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Job Satisfaction Strategies to Improve Performance of Small Businesses

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Job Satisfaction Strategies to Improve Performance of Small Businesses

by

Akram Abubaha

MBA, Birzeit University, 2004

BS, Birzeit University, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April 2019

Abstract

Small business leaders continually face challenges due to limited resources and lack of employees' engagement. Only 78% of new small businesses survive 1 year after establishment, and half of those fail within the next 4 years. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies small business leaders used to increase employees' overall job satisfaction in Alberta, Canada. The conceptual framework for the study was transformational leadership theory. The targeted population was 10 purposefully sampled leaders of small businesses from different industries located in Alberta. Member checking and methodological triangulation were used to validate the data gathered through face-to-face semistructured interviews, a review of organizational policy documents, yearly reports, websites, and company marketing brochures. Data were analyzed using inductive coding of phrases and word frequency searches. Using thematic analysis, 3 themes emerged: the importance of supportive leadership that addressed individualized needs, necessity of financial rewards, and prominence of nonfinancial rewards to improve job satisfaction. The implications of this study for positive social change include providing leaders of small businesses with strategies that might enforce the sense of social responsibility and induce them to give back to the community by training new and existing employees and supporting communities through fostering self-development and self-support along with engendering pride in creativity.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my beloved wife, Rania Awadallah, who provided me with great support, passion, and great understanding throughout the doctoral journey. I am so lucky to have you in my life. Also, I dedicate this work to my children, Malik, Omar, Mahmoud, and my beautiful angel, Malak. I hope that I have provided an example of the persistence, hard work, inspiration, and dedication needed to accomplish your goals and dreams in future. I thank God that I have this close family who understood my determination to achieve this dream and become a doctor.

Acknowledgments

I thank God for giving me patience through this process to complete my study and by surrounding me with great people. I want to thank my wife and children for their support during the hard time, and apologize if I had to take from family time to complete my study. My committee members, thank you is not enough for all guidance and support during this journey. To my chair, Dr. Carol-Anne Faint, you are the best role model I have ever seen. Your kindness, respect, engagement, motivation, and feedback make things possible in this study. To my second committee member, Dr. Lisa Cave, thank you for the immense support, critical thinking, and additional perspective on my work. To the University Research Reviewer, Dr. Rocky Dwyer, thank you for behind the scenes efforts in ensuring my research study complied with the requirements of the university and the research community as a whole. To Walden University Writing Centre and specially Dr. Travis Sands, many thanks for editing my doctoral study. Without these individuals, and various other professors and scholars, this journey would have been far more difficult and far less rewarding. The learning experience has been profound, and has opening my mind to the endless possibilities ahead of me. Thank you to soccer parents and coaches who spent time taking care and coaching my boys. Thank you to my friends and my family especially my mom, my dad who is my role model and inspiring person, brothers, and sisters for asking about my progress all the time. Special thanks from my deep heart to my beloved brother, Dr. Osama Abubaha for being one of the most motivators in my life to achieve higher education and success. Also, my sincere thanks extended to my brothers Khaled and Ala'. And finally, to my sister Khawla, may your soul rest in peace.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Small businesses are key contributors to employment, income, and quality of life in communities (Alberta Small Business Profile [ASBP], 2014). Small businesses are not only surviving, but are also thriving, and employee engagement is becoming vital to business success. Between 2012 and 2013, over 10,000 small business owners have registered to operate in Alberta's business landscape (ASBP, 2014). Job satisfaction is a key factor in employee engagement and will help in achieving small businesses' organizational objectives. Antecedents of work satisfaction and rewards influence the level of employee engagement (Sugandini, El Qadri, Kustyadji, & Muafi, 2018). Meanwhile, highly engaged employees may improve organizational commitment and leader member exchange (LMX).

Employees' work performance deteriorates when they do not feel satisfied with their jobs. Mendis (2017) emphasized the importance of having satisfied employees to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Mendis (2017) also indicated that job satisfaction could impact employee job performance. Every person is unique and might expect a different outcome from the job; however, there are some job satisfaction factors that psychologists usually agree will improve employee satisfaction (Lane, Alino, & Schneider, 2017). I investigated job satisfaction as a two-way exchange process between employers and employees. The more satisfied employees are with their jobs, the more likely their employers will achieve organizational objectives.

Background of the Problem

Small business leaders must continually make critical decisions with limited resources to ensure their organizations are capable of competing against large corporations. For example, efficient use their limited resources might enhance their ability to increase their free cash to maintain a sustainable and healthy corporate structure at all times to maintain satisfied employees. Many small business leaders lack strategies to increase job satisfaction and maintain effective communication between leaders and followers. Exploring qualitative characteristics and strategies for fostering and sustaining job satisfaction promotes a more nuanced and potentially useful understanding of the relationship between satisfaction and work outcomes (Kovacs, Stiglbauer, Batinic, & Gnambs, 2017). The findings from this study may enhance small business leaders' ability to explore strategies that might increase job satisfaction. There is a potential link between job satisfaction and organizational performance (Kovacs et al., 2017). Findings might be of value in drafting new leadership directions for small business leaders looking to ensure effective implementation of job satisfaction strategies that may improve employee retention, business profitability, and growth. According to Graves and Luciano (2013), enhancing leaders' ability to explore job satisfaction strategies may create value for the small business sector. Graves and Luciano (2013) claimed that in addition to having a significant impact on employees' performance, job satisfaction affects the relationship between employees and their organizations. A key factor in this relationship is employees' satisfaction to perform effectively.

Problem Statement

Only 78% of new businesses survive after 1 year of establishment, and half of those that remain fail within the next 4 years for many reasons including poor employee satisfaction (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2016). According to Roche, Duffield, Homer, Buchan, and Dimitrelis (2015) employee dissatisfaction results in a high turnover ratio, with replacement costs ranging from $17,728 to $104,686 per full time employee (FTE). The general business problem is that small business leaders struggle to survive over 5 years due to several financial, managerial, customer, and employee challenges, which may have a direct impact on production profit. The specific business problem is that some small business leaders lack strategies to increase the overall job satisfaction of their employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies small business leaders use to increase employees' overall job satisfaction. The targeted population were small business leaders working in 10 different industries in Alberta, Canada, which is representative of industries in many nearby cities in Alberta such as Edmonton, Leduc, St. Albert, Calgary, Red Deer, Cold Lake, Hinton, and Lloydminster. The implications for positive social change include providing small business leaders with practical strategies to (a) increase employee job satisfaction, (b) become more efficient at improving internal processes, and consequently (c) overcome some of the challenges presented by large competitors. Providing small business leaders with new strategies might enforce the sense of social responsibility in giving back to the community through

training new graduates and existing employees, and providing a way to support communities by fostering self-development and self-support along with engendering pride in creativity.

