity of employees. Instead, the shortage of funds often limits the capacity of barber salon owners to improve the knowledge and skills barbers for offering high-quality services essential to meet customer satisfaction continuously.

Absence of vision and competition. Bellingkrodt and Wallenburg (2014) suggested that company leaders who center business and strategies, with a focus on customer satisfaction are likely to innovate to overgrow. Innovation, nevertheless, is an essential factor leading to the competitiveness of organizations whose leaders aim to survive potential threats of fierce competition. Small businesses managers often lack innovation capabilities because of the limitation of skills or often rely on suppliers to introduce new products into the marketplace. Agnihotri (2014) expressed that the relatively poor performance of small enterprises is the result of leaders who count on suppliers to invent new products or services and compete within the market. Elmahgop et al. (2015) argued that the process of innovation includes decision-making and reliable information systems, which small firm leaders often fail to have, and use personal views to implement decisions.

Agnihotri (2014) indicated that the intensity of competition, the pressure from customers, technological advancements, necessitate business supervisors set aggressive growth strategies to increase image and reputation permanently. Developing strategies for handling business activities, small company managers or owners often miss implementing appropriate ethical and customer-oriented strategies, which may negatively influence social performance, and curtail profitability. Styhre (2016) emphasized that with the lack of ideology of management or visionary ideas, managers miss operate business activities fruitfully for progressing customer conditions socio-economically. Agnihotri stated that in 2011, nearly 25% of small enterprise leaders performed disappointingly because of the payment of low salaries by shareholders, the absence of vision and competition. Herzallah et al. (2014) contended that positive correlations between vision and competitive strategies are of value in gaining a competitive edge over rivals, and in sustaining financial performances for companies. Elmahgop et al. (2015) indicated that the deterioration in products or services quality is the main reason leading to a weak financial power of small businesses. In these companies, there is often a total absence of a quality center, failure in periodic and regular inspections, and the use of old materials in value generation, causing unstable margin profits. Barber salon owners should implement, observe, and comply with state safety rules not only to protect employee lives but also those of customers. The safety of clients will contribute to enlarging customer base for barber salons to influence positive and stable margin profits generation.

Small Business Profitability

Negro et al. (2014) suggested that business profitability linked to a firm's loan volumes. Leaders could also achieve steady profits in applying proven business models to different geographical areas to lower operating costs and losses. Milosavljević, Milanović, and Benković (2016) held a different opinion, declaring that the primary factor that ensures companies gain profits is customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers are likely to purchase continuously from the same company and recommend it to others. Besides the location, image, sales growth as well as reputation of the business could substantially influence the generation of margin profits. Şamiloğlu and Akgün (2016) described profitability as an ability of leaders to run a firm successfully, generate and disburse dividends to shareholders. The stability of profits implies the efficient management of working capital, which, thereby, avoids financial crisis to increase value distribution of the firm and its profitability. Barber salon owners could improve profits by formulating effective strategies to remedy funding inadequacies, to ensure economic growth.

Szuamnik-Samolej (2016) reasoned that with the shift in the business arena, the term profitability portrays different or advanced meanings, such as social and/or environmental mission achievement. The 21st Century has seen changes derived from damages business leaders caused to the social environment, and as a result, the conception of margin profits also shifted. Organizations establish to earn economic or commercial earnings but also to fulfill social and environmental agendas. Negro et al. (2014) observed that commercial profits might indicate the proper use of financial assets,

the lower costs related to staff management to result in one instance, \$350,000 annual earnings for businesses. Galloway et al. (2015) acknowledged that as fundamental objectives of creating a business, profits earning appear as the logical consequences of invested resources. Schaupp and Bélanger (2014) viewed profits as the return on investments (ROI) that factors like competitive pressure, market power, and the company's level of technology could influence significantly. The achievement of profits or the generation of adequate ROI requires hiring skilled and professionally trained licensed barbers to perform haircut services with professionalism and create more customer traffic for barbering businesses.

Schaupp and Bélanger (2014) affirmed that the fulfillment of social and environmental agenda's, nevertheless, is not a pure profit but as noted by Szuamnik-Samolej (2016), social performances organizational leaders exploit to ensure the well-being of customers and foster solid reputation and positive image to increase sales and earnings. Pham and Nasir (2016) argued that reputation affects the management of brands and could result in customer loyalty and economic growth. Understanding the concept of profitability aid in setting and attaining financial goals by the barber salon owners makes it an imperative to hire, train, and retain skilled and knowledgeable barbers to be effective in ensuring business growth and sustainability.

Transition and Summary

The major elements of Section 1 included the background and introduction to the research topic, including the rationale for the study and the problem for small business organizations. The purpose of this study entailed exploring the business management

leadership strategies that successful barber salons owners use in Indianapolis, Indiana. The goal of the study is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the critical leadership strategies needed by unsuccessful barbershop owners to survive the fierce competition in the barbering industry. Section 1 also included a brief overview of the research approach selected for this study; the interview questions used to collect accurate data and responses from eligible participants to the research question. The details related to assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study, and the motives explaining why this study may be of value to small businesses and contribute to positive social change, also included in Section 1.

The review of the literature included an overview of the history of the barber salon business in the United States, setting the groundwork for understanding the growth of U.S. barbering industry and the struggle faced by some barber salons owners. A supplementary subject within the literature review included an in-depth critique of small business success factors and some barriers, affecting small businesses' operation and profitability. The literature review also includes a critical review of transformational leadership theory, which represents the conceptual framework for this study.

Section 2 encompasses details of the conducted interviews, with an extensive explanation to include the research topic, method, participants, data collection approach, data analysis procedures, and the means for assuring the creditability, transferability, reliability, and confirmability for this study. Section 2 includes a description of the role of the researcher and establishing relationships with study participants. Section 2 also

includes information regarding processes to ensure dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the data and the outcomes of the study.

Section 3 includes the findings of the research study. The presentation of the results and the detailed analysis presented included the identification of key emergent themes from the analysis of data, and a discussion involving the relevance of the lens of transformational leadership principles approaches and styles to contribute to understanding the findings. The discussion in Section 3 also may denote the applicability of the findings to business practices and recommendations for action and future research, derived from extensive analysis of the primary research undertaken, triangulated against credible secondary sources of data and information.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 encompasses a detailed clarification of the processes for assuring the validity and integrity of the research study. Undertaking a qualitative multiple case study, I explored the current and past experiences of established barber salon owners in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana (United States), who have run profitable barbering businesses for at least 5 consecutive years. Section 2 contains an explanation of the research study's objectives in exploring business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners have used to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. The findings of this study could be of value for some of the efforts of barber salon owners in sustaining and increasing profitability of barbering businesses. Section 2 also includes descriptions of the role of the researcher, details on participants for the study, and the rationale and justification for the selected research method and design for completing the study. A discussion of the processes for sampling and the selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, and the important measures implemented to assure in a qualitative context the reliability and validity of the study's findings completes this section.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners have used to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. From the population comprising 69 active barber salons in Indianapolis, Indiana (Indiana Government, 2018a), purposeful selection of three successful owners

who have, in 5 consecutive years, recorded stable profits constituted the case and study sample. The findings and knowledge from this study could contribute to the economic and social welfare progress of the population of the barbering business community of professionals, employees, and customers, in the city of Indianapolis, through quality services increasing for clients. Amaeshi et al. (2016) noted that small business growth yields positive social change for communities.

Role of the Researcher

In the completion of this qualitative, explorative multiple case research study, my role as the principal researcher throughout this study involved collecting, categorizing, analyzing, interpreting the data, and developing themes and conclusions. Following the data collection, data organization, data analysis, and contrast of data accumulated from participants involved in the achievement of multiple case study, as suggested by Goyal et al. (2016), aided me in seeking convergent and divergent points of views to address the research question. After the interviews, recorded data, data transcription, and coding followed to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants in this study, thereby protecting any sensitive information revealed during the study. Taylor (2015) observed that the sensitivity of collected information requires researchers to use pseudonyms to safeguard the privacy of participants in the research study. In the analysis stage, the use of Microsoft Word software and color coding helped in analyzing and classifying participant responses following the identification of main themes from the collected information. Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, and Khodyakov (2015) concluded that researchers analyze interview insights through coding and thematic appraisal. I wrote up

the final research study while keeping respondent identities and specific location information in a secured place for at least 5 years from the date of study completion. Taylor stressed that researchers must ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants through the research process and the publication stage of the research study's findings.

The adherence to the Belmont Report (BR) principles will invariably assure the researcher achieves quality and ethical research. Jaramillo et al. (2015) reported that ethical businesses are successful by focusing on employee concerns while producing values to benefit the society. I complied with the principles of research ethics in having measures to assure the respect and protection of human rights and vulnerable research subjects, namely children and individuals with diminished self-determination capacity, and to meet ethics and quality for this study.

The BR protocol specifies the responsibilities of researchers in acting ethically while completing research studies. Bromley et al. (2015) suggested that researchers explain to participants at the early stage of a study the rationale of achieving the study and also clarify both parties' roles. I exercised care to ensure that selected study participants comprehended that they had the right to participate or withdraw from the completion of the study at any time. Consenting study participants did not receive any financial incentives. Bromley et al. stressed that free and voluntary participation of individuals in a research process reduces ethical risks. Researchers have to show fairness and respect to participants in data collection and treatment but must agree with

interviewees on the final analyzed data before the diffusion of the study findings (Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

Participants

As a critical step, I selected participants to complete this research study. The selection of three successful barber salon owners to participate in the study was useful in undertaking this multiple case study, as the aim was to collect rich and in-depth insights. The participation of three successful barber salon owners aided in gathering and contrasting practical knowledge and experiences they recalled and revealed, critical for addressing the overarching central question. The selection of three participants who successfully demonstrated ability to earn profits served to provide rich data regarding the phenomenon under study, which was the discovery of business management leadership strategies used by some salon owners to increase profitability and financial sustainability. Park and Park (2016) urged qualitative researchers to usually use a small number of participants with in-depth of knowledge and business management experience who can provide in-depth and insightful information regarding the phenomenon. As in this research approach, the validity of findings is paramount in discovering first hand experiences of involved participants. The expertise of the selected participants through in-depth interviews possibly brought to the foreground necessary business management leadership strategies, which could be valuable to salon owners who struggle to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment.