Nature of the Study

I chose a qualitative methodology for this study. Qualitative research is primarily exploratory to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. The qualitative method can provide insights into a problem or assist in developing ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). Therefore, the qualitative method was appropriate for this study. Conversely, researchers use quantitative inquiry to examine variables' relationships or differences and use estimated relationships to make predictions (Saunders et al., 2015). According to Frels and Onwuegbuzie (2013), quantitative research can answer questions about the relationships or differences among variables in the form of correlation or comparisons. Correlational analysis, which identifies the relationships between independent and dependent variables, was not my intent in this study. A mixed method design includes the attributes of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Saunders et al., 2015), making a mixed method inappropriate for this study.

I used a multiple case study design. Saunders et al. (2015) recommended using a case study when the research focus is on how and why to observe a behavior and further understand a given phenomenon. Other designs, such as grounded theory, ethnography, narrative research, historical research, and phenomenology were not the best fit for this study. Anthropologists use ethnography to explore cultures (Saunders et al., 2015). The

primary data collection method is observation over an extended period, which was not an available option for this study. Researchers use grounded theory to explore potential theories for explaining a specific phenomenon and not individual behaviors (Saunders et al., 2015). The theory is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomena, which made grounded theory inappropriate for this study. Scholars use phenomenology to identify events and focus on subjective experiences in order to understand the structure of those lived experiences (Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers use phenomenology to describe, in depth, the meaning participants' attribute to experiencing phenomena that have occurred, which was not my intention in this study (Saunders et al., 2015).

Research Question

What strategies do small business leaders use to increase employees' overall job satisfaction?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you developed and implemented to increase your employees' job satisfaction?

2. How did you assess the effectiveness of your strategies for improving employees' job satisfaction?

3. How do you reward your experienced and non-experienced employees?

4. In what ways do you provide individualized feedback to your employees?

5. As a leader, when and how many times a manager should communicate and provide a direct and clear information to employees about effectiveness of task performance?

6. How would task varieties impact employee job satisfaction?

7. In what ways do you explore if job satisfaction affect the employees' tendency to improve their performance?

Follow-On Questions

1. Based on the strategies you indicated in Interview Question 1; did you implement a flexible rewarding system based on specific individual needs and if yes, have you observed if implementing such flexible reward system could impact job satisfaction?

2. Based upon the feedback experience you mentioned in Interview Question 4, in what ways, if any, do leadership skills assist in guiding employees and creating the right working conditions?

Conceptual Framework

In this qualitative case study, I used transformational leadership as the conceptual framework. Burns (1978) developed the transformational leadership framework through studying political leadership. Transformational leadership theorists have explained how leadership is based on the premise that leaders can inspire followers to change their expectations, perceptions, and motivations when working toward a common goal. Bass (1985) extended Burn's (1978) work and affirmed that authentic transformational leadership is grounded in moral foundations that are based on four fundamental elements

(idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) and three moral aspects (the moral character of the leader, the ethical values embedded in the leader's vision, and the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue). I used each of these fundamental elements and moral aspects to address small business leaders lack the necessary strategies to increase overall employees job satisfaction.

According to Effelsberg, Solga, and Gurt (2014), Hernandez and Long (2014), and Tourish (2014), transformational leaders have various essential characteristics to manage subordinates and sustain the growth of small businesses. For example, transformational leaders inspire employees to make personal sacrifices to achieve higher team goals (Chan & Mak, 2014; Groves, 2014); accordingly, small business leaders with the transformational approach to leadership might lead organizations effectively, therefore mitigating small business failures and sustaining small business growth.

Operational Definitions

For the purposes of this research, I used the following definitions of significant terms.

Authentic leadership: An interpersonal process created by both leaders and followers that have a positive impact on building a healthy work environment and will develop leader-follower relationships (Belias & Koustelios, 2015)

Authoritarian or directive leadership: A leadership behavior in which leaders assert absolute authority, exercise control over subordinates, and demand unquestioning obedience in how and when to complete tasks (Northouse, 2016).

Contingent reward: A reward offered by leaders in return for employees fulfilling clearly posted and mutually agreed-upon objectives that he or she has provided them with sufficient resources to accomplish (Northouse, 2016).

Idealized influence (attribute): The aspect of a leader's personality that indicates whether an individual is powerful and confident and is perceived as concentrating on higher order ideals and principles (Northouse, 2016).

Idealized influence (behavior): The behavior of a leader that he or she practices under the influence of principles, attitudes, and a sense of purpose (Northouse, 2016).

Individualized considerations: A leadership behavior that leaders adopt when they have a priority to earn the loyal support of coworkers (Northouse, 2016).

Inspirational motivation: A leadership practice that involves encouraging workers by setting ambitious objectives for them and expressing faith in their ability to attain the objectives (Northouse, 2016; Svanberg, Öhman, & Neidermeyer, 2017).

Intellectual stimulation: The projection of questions or ideas by a leader to provoke creative thinking among workers as a means for overcoming difficulties in achieving assigned objectives (Halliru, 2016; Northouse, 2016; Svanberg et al., 2017).

Participative leadership: A hallmark of what is often termed organizational democracy in which leaders seek followers' inputs and consult with them on about how the organization should proceed (Northouse, 2016).

Transformational leadership: The leadership style that influences the level of employees' engagement at work and positions the leader as a mediator in creating organizational knowledge (Northouse, 2016; Svanberg et al., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are facts that are not yet verifiable, but which guarantee the validity of the findings (Bernard, 2013; Yin, 2018). I made four assumptions when developing this study. First, I assumed the selected small business leaders in this study were representative of the small business sector in the province of Alberta. Second, I assumed that the demographic characteristics of the sample population of leaders were representative of the general population of the small business sector in Alberta. Third, I assumed the leaders of the organizations would respond to the interview questions accurately and honestly. Fourth, I assumed participants would have sufficient knowledge of effective strategies to increase overall employee job satisfaction.