The participant selection was a crucial means for collecting and analyzing data from the interview of study participants. I screened and purposefully selected the targeted participants who met the eligibility criteria to participate in the research study. Lauritsen and Perks (2015) suggested for researchers to use a purposeful sampling to reach out to appropriate respondents in fulfilling the research objectives and goals. Conducting semistructured and face-to-face interviews of three selected and successful barber salon business owners in Indianapolis (Indiana), United States aided in comprehending the imperatives of the used business management leadership strategy. Lauritsen and Perks reasoned, that interviewing effective leaders may facilitate obtaining useful information that could be valuable in generating business knowledge, which may be important to boost the image, reputation, and even profitability of struggling businesses.

I successfully conducted this study keeping in mind the objectives encapsulated in the central research question and using carefully determined eligibility criteria in the selection of suitable participants. Lauritsen and Perks (2015) advocated that in the process of recruiting participants, researchers may have to choose or combine criteria like age, gender, and geographical locations for having a broad range of involved interviewees for completing a study. All barber salon business owners participating in the research study were (a) registered with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Department of Commerce, or Indiana PLA, (b) operating a successful business within the barbering industry for at least 5 years, (c) over the age of 25 years, and (d) located in Indianapolis.

After receiving the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for collecting information, I screened all qualified potential participants meeting the

eligibility criteria by making phone calls and sending consent forms through e-mails, which doubled as an invitation letter, requesting participation in the study. Lanivich (2015) indicated that e-mails constitute primary tools to contact targeted individuals to participate in the completion of the study. Upon the selected interviewees' consent, the participants received thoroughly explained details concerning the research study process. Bromley et al. (2015) observed that it is important to set a foundation of trust between a researcher and participants and engage both parties. The acceptance of the selected individuals was the last step preceding the data collection for the study.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

A qualitative method optimally served to explore the business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability of operations beyond 5 years from business establishment. A researcher may choose the qualitative approach among the three principal alternatives: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method (Barnham, 2015; Park & Park, 2016). From all possible options, a qualitative method was an adequate and suitable option for meeting the goals and objectives of the study. The reason for choosing qualitative research instead of the quantitative or mixed method is that the qualitative approach is beneficial for discovering participant experiences related to the study (Ogden & Edwards, 2016). The conduct of a qualitative approach engenders accurate results by helping researchers learn from the dynamic and changing nature of the researched phenomenon at a given moment (Park & Park, 2016). The use of semistructured questions is useful to seek and reach

objectivity in addressing the central research question but through the views of interviewees (Barnham, 2015). This research study entailed striving to achieve a profound comprehension of the experiences, strategies, and the mindset of successful barbers operating in the U.S. barber salon industry. Barnham (2015) declared that qualitative research has meaning when a researcher intends to identify the mental structures that business stakeholders use to depict and know organizational environments. The qualitative method optimally served in obtaining detailed perspectives and insights for this study on the business management leadership strategies successful barber salon owners use for achieving business profitability and financial sustainability. The quantitative method was not the preferred approach for this study because its construct requires empirical processes (Barnham, 2015) for examining relationships among variables deductively. In a quantitative study, the researcher often examines causes and effects and relationships between variables (Barnham, 2015) while testing formulated hypotheses to achieve the research objectives. Researchers collect data to measure variables, typically examining correlations within a particular context (Park & Park, 2016). The goal of this study was to access the essence of interviewees' experience but not to collect measurable data. The mixed method refers to an integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods under a single study, giving an opportunity for researchers to gather and analyze data and contrast findings to draw interferences and implications (Johnson, 2015a).

The mixed methods may be more efficient (Bailey, 2014) in providing a broad comprehension of the research problem. However, the weakness of the mixed approach is

the complexity for researchers to report the study findings concisely (Johnson, 2015a). Cameron, Sankaran, and Scales (2015) criticized the mixed methods, stating that the reporting of the study findings may sometimes lead to two separate reports presentation. The report may also include both approaches, without the integration of the analysis of the results of the study. The purpose of the study did not entail formulating, testing, and developing hypotheses; there should not be the need for implementing a mixed method. The single quantitative approach and mixed method are unsuitable tools for discovering the business management leadership strategies used by some successful barber salon owners, and the qualitative approach, therefore, constituted the methodology favored for the completion of this study.

Research Design

An exploratory multiple case study was a suitable design for this research. The multiple case study design requires researchers to complete two or more different studies under the construct of a single one, for discovering detailed and rich insights about the explored phenomenon (Ogden & Edwards, 2016). Using a multiple case study design, researchers exploit different small case studies sequentially to achieve reliable results (Singh, 2015). For this study, data saturation entailed controlling the depth of the interviewees' sample and finding repetition in the gathered data throughout the interview, as recommended by other researchers (Park & Park, 2016), and implemented in interviewing successful barber salon owners in Indianapolis. The replication of participant views during the data collection process has implications in the context of data saturation (Ogden & Edwards, 2016), which represents the stage, where further

interviews do not yield new information pertinent to the research question and phenomenon. Ogden and Edwards stressed that investigators often also achieve data saturation by triangulating information from various sources drawn from studies, and other credible secondary data sources. The sample of this study seemed suitable to ascertain the reproduction and significance of the outcomes, with data triangulation against barber salon business financial reports, and other quality and credible secondary data, which helped in conducting an in-depth evaluation of the data of diverse participants. Ogden and Edwards emphasized that the contrast of different perspectives helps to clarify meanings.

Using qualitative methods, a researcher typically chooses among the principal designs of ethnography, grounded theory, and case study (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016; Park & Park, 2016). Researchers conducting a multiple case strategy have to design and combine different small case studies while searching for possible answers for the formulated research question (Glover & Reay, 2015). In the process of providing the best explanation to the phenomenon under study, the researcher chooses from two major case study design derivations: exploratory or explanatory to fit the need of the research (Johnson, 2015a).

The explorative multiple case study represents a study of several small cases (Johnson, 2015a) in which researchers seek soft facts from respondents to answer why and even what questions (Barnham, 2015). In the explanatory multiple case study design, researchers look at factors that may help explain the occurrence of a phenomenon through the qualitative analysis of participant experiences (Johnson, 2015a). The main

purpose of this study was to discover business management leadership strategies used by successful barber salon owners to generate knowledge that may serve other enterprises to succeed and grow financially. The explanatory multiple case approach did appear as a fit in fulfilling the goals of this study; however, an explorative design did suit the aim of gaining deep insights into the phenomenon studied.

Park and Park (2016) defined the concept of ethnography as a picture describing standard living conditions of a specific group of individuals. Park and Park indicated that the use of an ethnographic design facilitates learning about how a group of people interacts with each other culturally. Employing an ethnographic design requires researchers to use the views of insiders and outsiders in understanding cultural and other traits, through constant immersion in such settings. Park and Park insisted that researchers consider using the ethnography design if the magnitude of this study is to explore social beliefs of a group or cultural interactions, and sympathetic behaviors or motivations for gathering together. Since the interest of this study was to concentrate on barber salon owners who have efficiently implemented prudent business management leadership strategies in running barbering activities to meet customer expectations and grow profitably in the Indianapolis area, an ethnography design was inappropriate.

Humphreys (2014) posited that the grounded theory approach presented initially by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, is useful for researchers to develop a theory to explain a complex social phenomenon. As the intent of completing this study was to discover most effective business management leadership strategies to aid some struggling barber salon owners to operate profitably and achieve financial sustainability, the grounded theory

design was also unsuited to the conduct and fulfillment of aims of this research study. In a case study, researchers explore or examine a particular system, trying to understand, analyze its worthiness, and report its uniqueness (Park & Park, 2016).

Population and Sampling

The general population for this study encompassed all barber salon owners in the city of Indianapolis, who have successfully achieved financial sustainability in the barbering industry during their first 5 years of operations and business establishment. In this qualitative, explorative multiple case study, the invocation of purposeful sampling served to select three participants with significant experience and a financial track record of successful business operations. Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, and Hoagwood (2015) argued that purposeful sampling is an efficient and standard approach to qualitative multiple case research. Participants in the study were three owners who have run grooming businesses and have a record of successful financial performance management beyond 5 years, in the city of Indianapolis. Duan et al. (2015) urged researchers to use purposeful sampling to ensure exploiting most proficient and available resources under budget constraints. Although the snowball sampling approach is worthy for recruiting potential interviewees via online strategies, it can reduce the possibility for a researcher in interacting with selected individuals. Lauritsen and Perks (2015) stated that before choosing any respondent, researchers should assure targeted participants meet the criteria of eligibility. Participants who partook in the study met the study selection and eligibility criteria. Shafi, Baloch, Memon, Fatima, and Shafi (2016) suggested that researchers

based on the goals and objectives of the study must establish proper interview questions, and screen participants to meet the eligibility criteria, from the identified population.

The choice and invitation of respondents to participate in the study follow after the IRB approval of the study. The participants received a consent form, which indicates the absence of any known risks for participation in the study. The primary data collection entailed interviewing owners, with established and selected successful barber salon businesses in Indianapolis. Park and Park (2016) advised that researchers should collect information within the natural context of the study to gain more meaningful data.

Researchers should choose participants for collecting valuable insights in addressing the researched business problem (Ganesan & Saravanaraj, 2014) in a purposeful sampling approach. Gaining insight into the practical experience of three successful barber salon owners helped in acquiring new knowledge and a deeper understanding of the critical success factors and business management imperatives in running barbering businesses. Singh (2015) indicated that when assessing data collected in a case study, researchers create new knowledge to help operate the business efficiently. The purposeful sample for this study comprised of selecting only successful barber salons owners located in (a) Indianapolis, (b) registered with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, or PLA. The study participants recruited for this study were targeted barber salon owners over 25 years of age and running and operating barber salon businesses for at least 5 uninterrupted years, which also represented the important eligibility criteria to participate in the study.

The success of a study depends on the crucial responsibility of researchers who show rigor in selecting a sample size to fit the achievement of the expected goals (Kim, Giacomini, & Macredie, 2014). The sample from the population, as well as its size, can also be subject to a reduction to supply researchers with robust and adequate information (Linder, Samawi, Yu, Chatterjee, Huang, & Vogel, 2015) to meet the objectives of the research. A small sample of three grooming business owners constituted the size of the study.