Limitations

Limitations are the potential weaknesses of the study that, if appropriately addressed, will not undermine the study (Bernard, 2013; Yin, 2018). The two limitations of my study are the non-generalizability of the results, and the possibility that participants may have been reluctant to openly share information.

Delimitations

The delimitations of a study are factors that define the scope or boundaries selected by the researcher (Bernard, 2013; Yin, 2018). My multiple case study sample included leaders from 10 small business organizations operating in the province of Alberta.

Significance of the Study

This study's findings could be of value to small businesses, as the findings might fill the gap in understanding strategies to increase job satisfaction. Frequently, small businesses undergo significant development and have had to implement essential changes to keep up with international development and to address emerging challenges. Cheng (2015) ranked employee satisfaction level, along with degree of educational attainment and economic growth, as important factors in determining a nation's economic success. Omoijiade (2015) stated that leadership styles that do not address job satisfaction strategies could trigger ineffective and inefficient business performance in organizations. The information from this study might help small business leaders implement job satisfaction strategies in their organizations, which could be integral in sustaining the growth of small business in the province of Alberta.

Contribution to Business Practice

According to Graves and Luciano (2013), enhancing leaders' abilities to implement job satisfaction strategies may contribute to creating more value in the small business sector. Graves and Luciano claimed that in addition to having a significant impact on employees' performance, job satisfaction affects the relationship between employees and their organizations. A key factor in this relationship is employees' motivation to perform effectively. Cheng (2015) identified that job satisfaction is something that leaders generally recognize but unfortunately do not often address in practice. Results from this study can serve as recommendations about suitable job satisfaction strategies based on up-to-date information collected from small business

leaders representing the small business sector in the province of Alberta. The study results can also provide insights on how small business leaders can leverage job satisfaction strategies in small businesses to increase long-run profitability, retain employees, improve communication, and increase growth.

Implications for Social Change

Some small business leaders engage with external support agencies for assistance to help them survive, thus enabling the leaders to contribute toward a stable and sustainable social and economic community environment. Exploring small business leaders' practices and suggesting solutions might have significant positive social change such as improved health and quality of life for employees. Small business leaders may use the findings from this study to improve both employee and business performance to benefit their communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Researchers conduct literature reviews to draft a framework of data about a specific topic and to identify a gap in the literature that deserves further study (Gaur & Kumar, 2018). In the literature review, I sought to better understand the lack of job satisfaction strategies in the small business sector and how leaders can increase job satisfaction in organizations. The literature review included searches of various journal databases, the Walden University library, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and other online sources. The subject areas in which I searched for literature include business, management, accounting, organizational behavior, and psychology. The literature review consisted of assessing peer-reviewed articles, at lease 85% of which were published

between 2015 and 2019. The main search keywords that I used include *employee*

satisfaction, small business, motivation, organizational behavior, transformational

leadership, leadership and job satisfaction, management style in small business sector,

replacement cost, and *performance*. After evaluating over 400 references, I found 190

references suitable for use in this study; 162, or 85.26%, of these were peer-reviewed.

The percentage of references not older than 5 years from my anticipated graduation date

in 2019 is 85.78%.

To explore the job satisfaction strategies that small businesses leaders use in

Alberta, Canada, I conducted a review of the literature. This section includes (a) a brief

overview of the citations used in the study, (b) historical information about the small

business sector in Alberta and Canada in general, (c) a summary that substantiates the

rationale and theoretical framework for the study, (d) a brief discussion of the research

topic, and (e) comparison and contrast of different scholarly points of view on the

subject. I also present how this study relates to previous research and findings.

Transformational Leadership Theory

After reviewing several theories that could support the study, the transformational

leadership (TL) conceptual framework stood out for this study. Burns (1978) developed

the TL framework through studying political leadership. TL theorists have explained how

leadership is based on the premise that leaders can inspire followers to change their

expectations, perceptions, and motivations when working toward a common goal (Burns,

1978). Bass (1985) extended Burn's (1978) work and affirmed that authentic

transformational leadership is grounded in moral foundations that are based on four

fundamental elements (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) and three moral aspects (the moral character of the leader, the ethical values embedded in the leader's vision, and the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue). I used each of these fundamental elements and moral aspects to address small business leaders lack the necessary strategies to increase overall employees job satisfaction.

Bass (1985) proposed that TL is comprised of charismatic behaviors such as role modeling, risk sharing, and attributed charisma. In addition, TL includes intellectual stimulation, which encourages creativity and change in followers. It also entails the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits followers' ideas. Finally, individualized consideration involves leaders paying attention to each follower's needs and wants by mentoring, supporting, encouraging, and coaching followers to use their competence. By using the elements of TL, leaders might better align the value systems of leaders and followers, thus facilitating a condition where the leader and followers motivate each other to achieve the organizational goals (Jalal et al., 2012).

According to Effelsberg et al. (2014), Hernandez and Long (2014), and Tourish (2014), transformational leaders have various essential characteristics they use to manage subordinates and sustain the growth of small businesses. Organizational leaders must understand the importance of the necessary changes from the current lifestyle to a potential culture that promotes productivity, performance, and increases job satisfaction

(Baro, Bosah, & Obi, 2017). Flexibility to change, openness to technology, motivating, and promoting trust among team members are among the vital leadership tasks and skills needed for leaders to build a healthy and sustainable corporate culture (Belias & Koustelios, 2015). TL tasks that use the principles of social change are essential for sustainable development, creating a healthy corporate culture that encourages engagement, improves performance, and keeps employees satisfied (Chang, 2017; Hasmin, 2017; Rusert, 2015).