Kim, Giacomini, and Macredie (2014) advocated that data saturation occur when researchers after conducting additional interviews are unable to acquire any other new insights from interviewees. Kim et al. (2014) counseled that the saturation of data involves selecting participants who are relevant to the study, precisely those having most practical knowledge in the subject area. A sample of three barber salon owners, with practical knowledge and experience about the researched topic, was adequate to attain data saturation. The achievement of data saturation, however, required multiple rounds of interview with each participant to unearth the depth of inquiry required in soliciting deep and meaningful business management experience of successful and profitable salon businesses.

Ethical Research

The accomplishment of the aims of a study will often require the researcher to observe and comply with ethical norms. The treatment and protection of respondent rights is a crucial responsibility and expectation of researchers. Taylor (2015) argued that compliance with ethical standards is an essential responsibility of researchers for

avoiding biased findings and harming the participants. I adhered to the ethical values of Walden University and the Belmont Report (BR) fundamental principles, namely (a) respect for individuals, (b) fairness, and (c) beneficence to protect participants in my study.

Prospective respondents for the study received e-mails, which included an informed consent form, explaining the study's rationale and intent. Individuals who agreed to participate in the research study, completed, signed, and returned consent forms through emails. Upon meeting the criteria to take part in the research study, and providing the signed consent forms, I set up appointments to meet with interviewees. Before the beginning of the interview process, study participants received a full explanation regarding the research process. Patterson and Malpass (2015) noted that explanations are likely trusting relationships building through which researchers communicate with interviewees. When having a high level of confidence, interviewees often feel comfortable in revealing profound and constructive insights about the research topic. Taking time to answer participant questions, if any, concerning the study aided in creating an environment of trust for the study. Ogden and Edwards (2016) noted that participants have the right to comprehend the cost, purpose, and possible advantages tied to a study. Asmit and Koesrindartoto (2015) encouraged researchers to use statistical data and information gathered during interviews process in constructing findings. Participants were able to request the review of respective responses to the face-to-face and semistructured interviews, which should also ensure the accuracy of the transcription. Interviewees did not receive any financial benefits, rewards, and material incentive for

participating in the study. Research participants who, however, desired a copy of the findings can have it as a symbol of gratitude for participating in the study.

The selected respondents had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage for any reasons with no adverse consequence. Participants in the study also received information on the process of opting out of the study, by telephone or email. Each round of interview did not exceed 30 minutes in duration. Ogden and Edwards (2016) recommended an ideal length of an interview not exceed 60 minutes, to ensure flow, respect of interviewee time, and to also ensure a focused process of data collection. The identity of participants will remain protected and private in the study. Taylor (2015) stated that research teams should employ robust protocols of confidentiality and anonymity to avoid revealing the identity of participants. The use of codes, such as SP1, SP2, and SP3 is helpful in recognizing and differentiating each respondent to ensure participant confidentiality in the study. Asmit and Koesrindartoto (2015) concluded that codes facilitate data analysis for researchers, can help comply with safeguarding the privacy and fair treatment of participants. No other individual or group had access to the password, and study data resides on a personal laptop computer, to ensure safeguarding participants' confidentiality and the integrity of the study data. The measures to securely store study relate to computer files and data also include programmed deletion after 5 years from the completion of the study. Likewise, the planned incineration of paper files associated with the study data represents additional security measures. I will adhere to Taylor (2015) recommendation that the researcher should be the only individual who can access data to safeguard the study findings, image, and participant confidentiality.

Data Collection Instruments

Singh (2015) identified a researcher as an essential means for data collection instruments in a qualitative study. I was the primary data collection instrument for this research study. The data collection involved face-to-face interviews, with each participant who met the criteria to participate in the study. Singh observed that semistructured questions guide researchers in collecting pragmatic data and generating appropriate conclusions. Using in-depth semistructured questions was a fitting option to identify the business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners have used to increase the profitability and financial sustainability of operations. In the study, the interview process included interviews of consenting participants, using 10 semistructured questions (Appendix A) to the participants, following the same interview protocol (Appendix B) for all selected participants, to ensure a systematic and uniform process of data collection. The standard tools for the research study were no different from most qualitative studies. A word processor and pen to take notes and observations of participants' responses, an Olympus digital voice recorder VN-7200, 2GB/GO (1,100 hours) helped to record all interviews and avoid missing any details of responses from interviewees will be the crucial means to collect data, in formats amenable to recall, replay and analyze.

The administration of interview questions was valuable in gaining insight into the core experiences of respondents who have successfully implemented business management leadership strategies in the barber salon operations. Dasgupta (2015) argued

that various aspects of an organization could fall under the scope of a study when researchers desire to obtain a holistic view of management.

De Ávila and Bertero (2015) posited that data collection instruments include relevant questions to the researched phenomenon for collecting considerable information from interviewees. Dasgupta (2015) encouraged researchers to use quality instruments for data collection, needed information from all participants. Ogden and Edwards (2015) stressed that the review of transcription, triangulation, patterns recognition and observations are pertinent strategic aspects for assuring the purpose of the validity of the qualitative analysis. The reliability of a research study significantly hinges on the expertise of the researcher (Dasgupta, 2015). Members checking was a useful strategy in the study, as the emphasis included gaining quality and detailed insights into the views of participants. Interviewees review the transcribed interviews to reflect views' accuracy. Such reviews of the interview transcript by participants can enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the collected data. Member checking can help achieve the qualitative analog of reliability, as espoused in a quantitative context (Harvey, 2015). A standard interview protocol (Appendix B) for all participants also served in assuring validity and reliability of data in a qualitative context, as noted by researchers (Johnson, 2015a). The collection of data through observations, the gathering of archival documents, news articles, and business reports accessible on websites were meaningful for the completion of data methodological triangulation and analysis. The consideration of information from various sources helped for assuring the reliability and validity of the research study as suggested by researchers (Dasgupta, 2015).

Data Collection Technique

The research entailed conducting personal interviews with eligible participants, documentation search, and observations. Johnson (2015a) argued that in a case study, there are multiple ways for researchers to collect qualitative insights. The approaches may consist of focus groups, interviews, observations, researcher immersion in experiences, and open-ended questions. The use of different sources for accumulating and analyzing data could augment the quality and depth of the research, to facilitate triangulation and present a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. Individual and in-depth interviews, using semistructured questions, with three qualified participants, served as the approach for collecting data for this study. The Olympus digital voice recorder is an instrument suitable to record the voice of participants. In this qualitative study, the use of word processor and pen were helpful for note taking of behavioral reactions of participants. Completing interviews with the use of a digital voice recorder has the advantage to record verbatim insights during face-to-face interviews accurately. Researchers could listen to recordings, and use the notes taken for reporting collected data. Soto and Ambrose (2016) argued that digital audio recorders are robust tools for capturing full explanations. The digital audio recorder could serve in accurately gathering and analyzing data so that solutions from successful business leaders emerge from the careful analysis of interviews.

Conducting face-to-face interviews with semistructured questions provided a means to identify the business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners use to increase the profitability and financial sustainability of operations.

Soto and Ambrose (2016) asserted that digitally recorded interviews help researchers in gaining insights in business research for solving business problems. One of the potential disadvantages of using Olympus digital voice recorder for interviews as stated by Pezaro and Lilley (2015) lies in harming the interview process if researchers cannot use it appropriately. To gain credible data, researchers need to test devices, have an ability of their use, and employ recordings to collect interview data entirely for analysis. Pezaro and Lilley noted risks related to digital voice recording by stating that researchers could face critics, skepticism and pessimistic views of respondents for its employment during the data collection stage.

Following the transcription of interviews, each participant received a copy for review, as a member checking step, essential to ensure participant agreement on transcribed views, accuracy, and for assessment. Thereafter, repeating the member checking step after analysis and interpretation of the interview data increased conformability measures. Respondents were free to ask for addressing any missing information or changes in case the transcription does not adequately reflect any thoughts with accuracy. Pezaro and Ambrose (2015) suggested that handing transcribed copies to participants is an opportunity to enhance the credibility, accuracy, and trustworthiness of the findings. As proposed by Der Pan, Deng, Tsia, Jiang, and Wang (2016), I enabled participants to review recorded responses, and seek to address potential inconsistencies after collecting data, and as stated herein for the d study.

A case study is a creative and logical approach (Singh, 2015), in which researchers have the latitude to use the subsequent: published reports, Internet, e-mails,

websites, media, written documents as reliable means to collect and demonstrate evidence (Ogden & Edwards, 2015; Singh, 2015). Reviewing these documents, as secondary sources, contributed to supporting the findings from face-to-face interviews, reinforce the credibility of gathering data, guarantee sufficient contrast, analysis, and facilitated methodological and data triangulation. Triangulation is vital to assure research quality (Ogden & Edwards, 2015). The documents, for triangulation and review, included a review of the trends of small business, the official reports concerning SMEs, and realistic sources of information related to barbering industry or grooming businesses.

Data Organization Technique

To facilitate data organization, I used a word processor to aid in creating a log for and to keeping track of all gathered data from the recording interviews, other associated documentation, and notes taken during the interviews. The use of a personal computer, specifically, and cloud storage, ensured secure and password protected electronic storage of data. Date (2016) advocated that researchers could transfer large data sets to cloud storage at low costs for the preservation of integrity and security. Keeping data in cloud storage should help in data recovering in case of personal computer failure designated to store study data.

A review of study-related documents such as field notes and memos preceded the stage of data organization to render a systematic and organized process. The organization of data entailed the reduction of data collected through interviews, to facilitate analysis, constant comparison and derivation of themes. As advocated by others researchers like Van der Graaf, Forrest, Adams, Shucksmith, & White (2017), each participant received a

personal copy of the transcribed and recorded interviews. I also uploaded interviews' transcriptions into NVivo, a computer-based qualitative data analysis software program (NVivo-QDASP). Consistent with the view of Deakins, North, and Bensemman (2015) organizing the data facilitated identifying themes that emerge through the review of interviews and documents. Glowacki-Dudka and Griswold (2016) observed that researchers achieve consistency and trustworthiness through the discussion and review of all gathered data. The design of codes, such as SP1, SP2, and SP3 aided in identifying and differentiating the three participants, and in assuring the participant confidentiality. A separate document contained interviewee contact information without any connections with the applied codes or identities. Data for this study are in a database with a protected password. All research study paper documentation will remain in a safe, locked and fireproof case for 5 years after the completion of the study. Per Walden University protocol, data will be in a secure location where only I will have access. All computer files and paper documents will be automatically deleted using a computer program, and incinerated respectively, after 5 years, following the official completion date of this study.

Data Analysis Technique

Johnson (2015a) viewed methodological triangulation as the utilization of a mix of methods with the purpose of gathering and contrasting insights from diverse sources to enhance the reliability of the study findings. Methodological triangulation is a worthy step in achieving comprehensive and holistic analysis, rather than using just the interviews. Johnson asserted that the triangulation tactic helps researchers in overcoming

deficiencies to reach convergence in the search for answers to the phenomenon. The information gathered from secondary sources, namely company reports, policies, institutional videos, and other documents could reveal considerable knowledge about respondents (De Oliveira Menezes & Da Cunha, 2016). Using data triangulation, researchers endeavor to increase the reliability by revealing dissimilarities and resemblances of the research results within different respondent replies to the same questions from interviews (Singh, 2015). Methodological and data triangulation will be necessary for this study because a comprehensive approach helps in validating the findings. The member checking, as Johnson conceptualized it, forces researchers to seek confirmation and conformity of accuracy and interpretation from the perspectives of participants.

The data analysis entailed a systematic analysis of the interview questions, and developing insights collected from secondary sources, which contributed to uncovering knowledge on the profitable business management leadership strategies implemented by successful barber salon owners. Singh (2015) stressed that with the identification of various and salient themes, researchers could structure evidence to address the research objectives holistically but with full explanations. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo, widely used by researchers (De Oliveira Menezes & Da Cunha, 2016; Johnson, 2015b), facilitated handling and analyzing the data. The uploading of data into the qualitative data analysis software NVivo followed the transcription of interviews. Oliveira, Bitencourt, Zanardo Dos Santos, and Teixeira (2016) defined NVivo as a package of software that researchers could exploit in gathering data to complete a

dynamic and vibrant analysis. In a single case study, researchers could add and modify data, conduct cross-reference data or record insights as memos to avoid losing essential details. De Oliveira Menezes and De Cunha noted that the organization and classification of data enable researchers to employ a strategy of using nodal features NVivo. Nodes, as noted by Oliveira et al. (2016), reflect the categorization of collected insights based on criteria, such as participants, places, or organizations to help centralize and code answers before conducting any analysis. Adewunmi, Koleoso, and Omirin (2016) posited that researchers can save considerable time when analyzing interviews with the help of NVivo software. The use of NVivo software helps reduce manual tasks for researchers in discovering patterns, recognizing themes, and in deriving judicious conclusions.

The analysis of the study outcomes helped in developing substantial information for addressing the central research question of this study. The potential participant insights in tandem could also aid in relating the findings to the theory of transformational leadership postulated by Burns (1978), in exploring business management leadership strategies of successful barber salon owners. I identified, analyzed, and contrasted latent and key themes, as related to the central research question and compared to those expected from the conceptual framework. The responses of participants to the different interview questions revealed experiences, potential factors, and strategies successful barber salon owners use to exceed customer expectations in the quest for sustainable businesses.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability of qualitative studies refers to the achievement of objectivity in collecting verifiable insights to enhance the quality of the study's findings (Erb & Pelger, 2015). For qualitative studies, the analogue of reliability for quantitative studies, is dependability. In both qualitative and quantitative research studies, assuring the reliability/dependability and validity of findings requires demonstrating or enabling others to determine the external validity of the study or transferability (Garside, 2015). As a researcher, I collected objective, unbiased and qualitative data to assure reliability and validity of the study's findings. Erb and Pelger argued that verifiable, objective insights assure the dependability in addressing the central research question. Garside noted that researchers can report justifiable and dependable results through using audit trails. I used an audit trail strategy to assure the validity of the study's outcomes. Garside insisted that describing and using audit trails buttresses the reliability and adequacy of the research study.

Qualitative research is dependable when researchers assure quality through the entire process to thoroughly report processes for developing findings (Bailey, 2014). The reliability/dependability and validity of the study outcomes depend on developing and using processes to enhance and ensure reliability/dependability and validity (Hays et al., 2016). In a qualitative research study, trustworthiness is achieved through using principles for demonstrating rigor through addressing the quantitative criteria of dependability, reliability, validity, and impartiality. For a qualitative quality research study, researchers demonstrate rigor by describing and demonstrating and adhering to

processes for ensuring authenticity, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability to achieve trustworthiness (Hays et al., 2016).

Reliability

Researchers have a crucial responsibility in assuring reliability at all stages of research studies. Rodham, Fox, and Doran (2015) argued that the lack of a typical and transparent process for assuring research quality may reduce the required rigor and ethicality in a qualitative research study. The use of strategies of member checking, data, and methodological triangulation is critical to ensure dependability of the study results. Using methodological triangulation requires comparing and contrasting findings from different participants' experiences against other credible data and information from multiple types of data. De Oliveira Menezes and Da Cunha (2016) argued that the methodological triangulation helps researchers compare participants' insights, against data collected from diverse sources, to assure the dependability and validity of the research study. De Oliveira Menezes and Da Cunha stressed that researchers use triangulation techniques to ensure the accuracy of collecting data in answering the phenomenon under study. For my study, methodological triangulation included data from eligible and screened participants, supplemented with a review of essential documents from credible barbering industry reports. Rodham et al. (2015) noted that following the data collection stage, researchers should have participants review transcriptions to ensure alignment with initially recorded responses. The review of transcriptions by participants helps researchers to demonstrate transparency, credibility, and assure the quality of reporting the study findings to achieve trustworthiness.

Maintaining a clear audit trail by the researcher is often significant for collecting accurate data (Rodham et al., 2015). An audit trail helps researchers in reporting the study findings while explaining the methodological process employed to enable confirmability for the research (Rodham et al., 2015). In the study, the data collection and extensive notes about the contextual research conditions and process for procedural decisions will likely contribute to demonstrating the study's dependability and rigor. When using NVivo software, researchers perform vigorous, descriptive, and qualitative evaluation by analyzing, coding, organizing collected data thematically, and for comparing findings to theories related to the subject (De Oliveira Menezes & Da Cunha, 2016). Using NVivo software can facilitate researchers' efforts and capabilities to assure studies' quality, dependability, and confirmability (De Oliveira Menezes & Da Cunha, 2016).

Validity

Researchers need to demonstrate clear and objective efforts to ensure quality, truthfulness, and confidence of research study findings to increase credibility (Hajli, Sims, Featherman, & Love, 2015). In a qualitative research study, credibility replaces the quantitative criterion estimators of internal validity, and transferability for enabling others determinations of the relevance of the study findings to different settings (Garside, 2014). Demonstrating the validity of qualitative research requires the researcher to minimize personal bias and subjectivity in analyzing and reporting study findings, with neutrality and without personal feelings (Teusner, 2016).

For assuring the credibility for a study, I used methodological and data triangulation, continuous engagement, member checking, reliable observations, and peer debriefing as proposed by Garside (2014). Triangulation, member checking, and constant engagement, reliable observations served as validation strategies in this qualitative, explorative and multiple case study. Teusner (2016) argued that the control of bias and subjectivity require trusting relationships building between researchers and interviewees to remove possible barriers and reduce any potential threat to validity.

I used member checking to provide participants with the opportunity to evaluate interview transcriptions' accuracy and derived findings and interpretations. The three barber salon owners, taking part in the research received a transcription copy of recurring interviews for appraisal. After the evaluation, the interviewees had the opportunity to ask for changes to any part, which does not reflect fully or accurately their actual experiences. Using data and methodological triangulation facilitates assuring the credibility of qualitative research studies (Garside, 2014). I perused and analyzed recent and authoritative industry reports related to the barbering marketplace to assure the validity of findings from various data types. In this qualitative research, other secondary sources, such as reports from the SBA, and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) helped helpful in analyzing and comparing the collected interview data against the findings from secondary sources, and with the conceptual framework's suppositions. The secondary sources, in this research study, included financial reports from governmental agencies, such as the SBA, Indiana Chamber of Commerce (ICC), or Indiana Department of Commerce (IDC), the IRS, and companies' websites, and professional association, such

as the National Association of Barbers Boards of America (NABBA). A comparison of data collected from the primary interview data, against secondary sources facilitated in conducting a holistic assessment of the researched phenomenon to assure this study's validity.

The third strategy for assuring validity in a qualitative context in this study was by achieving data saturation. This strategy requires researchers, in the process of collecting data, to continue to collect data until no new information related to additional themes emerge (Garside, 2014). Data saturation occurs in qualitative research studies by researchers conducting more than one interview with participants to ensure gathering multiple perspectives about the research question (Garside, 2014). Aldrich, Dietz, Clark, and Hamilton (2015) stressed that in a case study, researchers can attain data saturation with a small number of interviewees if participants are experts who have the most knowledge and experience relevant to the field of the study to answer the fundamental research questions. The collection of information, responses from three successful barber salon owners taking part in this study hence was useful for achieving data saturation because of proven successes in developing strategies in sustaining their businesses in a challenging barbering industry. A contingency plan in place, and also implemented, consisted of continuing interviews with the same three selected interviewees till no new insights emerged.