Transformational leaders can affect the level of employees' engagement at work, and this same degree of engagement plays as a mediator in creating organizational knowledge (Jena, Pradhan, & Panigrahy, 2017). However, directive or authoritarian leaders assert absolute authority, exercise control over subordinates, and demand unquestioning obedience. Results from previous scholars' work has proven that directive leadership has had a negative impact on job satisfaction (Rabbani, Imran, Shamoon, & Kamal, 2017). To enhance organizational culture and achieve a competitive advantage, small business leaders must develop a team-based organization (Northouse, 2016). Asmawi (2017) and Schutz (2014) contended that creating a culture of empowerment where all employees at different levels participate and are involve in best practices to serve the customer is vital in motivating employees to keep them satisfied. Leaders can influence their subordinates and empower them. This kind of empowerment is achievable through delegative leadership and teamwork in which leaders assign considerable responsibility for decision making to lower-level managers and employees (Ahmad &

Manzoor, 2017). Teamwork and employee empowerment have significant positive effects on employee performance (Ahmad & Manzoor, 2017).

Abouraia and Othman (2017), and Sayadi (2016) found that transformational and transactional leadership is positively related to the effectiveness of the leader, the subordinate's effort, job satisfaction, and the subordinate's organizational commitment. Sayadi (2016) collected a sample that consisted of 387 teachers from 42 schools and indicated that charismatic leadership was a strong predictor of job satisfaction and value commitment, and that laissez-faire leadership was a strong negative predictor of intent to stay. Chordiya, Sabharwal, and Goodman (2017) found that job satisfaction has a significant positive impact on affective organizational commitment.

Huang (2015) explored four leadership styles of telling, selling, participating, and authorizing in the situational leader model. Huang indicated that leadership style plays a vital role in optimizing the development level of employees and determining the suitable job objectives, aspiration skills, working experiences, communication, feedback, and self-evaluation. Malik, Javed, and Hassan (2017) indicated that leadership, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and trust have become vital processes for businesses. Malik et al. explored the impact of components pertaining to TL by investigating dilemmas as the employees' satisfaction and commitment. They found a positive correlation between TL and organizational commitment (Mesu, Sanders, & Riemsdijk, 2015). Mahenthiran (2017) found that TL is positively related with commitment and performance, where organizational commitment mediates the relationship between TL and job performance. According to Pabst, Casas, and Chinta (2016), the main reasons for the failure of

enterprise resource planning (ERP) in small and medium businesses are the lack of organizational commitment and leadership support. In explanatory research to determine the mediating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among small business employees, Abdullah, Shamsuddin, and Wahab (2015) found that organizational culture mediates the effect of TL on organizational commitment among small business employees**.**

Leadership style is a key factor in developing organizational learning processes and achieving innovation, high performance, and competitiveness (Vargas, 2015). Researchers perceive TL as the most useful leadership characteristic in predicting employees' satisfaction with their superior (Vargas, 2015). Belias and Koustelios (2015) studied the relationship between Greek Banks' leadership style, employee's job satisfaction, and organizational culture. They confirmed previous findings that job satisfaction is quite high among Greek bank employees, particularly due to the good relationships between immediate superiors and employees. Hutchinson (2017) indicated that authentic leadership helps build a healthy work environment by contributing to the development of empowering leader-follower relationships. Authentic leadership significantly and positively influences staff empowerment, which undoubtedly motivates employees and increases job satisfaction and productivity (Hutchinson, 2017; Lien, 2017).

According to Hutchinson (2017), transformational leaders have various essential characteristics to manage subordinates, sustain the growth of small businesses, and

improve organizational and economic impact. Hutchinson termed these essential characteristics *X-factors*, which are vital in contributing to the sustainable development of small business. For example, transformational leaders who have personal integrity inspire employees to make personal sacrifices to achieve higher team goals (Diliani, 2016); accordingly, small business leaders with the transformational approach to leadership might lead organizations effectively, therefore mitigating small business failures, sustaining small business growth, increasing performance, and maximizing the value to stakeholders.

Alternative Theories

The other two main job satisfaction theories are Herzberg's (1959) theory and value theory (Baro et al., 2017). Baro et al. (2017) indicated that in the late 1950s, Frederick Herzberg, considered by many to be a pioneer in motivation theory, interviewed a group of employees to find out what made them satisfied or dissatisfied on the job. He asked the employees essentially two sets of questions: When you feel good about your job, why did you feel that way? And, When you feel bad about your job, why did you feel that way?

From these interviews, Herzberg developed his theory that there are two dimensions to job satisfaction, motivators and hygiene factors (Baro et al., 2017). Herzberg (1959) identified a set of hygiene factors that include the employees' environment such as organization policies, working conditions, and supervision. He also defined motivators such as achievement, recognition, work responsibility, and advancement to create satisfaction by fulfilling individuals' needs for meaning and

personal growth. Therefore, Herzberg recommended addressing the hygiene factors first

so that the motivators can be used to promote job satisfaction and encourage

production. Hygiene issues cannot motivate employees but can minimize dissatisfaction,

if handled correctly (Baro et al., 2017). However, if leaders do not address the hygiene

issues first, the leaders will not be able to create a suitable environment in which

employee satisfaction and motivation are even possible. Herzberg concluded that

satisfying and dissatisfying factors at work fall at opposite ends of the same continuum;

the absence of negatively valued characteristics in a job will lead to job satisfaction and

that in the same manner, the lack of positively valued traits will lead to dissatisfaction.

Despite Herzberg presenting considerable empirical evidence to confirm the motivation-

hygiene theory, there is some methodological criticism of his work. Also, Herzberg's

theory contains the relatively explicit assumption that happy and satisfied workers

produce more, even though this might not be the case. Hence, the theory was not suitable

for my study.

According to Gerstein, Hertz, and Friedman (2016), the second important theory

of job satisfaction is the value theory developed by Atkinson in the 1950s and 1960s

(Gerstein et al., 2016). The authors' conceptualization claim that job satisfaction exists to

the extent that the job outcomes (rewards) an individual receives match those that they

wanted. The more employees receive outcomes they value, the more satisfied they are.

Likewise, the lesser job outcomes that employees receive, the less satisfied they are

(Gerstein et al., 2016). The more significant discrepancy between what people have and

what they want regarding various facets of their jobs (pay, learning opportunities), the

more dissatisfied they are with those jobs. This relationship is higher among those who place great importance on the facet such as pay, learning, opportunity for advancement than among those who consider it to be less critical. To this end, the value theory is concerned with personal values which are popularly held by a community, and how those values might change under particular conditions. Different groups of people may hold or prioritize different kinds of values influencing social behavior. Accordingly, there is no set of common values that I can set in my study for small business leaders to increase job satisfaction, and hence this theory is not relevant for my study.