In qualitative research, transferability or for quantitative studies, external validity refers to the extent to which outcomes of a research study are systematically enlargeable to the rest of population (Aldrich, Dietz, Clark & Hamilton, 2015). Researchers,

therefore, have a critical responsibility for enabling other researchers to determine the transferability of the research study's findings. I have, therefore, provided detailed information about the study's purpose, population, and participants.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 contains a full clarification and foundation concerning the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, research methodology, ethical research, population and sampling, data collection instruments, techniques, organization, analysis, reliability, and assuring study validity. Section 2 includes specific details on the qualitative method, and explorative multiple case study design, to explore the business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability of operations. Semistructured and face-to-face interview questions will serve to collect profound insights to address the research question. In Section 3, the focus will be on categorizing and interpreting data collected to replicate the shared experiences of different participants implicated in the research study. Section 3 will also cover the presentation of study findings, which include the application of the research to professional practice, the implications for social change, recommendations for action, and with the current limitations, outline possible research for future studies, and a conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 includes a detailed description of the results of the research study. The section also includes a broad overview of the study and details in the presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, and recommendations for action. The limitations of the study, the opportunities and recommendations for further studies, reflection on personal experience in the academic and professional journey, summary, and the study conclusion end this section.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the business management leadership strategies of successful barber salon owners in successfully negotiating the vulnerabilities typically associated with the first 5 years of a business and achieving profitability. The participants in this study included individuals who met the eligibility criteria of the study of barber salon ownership, 25 years and older, and currently running a valid and registered business in the state of Indiana for more than 5 years.

Each participant responded to 10 open-ended questions, in the format of a semistructured interview, which helped to elicit deep insights into responses that were specific to the overarching research question of this study. The data collection included interviews. Thereafter, upon the transcription of all responses, a thematic analysis revealed the importance of the following four major emergent themes to reflect the business management strategic focus of successful barber salon professionals: (a) barber salon operating structures, (b) salon leadership and managerial strategies, (c) licensed

barber skill enhancement, and (d) salon operating strategies effectiveness and sustainability.

Presentation of the Findings

As stated, the semistructured interviews served in exploring the business management leadership strategies favored by successful barber salon owners to increase profitability and financial sustainability and succeeding beyond the first 5 years from business establishment, when many small enterprises are susceptible to failure. The central research question that guided the study was as follows: What strategies do successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond 5 years from business establishment? The data collection process included interviews of three established successful barber salon business owners. The participants in the semistructured interviews held diverse and specific knowledge, experiences, and approaches in implementing business management leadership strategies, with the aim of ensuring successful and economically viable operations. The data analysis led to the identification of important themes, imperatives, and strategies that the interviewed and successful barber salon owners have used to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. The open-ended questions format provided participants an opportunity to recall, express, and share different insights, knowledge, practices, and experiences in the domain of operating barber salon business in the United States, particularly in the Indiana region.

All participants met the study eligibility criteria of (a) over 25 years of age, (b) running a successful business for more than 5 years since business formation, and (c) established and registered with the Indiana PLA (see table 2).

Table 2

Selected Participants Meeting Eligibility Criteria

Participant	<u>Eligibility criteria</u>		
	Minimum age (25 years old)	Established and registered with Indiana PLA	Operating for 5 consecutive years
SP1	54	✓	30
SP2	41	✓	14
SP3	45	✓	6

Note. Table indicating the meeting of the eligibility criteria by all selected and involved participants in the research study. The check marks in Column 3 indicated that each of the participants in the study met the eligibility criteria of being registered with PLA.

Before the interviews, I sent e-mails to each participant, with the consent form attached, as an invitation letter to participate in the study. Each participant responded to the e-mail solicitations with the response: *I consent and confirm personal involvement and participation in the research study.* The approval on October 18, 2018, with the authorization number of 10-18-18-0565668 from Walden University's IRB for the consent form and the interview questions, served as a signal for the commencement of the research study. In 2 weeks, conducting repetitive face-to-face recorded interviews, each of which lasted approximately 30 minutes, generated deep and detailed insights that helped me gain knowledge and identify the business management leadership strategies used by successful salon owners. Reaching data saturation after conducting the three

individual interviews required completing the four rounds of interviews with participants to ensure solidity in the research study and gathered data. Moridi and Aminshokravi (2018) found that data saturation is attained after questioning interviewees repeatedly and no new insights are developed thereafter.

After the recording of interviews, the transcription of each interview followed, which represented the primary data for analysis in this study. Participants received an individual copy of the interview transcript, with a request to review and confirm the accuracy. After data analysis, each participant also received the interpretation, a crucial step or measure to guarantee trustworthiness and increase validity of the study's findings. Thereafter, coding of data served as a measure to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants. For this study, using codes SP1, SP2, and SP3 helped me to identify each participant, with the use of additional sequential codes of C1, C2, and C3 to specify different cases. The codes C1SP1, C2SP2, and C3SP3 also served to complete a thorough analysis and aided in contrasting participant views specific to an interview question. As noted in the BR, participant confidentiality Moridi and Aminshokravi (2018) insisted must be through necessary codes, which may aid in portraying a specific semantic unit to extract principal themes. Participant information in this study on the operation of barber salons was confidential, stored on a password-protected personal computer, with data backed up on an external hard drive and stored in a locked safe. Per Walden University requirements, all paper and computer data files will be destroyed or incinerated 5 years from the official completion date of this research study.

I used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12 to facilitate data analysis. I uploaded the interview transcripts into the software to save time, benefit from the software features, and analyze data qualitatively to identify major emergent themes. The review of documents from business and barber salon businesses ensured the triangulation of data to ensure a holistic review and analysis of primary and secondary data. Based on the overarching research question, the data analysis of responses provided by participants guided the identification of 35 codes, which were abstracted into the four core emergent themes of (a) barber salon operating structures, (b) salon leadership and managerial strategies, (c) licensed barber skill enhancement, and (d) salon operating strategy effectiveness and business sustainability.

Figure 1 reflects a thematic chart detailing and explaining relationships between themes generated from the analysis of interviews. Theme 1, barber salon operating structures, appeared to strongly align in two directions with the Themes 2, salon leadership and managerial strategies, and 4, salon operating strategies effectiveness and sustainability. Theme 2, salon leadership and managerial strategies, showed a strong connection with Theme 4, salon operating strategies effectiveness and sustainability. Theme 3, licensed barber skill enhancement, meanwhile, seemingly displayed weak alignment between the Themes 1, barber salon operating structures, 2, salon leadership and managerial strategies, and 4, salon operating strategies effectiveness and sustainability, which is represented by arrows with broken and bidirectional lines, in Figure 1.

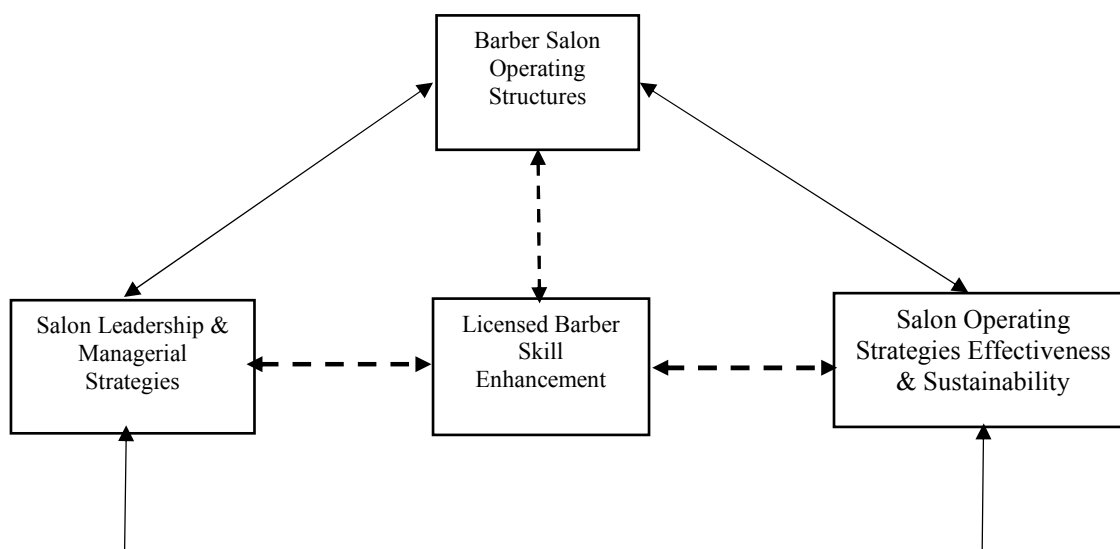


Figure 1. Representation of relationship and connection between emergent themes.

The results from exploring business management leadership strategies of the interviewed successful barber salon owners may be useful for salon owners who struggle to sustain businesses. The four core and emerging themes from the data analysis of the study may reflect some critical and essential strategies needed to operate barber salon business successfully. The results from the research study showed that all the interviewed participants were likely familiar with challenges faced by the barber salon industry, willingly expressed and shared thoroughly detailed experiences and insights of approaches to negotiating these challenges. Using a combination of innovation and business acuity, participants expressed favoring customized and developed specific business structures, with diverse approaches of operation to overcome industry and other challenges and be successful. Below is the presentation of key emergent themes and the study findings, from the interpretation of responses to the interview questions.

Theme 1: Barber Salon Operating Structures

Theme 1 emerged from the analysis of participant responses to Questions 1 to 10, as participants were asked to express views about the business management leadership strategies used to increase profitability and financial sustainability. The principal components of participant responses were directly related to barber shop, barber salon business, views on the employment of contracted barbers, and employed barbers. The word cloud output from the NVivo 12 software indicated that the participants comprising of successful barber salon owners favored customizing their organizations and business operating structures to the needs of the environment and clientele (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Thematic derivation from participant responses to Interview Question 1.

Study participants, responding to interview Question 1, were asked to express views regarding leadership strategies implemented in operating efficient business salon, provided different responses. C1SP1 noted, “We run the salon business like a shop with no specific leadership strategy.” C2SP3 emphasized that “It is just not my barber shop.

My name is on the shop but it is also a business in a business.” C3SP2 opposed the previously stated views, saying that “As a leader, I run this salon business by following servant leadership principles.” C2SP2 added, “They are my employees, I am the boss, and the shop owner.” C3SP3 reasoned that “I looked at the contracted barbers not as employees but as business owners.”

The analysis of the dominant and frequently expressed views from the conducted interview revealed important themes in terms of business strategies and imperatives in running salon businesses. The themes which emerged from a detailed review and analysis of participant views, reflecting the ideal and favored organizational structures and strategies in increasing business sustainability. The recurrent themes, referring to leadership strategies favored by participants are: employed barbers, barber salon business, servant leadership, contracted barbers, collaboration, and barber shop. Table 3 reflects the salon structures and dominant aspects of conversations emerged from the interviewed participant responses, which led the identification of the two types of salon operating structures: barber salon (shop), and barber salon business.

Table 3

Barber Salon Operating Structures (Interview Questions 1)

Number of Participants in the Study	Salon Operating Structures & Specific Factors	Theme Frequency from qualitative data output & analysis	% of Theme Frequency
3	Barber shop	62	17.77%
	Barber salon business	69	19.77%
	Contracted barbers	48	13.75%
	Employed barbers	47	13.47%

Note. Table summarizing the frequency of themes used by participants regarding favored salon structures.

Through the entire responses to all interview questions, participants answered questions, using specific barber and industry terms, such as barber shop, salon, business, employed, and contracted barbers. C1SP1 observed, “This is a barber shop... We have much of fun, a good time; we joke a lot, talk about sport and politics.” Ball-Berry, Dacy, and Balls (2016) found that barber shops rapidly developed into an area where Black individuals fraternize and discuss politics. C3SP3 indicated that “Contracted barbers are business owners and book spot in advance weekly.” C2SP1 noted, “We do not implement a specific leadership strategy,” which C2SP3 emphasized, stating that “As a salon owner, I consider contracted barbers as co-partners.” The analysis of participant responses revealed that in this employee partnership salon model, salon owners collaborate with contracted barbers that they consider as co-owners or partners. Table 4 portrayed deep insights concerning each type of salon operating structure, based on emergent themes, enunciated by all participants in this study.

Table 4*Barber Salon Operating Structures (Interview Question 1)*

Salon Operating Structures	Interviews Excerpts	Inferences drawn
Barber shop	<p>C3SP3: “One barber pays \$85.00 a week and the second one, \$65.00, as they respectively open five and three days weekly.” C1SP1: “I do not tell people how much my contracted barbers pay in front weekly for spots, to be working here with me.”</p> <p>C1SP1: “Contracted barber know that we all are uniform and open the shop from 7:59 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.”</p>	<p>The analysis of participant opinions showed that contracted barbers, as co-owners have to pay and book spots in advance weekly before running a business.</p>
Barber salon business	<p>C2SP2: “I have been able to build this business myself, from 1 to 21 chairs.”</p> <p>C2SP2 stressed, “I created a level of competition among employed barbers who got payed weekly... Plus, I paid 3% bonuses to top performers.”</p> <p>C3SP2: “As a leader, I try to lead like a dictator, or as a tolerant...and employed barbers do not like to leave.” C2SP2: “I follow servant leadership... I put myself in the position of those I am serving.”</p>	<p>The analysis of participant responses indicated that when running the barber salon as a business, there is a sole leader who is owner, hires and employs licensed barbers and seems to display servant leadership traits and disposition in running the business.</p>

Note. Table designed based on involved participant views, indicating favored salon operating structures in the study.

Theme 2: Salon Leadership and Managerial Strategies

Theme 2 emerged from the analysis of participant’s responses to questions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9 where participants were asked to express opinions about leadership strategies, challenges faced in running the barber salon, strategies implemented to address key challenges, ensure customer retention, and achieve business profits as outcomes and results. The essential emergent word components revealed by the participant responses were strongly relevant to servant leadership, co-partners, no specific leadership strategy, boss, leaders, and co-workers. Table 5 reflects the different leadership strategies developed by salon owners, based on the type of salon operating structure embraced. The

Table 5

Salon Leadership and Managerial Strategies (Interview Questions: 1, 2, 3, 5; 9)

Salon Operating Structures	Salon Leadership Strategies	Salon Management Strategies						Result per Salon Operating Structures
		Employees	Motivation	Communication	Price	Opening Hours	Key Challenges	
Barber salon	Co-ownership & spot booking	Contractors & co-partners	Self-motivation	Religion, family members to get along with	Standard price menu & customized pricing policy	Standard hours for all Flexible & individual hours	Lateness from contracted barbers	Four chairs with at least 200 clients, as customer base weekly.
Barber salon business	Servant leadership	Hired and employees	Bonuses & paychecks	One-one & meetings	Standard and unique pricing policy	Standard hours for all	Lateness from hired employees	21 chairs with at least 250 clients, as customer base daily, and 5,000 monthly.

Note. Table designed based on perspectives gathered from participants in the study to reveal salon leadership and managerial strategies.

Theme 3: Licensed Barber Skill Enhancement

Theme 3 represents the findings derived from participant insights shared in responding to question 7, while expressing opinions concerning training programs they respectively implement to enhance licensed barber skills, working in the salon. Table 6 below encapsulates the approaches taken by salon owners, under operating models to improve contracted and employed barber skills, to achieve business goals and results.

Table 6

Licensed Barber Skill Enhancement (Interview Question 7)

Salon Operating Structures	Types of Training Program	Interpretation & Analysis	Observations
Barber shop	C1SP1: “Licensed barbers went through 1,500 hours of training at school, so they should know everything. However, they can learn by watching me cutting hairs sometimes.” C2SP2: “Most of employed barbers know what we give, so they try to give it in the same way.” C3SP3: “I make sure all contracted barbers participate in yearly hair shows, such as Team Indiana Barbers. This is a continued education program for barbers.”	The interpretation of participant responses indicated that since licensed barbers receive training at a barbering school, they are skillful and knowledgeable. An interpretation of participant views indicated that most contracted barbers take active part in job and hair show events to increase skills.	There is no training program designed to enhance licensed barber skills within the salon. Although contracted barbers are often considered by many salon owners as co-partners, some owners request mandatory hair show participation for increasing barber skills.
Barber salon business	C3SP2: “We also have on job training. One barber may be doing a demonstration of a new way to cut hair or trim beard and the rest of employees may be watching. Nevertheless, employed barbers may participate to hair shows, which is not mandatory.”	The analysis of participant responses revealed that in the barber salon business, there is no appropriate training program, but the salon leader demonstrates a new approach of cutting hair, attempting to increase employee skills.	The demonstration of new ways of cutting hair or trimming beard, reflects on strategies used by salon owners to increase the skills of employed barbers.

Note. Table designed based on data collected from participants involved in the study.

Citing the importance of training programs, 92% of participants did not implement any training strategy for enhancing licensed barber skills, which is represented by broken and bi-directional arrows in Figure 1. Participants, however, did value licensed barber skill enhancement in running successfully the salon activities, based on the analysis of collected responses. C1SP1 stated that “Barbers should know everything” therefore, as contracted barbers are co-partners or co-owners, there is no need to implement a specific training program to increase licensed barber skills. C2SP2 emphasized, “Employed barbers may go to hair show events, which is not mandatory, as they know our way to do things here.” These insights analysis revealed that salon owners and leaders strongly believed in the mandatory 1,500 training hours to professionally trained licensed barbers to run successfully business. C3SP3 opined that “Professionalism and continued education is required for barbers, on cutting hair.” An interpretation of this response may indicate that for contracted barbers or co-partners to be effective at operating barber salon, they must mandate further education, to promote a climate of continuous improvement within the enterprise. The BLS (2018) reported that licensed barbers willing to open and run salon business need additional training in sales and marketing. The mandatory or voluntary participation of licensed barbers to hair shows may not be adequate to increase barber skills, which C2SP2 confirmed in stating “Demonstrating new ways of cutting hair or trimming beard, through on job training.” C3SP3 argued that “The hair event gives an opportunity to take additional classes to refresh knowledge and increase skills.”

Table 7 represents the summarized different strategies participants used to achieve business growth and continued success in running and operating a barber salon business. The responses and the analysis may be reflective of the ability to display business sagacity in negotiating the initial five years from start-up when many small and medium-sized enterprises exhibit a propensity to fail.

Table 7

Salon Operating Strategies Effectiveness and Sustainability (interview Questions: 3, 4, 5, 6; 10)

Salon Operating Structures	Strategies for Profitability and Sustainability			Interpretation & Analysis
	Licensed Barbers	Customers	Sustainability	
Barber shop	C1SP1: "I have contract with the hired barbers. If they cannot respect the contract they sign, then I let them go." C3SP3: "I make sure the contracted barbers follow the standard pricing policy set in the shop."	C1SP1: "The customer base grows at least from 50 clients at establishment to 200 weekly then to 800 in a month." C3SP3: "I always offer great service to guarantee retaining customers... I cut hair for entire family members from grand-daddy to grand-son." C2SP3: "The standard price of \$25.00 was essential in having grown a customer base of 250 clients."	C1SP1: "Well, we have been successful for decade now." C3SP3: "I started six years ago just with one chair. As of today, I have a total of four chair, and will be adding the fifth one in the next coming weeks."	An analysis of participant responses revealed that they measure profitability and sustainability of barber shop in terms of the growth of customer base. They also base the sustainability evaluation in years spend in the barbering industry and number of chairs adding in the shop since the establishment of barber shop business.
Barber salon business	C2SP2: "I am the business owner and the boss.... I coach my 20 employed barbers through one-o-one communication or meetings." C2SP2: "I do not have problem to separate friendship from leadership and fire employees, if necessary." C3SP3: "I try to be fair to my contracted barbers." C2SP2: "I take care of my employees by giving them what they want and nobody wants to leave here."	C2SP2: "The more employed barbers I have, the more profit I can make. The best strategy is to retain employees to ensure retaining clients." C2SP2: "It does not take long to build clientele, and we are growing bigger and bigger, as we have at least 250 customers daily; 5,000 within a week because we open 5 days."	C2SP2: "You build the business and its profitability from there." C2SP2: "It is crazy! This business is getting too narrow. I will have a to buy or open another barber salon business of at least 30 chairs to encounter this growth."	The analysis of involved participant responses revealed that salon owners retain high number of employed barbers to ensure building clientele and grow from there by increasing profits. Another analysis of participants' opinions indicated that salon leader value the salon business location in increasing profitability and financial sustainability.

Note. Table designed based on participant views, while involved in this study.