Practical strategies to increase employees' job satisfaction are helping small business leaders become more efficient at improving internal processes and consequently overcome some of the challenges faced by large competitors (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2016). Providing small business leaders with new strategies might enforce the sense of social responsibility in giving back to the community through developing, training new graduates and existing employees, and providing a better way to support communities through fostering self-development and self-support along with engendering pride in creativity. Small business leaders can achieve this social responsibility through effective communication with subordinates and by encouraging the sense of teamwork (Northouse, 2016).

Background of Small Business Sector in the Province of Alberta

The province of Alberta leads Canada in small business creation which makes the province a unique place to establish a small business (ASBP, 2014). Small companies in Alberta have demonstrated they are a vital lynchpin to the provincial economy. Small

businesses have the reputation as a pivotal contributor to innovation. Between 2001 and 2013, SMEs accounted for about 90% of private sector job growth in Canada (Lester, 2017).

There is a wide diversity of small businesses in the province ranging from small environmental consulting organizations to family-owned restaurants. Small businesses are vital contributors to employment, income, and quality of life in communities (ASBP, 2014). The number of small businesses is significantly increasing year after year with an additional new 10,000 small businesses added to Alberta's business landscape during 2013 (ASBP, 2014). The small business sector in Alberta has helped to create wealth within the province generating the second-highest Gross Domestic Products (GDP) per capita in the country (ASBP, 2014). The ASBP (2014) provided useful statistics about the contributions made by small businesses to the provincial economy and the role that small business leaders play in some of Alberta's important and growing industries. Small businesses currently comprise 95% of all businesses in the province with the growth rate of new businesses near 20% in the last 15 years (ASBP, 2014). The small businesses sector generates a GDP per capita that far exceeded the national average (ASBP, 2014). Besides, small businesses in Alberta are responsible for 35% of all private sector employment in the province (ASBP, 2014). Between 2003 and 2013, the number of small businesses in Alberta increased by nearly 19% with a contribution of 25% to Alberta's GDP (ASBP, 2014).

Small businesses are essential players in Alberta's business landscape. Small businesses fill a variety of roles and niches all over the country. In many ways, small

business owners are responsible for propelling the province development forward (Chrisman, Devaraj, & Patel, 2017). Even in Alberta's resource industries, large, multinational companies rely heavily on small businesses owners for countless goods and services (ASBP, 2014). Small business is vital to the economy and the quality of life that Alberta's communities enjoy. As small businesses in Alberta increase in numbers, they are more energized than ever before, actively growing while they identify and seize new opportunities which make it a continues interesting sector to research. The yearly sizeable growth rate of 7% of small businesses reflect Alberta's economic growth. Businesses of all sizes are taking advantage of economic opportunities, which are attracting large numbers of new small business entrants. Nearly two-thirds of small businesses are *micro-businesse*s; that is, they have only between one and four employees (ASBP, 2014). Small businesses with more than four employees are less common.

Alberta continues to be one of the best places in Canada to establish a small business and find success (ASBP, 2014). The province remains a national leader in small business growth, with the number of small businesses rising by almost 19% over the past ten years (ASBP, 2014). This far outpaces the Canadian growth rate of 12.1%. Interestingly, the growth profile of small businesses suggests that Alberta is not only welcoming new business entrants but seeing businesses scale up with time. Between 2008 and 2013, the number of micro-businesses has grown by nearly 12% (ASBP, 2014). This is consistent with previous years, as new business entrants tend to start out small. Over the same period, however, the number of *large* small businesses (those with 20 to 49 employees) has grown by nearly 16% (ASBP, 2014). This suggests that several small

businesses have taken on more employees and scaled up to seize more and better opportunities. In 2013, Alberta had wholesale trade valued at over $78.6 billion, and retail sales valued at over $73.1 billion (ASBP, 2014). Albertans had the highest average weekly earnings amongst all Canadians in 2013, giving the province significant purchasing power and attracting many small businesses to retail and wholesale trade. To this end, the province of Alberta is important to this research because it is considered the small business hub and has a significant impact on the Alberta economy, comprising 95.7% of all businesses with employees in Alberta and employing 542,058 Albertans in 2017 (Alberta Economic Development and Trade, 2017). Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurship is a critical part of maintaining and growing the economy.

Teamwork and Communication

Transformational leaders must incorporate teamwork when formulating an organizational vision. To have effective teams, leaders must consider several factors in the teams such as gender equality, minorities, diversity, and culture. Memon and Jena (2017) confirmed a significant relationship between workplace gender inequality (GI) and the reduced satisfaction and motivational levels of women workers. Memon and Jena (2017) addressed the importance of identifying various human resource practices worldwide to reduce GI and empower its female employees. Wilson (2014a) emphasized the importance of how small business leaders must embody more than gender equality in the organization. Leaders should bring attention to the minorities, diversity, and culture in overcoming the barriers in small business industries. Such awareness can be conveyed through effective communication tools with employees and fostering trust.

Small business leaders can have a daily huddle to discuss concerns, monitor measurements of success, and evaluate future tasks with employees. These clusters allow the management team to measure the level of performance and keep employees engaged in streamlining business processes. Leaders should focus on shaping managers' attitudes towards their subordinates in an appropriate direction, as managers significantly influence employees perceived organizational support and job satisfaction (Wnuk, 2017). Team leaders must know that their employees' need both praise for their accomplishments and recognition for their efforts while fostering employees' feeling that there are open and effective performance feedback channels. Accordingly, effective communication in the relationship between team members and the immediate supervisor is crucial to increase job satisfaction.

Dahlke and Stahlke (2017), and Rassa (2017) showed how teamwork affected healthcare delivery and job satisfaction. They found that effective teamwork through characteristics such as respect, listening, trust, and common goals is widely regarded as a means of delivering safe, effective, and patient-centered care and improving patient outcomes. Healthcare workers identified that effective teamwork increased their job satisfaction and commitment to providing better care to older adults; yet, perceptions about who was on the team varied. Flexibility and different skills levels within the same team and determining who can be as part of the team and how leadership can foster teamwork is vital to developing effective teams. Leon and Marcu (2016) emphasized that leaders who nurture and foster trust in the follower-leader relationship in their decisions and inspire followers to work hard will have more satisfied, motivated and loyal

employees. Satisfied employees are committed to their organizational goal and hence will hold themselves respectively accountable and act ethically in their job.

Ethical Decision Making

Decision making is one of the most dynamic, challenging, and continuous concepts in every organization. According to Baker (2016) and Djukic, Jun, Kovner, Brewer, and Fletcher (2017), leaders must do business ethically, promote transparency about decisions affecting employees, and donate to economic growth while improving the standards of the organization's workforce, the local community, employees, and society. All team members including leaders and managers must consider the stakeholders' interest in their activities and decision making while encouraging employee effectiveness. Leaders must accommodate technology, diversity, globalization, policy, teamwork, and leadership effectiveness spirit of an ethical code of conduct that creates an overall positive effect on society, employees, and company. For example, according to Dhar (2016), there is a direct impact of leaders' ethics on the innovative and quality of services at small and medium-sized tourist hotels. Dhar (2016) collected a sample of 585 employees and supervisors and revealed that ethical leadership promoted innovative service behavior of the hotel employees mediated through leader-member exchanges. Further, Dhar (2016) found that the level of service creative behavior was commensurate with the perception of employee job autonomy. In investigating the effects of organic leadership on six measures of firm performance: staff and customer satisfaction, financial outcomes, productivity, and staff and manager tenure, Avery, Bergsteiner, and Jing (2015) found that organic leadership has a positive impact on the performance on all

measures. Organic leadership enables staff members to enjoy the highest possible degree of autonomy, with decisions made entirely by employees and not by their bosses. Typically, no designated bosses with the power to control others exist; and employees self-commit to executing various tasks and projects leading to shared organizational goals, motivated by high levels of engagement with, and commitment to those goals.

Ethical leaders will improve ethical decision-making processes by ensuring awareness of corporate governance and social responsibility and also by promoting moral commitment, developing a noble atmosphere and guiding ethical decision-making (Esmaelzadeh, Abbaszadeh, Borhani, & Peyrovi, 2017). Leadership can have an effect on organizations as well as on individuals (Muenjohn & McMurray, 2016). Leadership increases self-development, empowers individuals working in distributed teams, provides achievement of personal goals, and fosters job satisfaction (Muenjohn & McMurray, 2016). Leaders must be flexible and give decision-making autonomy in the work process when the worker performs their job to raise job satisfaction and furthermore to increase job commitment (Jong & Son, 2017).

Fairness, the delegation of authority, clear job goals, and ethical guidance are also among the critical ethical leadership factors which had a significant positive influence on job satisfaction and job engagement (Roh & Yoon, 2017). Job satisfaction and job engagement showed a significantly positive effect on job performance (Roh & Yoon, 2017). Amisano and Anthony (2017) confirmed a significant relationship between some ethical leadership behaviors and social and environmental sustainability; however, no statistically significant correlations were identified between ethical leadership and

financial sustainability. Therefore, best leadership practices in organizations must incorporate social responsibilities, environmental sustainability and promote ethical decisions along with all hierarchical positions in the organization.

Corporate Governance and Social Responsibility

Rusert (2015) articulated that executives at all levels must recognize the importance of aligning the environment, social and governance practices with their companies' business strategy, mission, and values. Misalignment of these practices may damage the trust among stakeholders and the reputation of the organization. Corporate social responsibility has a positive effect on businesses job satisfaction especially with services introduced by the organization toward employees (International Institute for Science, Technology, and Education, 2017). Social entrepreneurship provides a differentiation strategy that allows businesses to earn an economic profit and provide social relief. Parker (2016) addressed the importance of utilizing technical innovation as a motivation factor in managing the business to improve job satisfaction and ensure the quality of services at a lower cost. Sanchez-Matamoros, Gutiérrez-Hidalgo, and Macías (2015) articulated that small businesses leaders, through their transformational leadership skills, should keep developing the internal processes to maintain competitive advantage through motivation to increase job satisfaction and improve performance.

Innovation is a primary requisite for small business to achieve long-term objectives. While relevant literature highlights the importance of leadership within small firms to establish and foster a climate conducive to innovation, evidence linking specific leadership attributes with innovation is lacking. Accordingly, Dunne, Aaron, McDowell,

Urban, and Geho (2016) examined the impact of the individual entrepreneur on fostering new product innovation within firms. The analysis of the Dunne et al. study confirmed that leadership style, negotiation style and organizational efficacy each affect new product innovation. Specifically, Dunne et al. found evidence to support the idea that small business leaders who are inspirational, who negotiate competitively, and who lead efficacious organizations establish environments that are more likely to yield new product innovations which will increase firm profitability.

Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Rasmi, Amrullah, and Sumardi (2017), defined motivation as a condition or action that encourages a person to do a job or activity as much as possible. People with low motivation tend to display feelings of discomfort and displeasure with their work. On the other hand, job satisfaction is something that is individually felt (Rasmi et al., 2017). Each individual has a different level of satisfaction in accordance with the value system that applies to him. The higher the assessment of the perceived activity in accordance with the wishes of the individual, the higher his satisfaction with the activity will be and hence knowing the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators become vital. To understand the complicated relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, pay satisfaction and job satisfaction among employees, business leaders must understand the factors that increase extrinsic (hygiene or maintenance) job satisfaction to increase retention within the organization, provide workforce stability, improve organizational and economic growth, and decrease costs related to job satisfaction (Larkin-Perkins, 2017).

The qualitative insights indicated that pay fairness and compensations strategy is essential in retaining employees and must improve over time (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017). Pay fairness and compensations strategy will have a broader impact on firm performance, and those who perceived that pay was not fair made comparisons with others or felt that compensation did not reflect their effort (Chrisman, Devaraj, & Patel, 2017). The direct impact of incentive compensation on firm performance in the family as well as nonfamily firms are perceived to be positive, and this has mostly been borne out by empirical research (Long & Fang, 2015). Even though money is an essential factor in increasing job satisfaction in the short run; intrinsic rewards such as responsibility and sense of accomplishment were considered essential to increase job satisfaction in the long run (Rasool, Jundong, & Sohail, 2017). Accordingly setting reasonable goals for employees that they perceived to be fair, and involving employees in the planning and control activities through the management process to give them the sense of responsibility is a vital task for leaders.