In the barbering industry, participants developed diverse strategies based on the favored management and operating structure of the salon, evolved and currently in place to seem suitable to generate business growth and profits. Two of the participants in this study mentioned operating in collaboration with contracted barbers, as they rent and book chairs in advance and per week. C1SP1 stated that “I successfully addressed the key challenges by contracts.” C3SP3 emphasized that “I look at my contracted barbers not as employees, but as business owners.” These two participants use self-motivation and charge booking fees per contracted barber who run their salon shop, as strategies to increase profitability and financial sustainability. C3SP3 mentioned, “I charge \$85 and \$65 respectively to contracted barbers who open four and three days per week.” The BLS (2018) indicated that barbers who are self-employed, often schedule flexible working hours. C1SP1 noted that “I remind them the contract they sign.” Although these participants are in co-partnership with contracted barbers, they paid great attention to how contracted barbers operate barber shop services. C1SP1 observed that “If barbers show up late and cannot respect the contract, I let them go.” C3SP3 reinforced by saying “I make sure we all stick with the pricing policy....and I guarantee whoever cut the client’s hair, the client will get great service.” C1SP1 reasoned, “My co-partners must understand that we are uniform.”

The last and third participant, as a sole boss or leader of the barber salon business, declared that “I am not sure if I have addressed the key hurdles successfully.... and things happen again” C2SP2. The participant coaches and conducts meetings to ensure employed barbers completing missions efficiently. C2SP2 added, “I treat employees as

they want to retain many as I can.” This participant believes in and valuing employees to ensure customer retention. C2SP2 said, “You can build the business by retaining barbers and sustain financially from there; it is crazy!” This participant also coaches, offers bonuses to employees to assure commitment to work, but things keep happening. C2SP2 stressed, “I have to fire two of my employees, as they keep coming late... Sometimes, I have to be a firefighter to be successful.” To achieve business success over time and through the years, C2SP2 mentioned, “My best strategy is: take great care of people, and they will take care of you.”

Study Findings Analyzed Using the Lens of Transformational Leadership

From the analysis of the interview data, the commonality of some business and management strategies formulated and implemented by participants, perhaps may indicate that there are imperatives and best practices to achieve business growth and success. The implementation of four strategies appeared to be common when looking at the commonalties in business management approaches across the data set and may be specific to the imperatives for what may be essential in the strategies to run a business in the state of Indiana. The data analysis in this study involved careful perusal of data using a process of constant comparison of responses, from which the dominant themes emerged, and represented the outcome of categorizing all the 10 open-ended interview questions into four groups.

The conceptual framework underlying this research study was the transformational leadership theory framed by Burns (1978). Transformational leaders as portrayed by Albelha, da Costa Caneiro, and de Souza Costa Neves Cavazotte (2017)

may reflect the approach and characteristics of these individuals to shape and influence organizational behaviors of the workforce towards achieving organizational goals. Using the lens of the theory of transformational leadership helped in identifying the strategies successful barber salon owners used to increase profitability and sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. The findings from the data analysis helped to appraise factors related and congruent to the theory of transformational leadership. For example, the barber salon owners demonstrating the willingness to empower employees, collaborate, train, coach, and motivate employees are consistent with the theory of transformational leadership. The essential outcome of this study was that innovative, diverse, and customized strategies are critical for the barbering business, reflecting the ability to change and innovate in an environment where critical thinking and leadership is often the differentiator of success and failure.

The finding in this study in many ways reflected that the traits and leadership styles of successful barber salon leaders appears mirrored in the essential qualities and traits of transformational leaders, as postulated in this leadership theory. The leadership attributes of charisma, individualized consideration, inspiration and intellectual stimulation components as manifested in the responses of successful barber salon leaders, depicts the important skills needed to achieve efficiency and business success in this industry and also serves to indicate the value of using an important leadership theory in a business assessment. From the data analysis, the clear implication is that diverse and innovative approaches to running a business salon aided the owners to overcome challenges, and seemed to be the hallmark of the interviewed barber salon owners in

achieving sustained business profitability, past the typically vulnerable first five years period, when many small businesses are susceptible to failure, which, for many small and medium-sized enterprises is a feat in formulating and implementing successful strategies.

Applications to Professional Practice

The barber pole portrays much worth concerning the barbering industry, as its presence serves as an alert in recognizing the origin of the profession and barbers' professionalism (NABBA, 2018). The BLS (2018) has also projected an increase of 13% in employment in the barbering industry from 2016 to 2026. Barber salon owners strive to expand businesses, increase sales, co-partners with licensed barbers, employs and retain licensed barbers, develop customer base, generate more profits, and grow businesses. Barber salons, however, as small businesses have experienced and continued to face different challenges within the barbering industry.

Arguably, some inadequacies in the governmental licensing regulations and eligibility criteria of (a) being aged of 16 years old, (b) having a high school diploma, and (c) completing 1,500 mandate training hours to becoming licensed barbers have jeopardized the entrepreneurial mindset of barbers, which causes staffing and business management challenges and adversely affects the efficient operations and progress of some barber salon businesses. The strategies to minimize or overcome these challenges may include forging co-partnership or co-ownership with licensed barbers. The strategies must include efforts to optimize staffing of contract and regular staff and increase retention and employee loyalty and motivation. Another strategy may be to establish the barber salon as with a strong business orientation, where a dedicated individual may lead

the efforts to develop leadership and managerial approaches to hire and retain licensed barbers, as skilled and committed employees in a business are known contributors to business success and can generate increased financial returns. The findings of this research study could apply to all barber shops, salons, or business owners in the United States, in the State of Indiana, and to benefit small barber salon business in the region.

Qualitative case studies often involve a small sample size hence, the study findings may not generalize to the entire population of barber salon owners in Indiana or to the country. The findings of this study, however, have shed light on key challenges faced by the barbering industry, and there are similarities in challenges across the United States, notably in the running of the salon business. The outcomes and knowledge from this study could, therefore, benefit small businesses and barber salons in geographic regions with a similar business environment to that of Indiana. The knowledge from this study would also likely hold value for small businesses that are challenged to surpass the critical threshold of the initial few years immediately after it commences operations.

Implications for Social Change

The primary objective of this research study was to explore the business management leadership strategies that successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. This research may be of significance to entrepreneurs and established barber shop owners for several reasons. The study findings may contribute to positive social change as the outcomes could lead to knowledge, perhaps useful to the welfare of the social and professional circles and groups to which these professionals belong. From

the data analysis, it appeared that these successful salon owners had developed unique business and management structures to sustain. The empowering and transformational leadership and managerial strategies were the most significant strategies used by barber salon owners to achieve business growth and profits. Some barber salon business owners can benefit from the findings and knowledge, which emerged from this study to design and implement additional training or coaching programs to strengthen the skills of licensed and barbers in employment. Salon businesses can increase the service quality offered to customers while striving to continuously innovate and surpass customer and marketplace expectations, which would likely aid in achieving revenues generation and an increase in clientele. Success for barber salons could manifest with strategies to increase employee motivation, reduce turn-over and job dissatisfaction by ensuring fair and competitive salaries and wages, on par with other professions for employed barbers. A satisfied and financially secure workforce has a positive impact on society bodes well for the empowerment of the business and professional communities to which these individuals belong.

Linnan, D'Angelo, and Harrington (2014) recognized barbershops as a vital element in the community, and important contributors to social, political, and economic development. The outcomes and discoveries of this study may contribute to the social change as sustainable barber salon business owners are crucial to job creation, innovation, and economic development in the United States. Balls-Berry et al. (2016) stated that barbering represents a profession, that is vital to the human community. The BLS (2018) advised that licensed barbers, willing to open and manage salon businesses,

would benefit by taking additional educational courses and training in sales and marketing. The licensed barber skills improvement could possibly lead to new job creation opportunities, and increase prosperity for barbers, and society. Successful barber salon businesses could potentially replicate businesses using the structures, models, and strategies suggested by the interviewed participants in this study, to other locations in the United States, which may aid in growing and developing new and existing business to be profitable ventures, and possibly into chains and franchises as well.

Recommendations for Action

The findings from this study may serve to highlight the challenges encountered by barber salons, and also provide insights into the necessary and important experiences, expertise, and opportunities for business owners in Indiana. Barber shop and barber salon business owners have shared opinions in this study about current challenges, which includes strategies on: (a) increasing profitability, (b) achieving financial sustainability, (c) overcoming licensed barbers' lateness, and (d) implementing training programs to improve the skills of employed or contracted barbers. The barber salon business owners interviewed in this study presented eloquently, the innovative and creative strategies needed to surmount the challenges experienced in the running of businesses in Indiana. The following recommendations derived from the analysis of the themes, which emerged from the responses of participants to the 10 open-ended interview questions, may aid advance the aspirations of barber shop, barber salon business owners seeking the continuous quest to achieve business growth and sustainability.

The first recommendation is that salon owners need to consider partnering or co-ownership within the barbering industry. Through these partnerships or co-ownerships, participants have encountered some challenges of the issues related to licensed barber employee punctuality and attendance, possibly stemming from the low motivation and wages. Successful salon businesses should consider expansion strategies, including adding more locations and a franchising operating model. These strategies would likely increase the commitment of licensed barbers who are current employees, and also new hires to becoming a branch owner or leader, and pay franchising royalties and fees, as would be determined in different structures and/or ownership models.

The second recommendation is that barber salons must shed the servant leader mindset and strive to develop transformational leadership qualities, retaining the service quality disposition of the former style. A professional and managerial approach within the enterprise will help to avoid employees taking advantage of the leader's friendship. In developing transformational leadership skills and characteristics, barber salon business leaders may develop the abilities to inspire, motivate, and stimulate employed barbers. Transformational leaders are role models, and in this setting would require the business manager and owner to playing a role model of salon leader, to foster a culture of engagement and leadership to spur employees to develop business and technical skills. Vatankhah et al. (2017) suggested organizational managers must demonstrate the leadership to inspire and motivate employees in achieving business and productivity goals.

The third recommendation is that barber shop or barber salon business owners need to implement specific and periodic training and coaching programs, through which they could improve the skills of contracted and employed barber skills related to customer service and the art of haircutting and grooming. This training program must include developing entrepreneurship knowledge to ensure developing the technical abilities and managerial and for-profit mindset of licensed barbers in employment. Church, Rotolo, Ginther, and Levine (2015) opined that it is possible to craft a single process or program to develop the talent and potential of employees.

The fourth recommendation is that barber salon business owners need to run the salon routinely activities as a business enterprise, similar to other industries and businesses, which have achieved success, by developing management and operating structure that is suitable to the business, in its operating sphere. Under this structure, leaders would be able to include different divisions of marketing, communication, finances, human resources, and hire licensed barber as employees to achieve the mission and purpose of the enterprise with efficiency in operations. The Internal Revenue Service (2018) has noted that small businesses, such as barber salons can choose different form of business structures best suited, from among the options of sole proprietorship, partnerships, different types of corporations, and a limited liability company.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore and identify the strategies of successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. The sample for this

study was purposively drawn from the population of successful barber salon owners in the state of Indiana. Participants in this study were effective barber salon owners who run a business registered with the PLA, and operate businesses in the state of Indiana. The study participation criteria required individuals to have demonstrated business longevity and successful operations exceeding 5 years consecutively, thereby displaying the adaptive management and resourceful financial.

The first recommendation could be to replicate this study to include barber salon owners in other states within the United States, such as Illinois, New York, Florida, California, and other states. Participants in these states may have additional insights, and the experiences may be unique and different. The second recommendation may be to replicate this research study to cover small business owners in different facets of the barbering industry, such as barber schools and cosmetology businesses and beauty schools.

The results of this study indicated that all participants had identified employee punctuality as one of major challenges faced in the barbering industry. The third recommendation is to replicate this study to focus only on appropriate strategies implemented to overcome employee punctuality issues and the associate workforce management and staffing challenges, as are crucial to achieving the sustainability of barber salon businesses. The findings from this study also showed that some salon owners contracted barbers, in co-ownership as a survivalist and innovative approach to derive from the strengths associated with a collaborative business model. The fourth recommendation, therefore, is to possibly undertake a study and concentrate only on

exploring the effectiveness of this partnership in increasing image, financial sustainability of both contractor salon owner, and the co-partner who may be a contracted barber.

Another recommendation is to conduct a study, seeking to understand the entrepreneurship mindset, skills, and characteristics of co-partners.

The participants in this study also shared that they embraced different operating business models, approaches, and structures to achieve and increase profitability and sustainability. The sixth recommendation is to replicate and undertake a study to include both operation business models to find out which one is more efficient structure for sustaining the barbering business financially. Participants in this study suggested the importance for contracted or employed barbers to voluntarily or compulsorily attend hair events or shows, citing the priceless learning opportunities in business and skill development. The seventh recommendation is to replicate this study to ascertain how the strategies formulated by salon owner and leader are effective in enhancing barber skills and increasing managerial knowledge and aptitude in operating a successful business enterprise. The third participant in this study observed that when establishing a barber salon business, the employment of licensed barbers, and exemplifying servant leadership aided in contributing to business success. The eighth recommendation is to complete a comparative analysis using the vehicle of an exploratory research study, using the servant leadership and the transformational leadership theoretical underpinnings respectively, to determine the most appropriate business management leadership strategy and characteristics to run barber salon business efficiently.

Reflections

A decade ago, the decision to move to the United States, after resigning from the job position of Marketing Manager for a private business company, a position held for 12 consecutive years, became true. Moving to the United States, made possible the improvement of my vision about how to successfully establish and run a modern barber salon business. The endeavor, therefore, to further my education was to enroll at Indiana Wesleyan University in January 2012, which resulted in earning a Master degree in Applied Management in 2014.

When I first moved to the United States, I did not initially imagine or consider pursuing a doctoral degree. The primary goals and objectives were to improve my business knowledge with a Master's degree to efficiently run a modern barbering company, which would be established in Benin, Africa, with potential expansion into some neighboring counties. Professors were impressed by the capstone's topic "Barbering Industry Assessment" presented by me, a critical component in obtaining my Master degree, and encouraged me to enroll in the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program. The appreciation and acceptance of the idea of pursuing my education at the doctoral level have led my enrollment in the DBA program, International Business at Walden University three months after graduating for my Master degree.

During my first residency at Walden University in 2015 in Indianapolis, faculty members informed doctoral scholars that the doctoral study journey could last eight years. However, this study journey could be ended earlier if I worked hard. The decision made to have my doctoral study accomplished within three years, and which is close

enough to happen, could be considered likely a success. Such success could never be possible without the expertise of my Committee members, precisely Dr. Lionel S. de Souza. My Chair, Dr. Lionel S. de Souza, was a compassionate mentor, father, and professor who gave me a definite direction to follow. Dr. de Souza also provided me with continuous supports, prompt feedbacks, and advice that were very useful in ending, as quickly as possible, this journey of study at Walden University. My study journey at Walden University was an overall excellent experience, which helped improve my business background considerably. I was able to understand how to select and apply economic theories and business management real-world practices and principles in business operations, and to also assess the potential impact on the social environment positively, while the knowledge acquired advanced the business-critical thinking and analytical skills to understand the imperatives and strategies of successful and viable business operations.

Along with pursuing my education at Walden University as a full-time student, I attended a barber school in Indiana to get trained and become a licensed barber and instructor. Different trips made to Europe, Africa, and within the United States, looking for partnerships, participating in hair shows or events, were useful in discovering how some successful barber salon business owners operate around the globe. The discoveries of these trips have convinced me that the barbering industry in the United States, Europe, and Africa is potentially a huge marketing opportunity, and also that there is an urgent need of the improvement of business skills of licensed and employed barbers, on which

hinges the quest of leaders and owners in this business to increase salon growth and business prosperity.

The purpose of conducting this research study was the passion and love for embracing my ambition and career path in establishing modern barber businesses around the globe. An exploration of the existing literature on sustainability strategies of barber salons in the United States yielded quite a few findings and results. The impetus for completing this research study was a desire to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. The ardent desire and aim in this contribution are that the findings and discoveries may yield knowledge and substantial value to aspire, and challenge established barber salon owners to succeed. It is also hoped that in some ways, the efforts and findings from this study may also bridge the current dearth of knowledge about the barbering industry in contemporary literature, was also the rationale. The outcomes of this research study may also be of considerable value for barber salon owners in the United States, Europe, and Africa, struggling to achieve or increase profitability and financial sustainability. The use of strategies, such as data and methodological triangulation, member-checking, invoking and implementing the Belmont Report (BR) ethical principles, and the adherence of participants to the interview protocol, has been critical in completing a reliable study. The aim in this study was to achieve trustworthiness through a focus on achieving dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability considered the quantitative analogues of reliability, internal and external validity/generalizability, and objectivity respectively (De Oliveira Menezes & Da Cunha, 2016; Hays et al., 2016).

All three barber salon owners participating in the study, were accommodating, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and answered the interview questions passionately, reasonably, and honestly. The participants welcomed the research study initiative while noting that the research was timely, as there was an urgent need to solve the dilemma of eligibility criteria in licensing of barbers and in enrolling in the barbering school across the United States. Through responses provided by all participants, I discovered new data on the critical and essential success aspects for running a successful barber salon business. Participants revealed that the success, within the barbering industry, requires crucial factors, such as enthusiasm and passion, engagement, business focus, professional training; and such management and business skills could lead to meeting customer expectations, and ensuring the profitability and financial sustainability goals of a business are met. Another takeaway was that employed barbers, and the owner needs to implement and observe quality and safety policies continuously to ensure repeat customers, enlarge and exploit the customer base profitably.

The completion of this study convinced me about the struggles of some barber salon owners and ultimately challenged me to consider entering the barbering industry by establishing a personal barber salon enterprise. It was also surprising to hear from all participants that some salon owners lack the desire and foresight in implementing appropriate training or coaching programs and the value in employed barbers participating in hair shows or by demonstrating new ways of cutting hair to improve skills. The low level of business, or entrepreneurship education mandated in barber licensing eligibility criteria, the inadequate number of hours to train licensed barbers

professionally, combined with the problems associated with regulations, appeared to be important causes as determined in this study to adversely affect the profitability and sustainability of some barber salons within the United States.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The purpose of this proposed qualitative multiple case study was to explore and identify the strategies that successful barber salon owners use to increase profitability and financial sustainability beyond the first 5 years from business establishment. The theory of transformational leadership underpinned the study and served as the conceptual framework for this study. Three successful barber salon owners, 25 years and older, who have registered a barber salon business under the PLA, with operations in the state of Indiana for at least 5 consecutive years, participated in this research study. The method used to collect primary data entailed using face-to-face semistructured interviews, to record, transcribe, and analyze verbatim transcriptions through the Qualitative Research Software NVivo 12. The analysis of data resulted in the emergence of four themes: (a) salon operating business structures, (b) salon leadership and managerial strategies, (c) licensed barber skills enhancement, and (d) salon operating strategies effectiveness and sustainability.

The findings and knowledge from this research study may benefit salon business owners in the state of Indiana in finding and applying new strategies, to sustaining the barbering business. Other researchers may further replicate the study in different states or cities and generate new knowledge that could also significantly apply to other small business activities or industries. The findings of this study may contribute to better

business practices and influence positive social change. Sustainable businesses can provide competitive salaries and bonuses payment to employees, thereby improving and elevating the standard and quality of life for small business owners and employees, thereby contributing to the economic and social welfare of the community.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What leadership strategies serve you in running your barber salon efficiently?
2. What major challenges did you face in implementing leadership strategies for running the barber salon services?
3. How did you successfully address the key challenges to implement management and leadership strategies in running the salon?
4. How did you assess the effectiveness of your strategies for increasing the profitability of your barber salon?
5. What business strategies do you use to ensure retention of customers for your barber salon?
6. How effective are the business strategies implemented in increasing your barber salon financial sustainability during the last 5 years?
7. What training programs have you implemented for enhancing barber skills in the salon?
8. How would you describe your communications strategies with licensed barbers working in the establishment?
9. What monetary or other incentives do you use to motivate employees to achieve results?
10. What business management leadership strategies have we not covered, which you may want to discuss?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

- A- Self-introduction to each and all participants.
- B- Explain the consent form; address all questions and concerns of participant(s).
- C- Obtain a signed copy of consent form from participants, through e-mail and prior to the interview.
- D- Tell participant and turn on recording device.
- E- Follow procedure to introduce participant(s) with coded identification.
- F- Begin interview by asking questions, in order from the first to the final one.
- G- Follow up with additional questions if necessary.
- H- End interview session and discuss member checking with participant(s).
- I- Be thankful to the participant(s) for input in the study. Repeat contact numbers for further questions and concerns from participants.
- J- End of the protocol.