Samad, Reaburn, Davis, and Ahmed (2015) indicated that transformational leadership was significantly related to employee well-being at the organization in a study of 2,700 social service employees. The researchers found a positive relationship between leadership style and both employee well-being and organizational performance. Leadership influences organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, employee commitment and loyalty, and turnover intentions (Mittal, 2016; Samad et al., 2015). A work environment that ensures the well-being of employees and their ability to detach themselves from work during the off-job time is vital. High job demands may lead to

emotional exhaustion, psychosomatic complaints, lowered work engagement and high turnover intention (Mittal, 2016). Gholipour Soleimani and Einolahzadeh (2017) articulated that job satisfaction causes a reduction in turnover. In investigating the effect of employee engagement, job motivation and job satisfaction to employee performance in the Ministry of Export and Import Department, the Indonesian Ministry of Trade, Tampubolon (2016) found that employee engagement, job motivation, and job satisfaction positively and significantly influenced employee performance. The same correlation between job satisfaction and performance was also confirmed by Mendis (2017) in his research to understand the nexus between job satisfaction and job performance of bank assistants in Sri Lanka.

Detachment from work during off hours buffers the impact of job stressors on personal life. Accordingly, leaders must allow the team members to distance themselves from their work during off hours such as a no-after-hours-communication policy, except for in cases of extreme emergency. If leaders are looking to improve satisfaction at the workplace, they must try by starting with the easiest thing on this list to implement. Workers' job satisfaction is quite sensitive to daily hassles such as unnecessary busy work, or senseless administrative tasks (Akwuole, 2017). According to Akwuole (2017), an employee may accept to do a job for a specific motive, but that does not mean he or she gains satisfaction. Job satisfaction occurs when the nature of work and the rewards derived from the work match the motivational needs of the employee. Although they might not seem like much, day-to-day irritations can affect job satisfaction. Small daily hassles are one of the easiest things to change, and it's a big hit in boosting employee

satisfaction. Leaders must take a look at current processes and see if they can be simplified through process re-engineering. If a leader asks employees what their daily hassles are, and addresses them, employees will be grateful. Autonomy and control are necessary for people to feel satisfied with their work. In fact, psychologists have found that the less control people have over their jobs, the more stressful and unsatisfying they find the job. Accordingly, a leader can direct employees to several ways to complete a job efficiently. However, mapping out the exact route is not ideal.

Ezam (2018) articulated that a positive correlation exists between job satisfaction and employee motivation. This means that the more job satisfaction an employee perceives, the more motivated the employee. Ezam (2018) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation through a comparison between lower middle and middle-income groups in different banks in Karachi, Pakistan and found that employees only consider monetary benefits as satisfiers. The limitation of Ezam (2018) study was in the fact it was based only on a small scale and only in the banking sector which questions the generalization of these results to other small business sectors.

Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) examined the impact that the leader-follower relationship had on productivity and employee loyalty. Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) suggested that the more interaction between leaders and followers, the more the organization would achieve its potential. To be specific, Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) found that employees who receive support and advice from their managers became both more loyal and more independent. The positive relationship means that leaders who involve the clarification of mission and goals to followers and provide recognition for

accomplished targets, will positively contribute the way the employee feels about his/ her job and the level of commitment to the organization. Blomme, Kodden, and Beasley-Suffolk (2015) offered evidence to support the notion that workers' motivation level tends to decrease because of their absent managers. When the leaders are available to explain tasks and requirements and delegate the activities to subordinates, Followers tend to be more motivated and satisfied.

In a study by Quintana, Park, and Cabrera (2015), the researchers stated that a relationship exists between leadership and employee performance. The study results revealed that transformational leadership is the most suitable leadership style for employees working for international luxury hotels. The researchers also stated that the type of hotel, whether independent or chain hotel, moderates the leadership styles and employee's performance. Quintana et al. (2015) suggested four managerial implications for organizations, which are (a) to develop transformational leadership based on idealized influence to inspire team leaders to be more reliable, create achievable objectives, and clarify visions, (b) identify subordinates' needs and tie them with leader's expectations for accomplishment and rewards for meeting organization's goals, (c) avoid applying passive management-by-exception and laissez-faire leadership styles which produce negative effects performance, and (d) account for organizational implications when introducing certain leadership styles. People-oriented leaders who give attention more to people might decrease employees' intentions to quit work and might increase employees' organizational commitment more than task-oriented leaders (Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursière, & Raymond, 2016). Mathieu et al. suggested in their study that included 763

employees from different types of organizations that perceived supervisor leadership might contribute to employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Salehianfard and Zohoori (2017) indicted that the TL with its entire elements (intellectual stimulation, ideal influence, inspiring motivation, and individualized consideration) has a significant effect on organizational performance and job satisfaction. In investigating the influence of intellectual stimulation leadership behavior on employee performance in SMEs in Kenya, Ogola, Sikalieh, and Linge (2017) found that management processes that include intellectual stimulation led to significant and positive employee performance in SMEs in Kenya. Ogola et al. (2017) concluded that when a leader encouraged employees to think critically about dealing with problems that they encounter in the course of their work, use their initiative, and seek innovative methods to approach their work and assignments; employees perform better. To this end, and as indicated by Rajak and Pandey (2017), the higher the level of motivation the greater the enhancement of satisfaction and commitment of the employees towards their institution.

Management Processes and Employee Retention

Employees of SMEs are vital human resources because their behavior and talents will affect the productivity and sustainability of this crucial large business segment. Johennesse and Te-Kuang (2017) explored how talent management processes contributed towards effective performance management. In particular, Johennesse and Te-Kuang (2017) studied how the early stages of the hiring process played a role in retaining employees which eventually lead to efficiency in the business processes. In a small

business, a person's job is more than just the routine activities of shuffling papers, writing programming code, serving customers, or driving a truck. Small business jobs require intensive and interrelated activities such as interaction with co-workers and supervisors, following organizational rules and policies, meeting performance standards, and working under pressure. By doing all these integrated activities, an employee's assessment of the level of satisfaction is a complex summation of several discrete job motivation elements. Accordingly, and as a result of globalization processes, leaders need to be effective in managing resources and acquire new skills to help their companies survive. Organizations that improve the work environment, use the knowledge, and invest in increasing their intellectual capital, have a better chance of success; accordingly, lack of job satisfaction strategies could severely impact the small businesses success and the employees' development. In a cross-sectional design study to investigate the relationship between TL and the innovative behavior of Korean workers Suk, Kihwan, Ebrahim, and Seung-Wan (2016) found that TL was significantly related to both employee innovative behavior and knowledge sharing. The results also confirmed that knowledge sharing mediated and perceived organizational support (POS) positively moderated the relationship between TL and innovative behavior of employees

Work Environment and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the condition of establishing a healthy organizational environment in an organization. According to Wnuk (2017), job satisfaction offers business leaders the ability to shape the work environment so that the most valuable,

loyal, and experienced employees can be retained in the company. At the same time, employers must shape and direct managers' attitudes towards their subordinates in an appropriate direction, as managers significantly influence employees' perceived organizational support and job satisfaction (Wnuk, 2017). Having a low level of job satisfaction is an indication of unhealthy working conditions. Individuals want to maintain status, high ranks, and authority in exchange for their capabilities such as knowledge, ability, education, and skills. The individuals who cannot meet their expectations in their jobs become dissatisfied. Thus, dissatisfaction affects the organization for which individuals work. Job satisfaction is vital for a person's motivation, and contribution to production and hence leadership skills that increase job satisfaction are essential to promote the sense of belongings and to motivate employees and reduce replacement cost. Job satisfaction may diminish irregular attendance at work, replacement of workers within a cycle or even the rate of accidents (Wnuk, 2017).

Satisfied employees tend to be more productive, creative and committed to their employers and contribute at higher rates to firms' performance and sustainability (Ayranci & Ayranci, 2017; Rajak & Pandey, 2017). Productivity, creativity, job satisfaction, and commitment concepts are positively and strongly related with each other (Ayranci & Ayranci, 2017; Rajak & Pandey, 2017). Accordingly, if leaders create work environments that attract, motivate, and retain hardworking employees, individuals will be better positioned to succeed in a competitive environment that demands quality and cost-efficiency (Malik, Javed, & Hassan, 2017). The physical work environment is a primary factor in increasing employees' job satisfaction as team members will spend so

much of their time in the office, the physical work environment can make a difference in job satisfaction. For example, a good desk, a little privacy, and separating the social and quiet areas, good lighting and some plants are among factors that increase job satisfaction. Moreover, most studies are concerned with job satisfaction and its relationship to absenteeism, turnover, productivity and performance, organizational citizenship behavior, customers' satisfaction, but not the transformational leadership style and its influence on job satisfaction. To this end, understanding the organizational behavior approach to management requires in-depth insights into interpersonal processes in organizations.

The Emergence of Organizational Behavior

Understanding the motivation factors, group dynamics, and challenges in viewing employees as resources rather than tools are among the core issues in the organizational behavior approach. The complexity of human behavior makes the prediction in organizations a problematic task for leaders. Beuren, Cláudio Marcelo, and Delci Grapégia (2016) articulated that leaders need to improve employee's organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) so that the employee more successfully performs his/her dual role in a way to positively enhance the overall performance of the organization. Organizational citizenship can have an impact on how to coordinate the activities in the organization, thus influencing the use of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) to measure the strategic performance (Beuren et al., 2016; Dwirosanti, 2017). Cao and Chen (2016) indicated that when crises happen in organizations, the employees' performance, and the

value of the organizations will decrease, accordingly, one way to overcome such crises is to keep a high level of employees' satisfaction along with financial flexibility.

Karaosmanoglu, Altinigne, and GamzeIsiksal (2016) indicated that membership, adequate role behavior, and extra-role behavior is important in understanding the relationship between job satisfaction and employees' behavior. The employee membership decision has a strong effect on employees behaviour and job satisfaction. Employees tend to voluntary quit a job and look for new one if the employer provided negative feedback (Angeles, Saludo, Virtus, & Win, 2015). The existence of cognitive evaluation (expectation of having low level of job security and advancement) will lead to non-favorable work environment for employees. Employees will then tend to have high levels of absenteeism when experiencing strong negative affects and will consistently be in a state of affective negativity. If affective negativity exists, employees will remove themselves from the negative affective state by joining a different employer (negative reinforcement). Therefore, Angeles et al. (2015) and Karaosmanoglu et al. (2016) recommended the enforcement of long-term membership to increase job satisfaction and removing the job dissatisfaction factors to reduce turnover and absenteeism.

Karaosmanoglu et al. (2016) indicated that employees would maintain an adequate role behavior as long as they remain satisfied in the job, employees will tend to do what is necessary to stay employed, that is, meet at least the minimum role expectations. Additionally, employees will engage and maintain a positive relationship with supervisors, subordinates, and co-workers. Angeles et al. (2015) indicated that when employees become dissatisfied with their work, they will diminish their performance to a

level below acceptable standards. Excessive dissatisfaction level (dissatisfaction that has a strong affective component) can severely affect the employer in many ways such as destructive actions to programs and providing a very low quality of services (Angeles et al., 2015).

For extra role behavior to occur (where employee take on new responsibilities, go beyond their responsibilities to help fellow employees, or provide extra effort to help customers), employers must continuously provide motivations and belongness to employees such as good pay, social belongness, and constructive task feedback (Karaosmanoglu et al., 2016). High levels of job satisfaction reinforce and lead to extra efforts by employees; however, satisfaction alone will not lead to extra behaviour or steps by employees to help other co-workers. On the other hand, dissatisfaction can have a strong suppressor effect on extra role behavior. Extra-role behavior that exists because of one motivator factor, will disappear if the employee becomes dissatisfied. Dissatisfied workers will avoid extra role behaviour such as take on new responsibilities, spend time helping subordinates, or extra effort to assist customers. Karaosmanoglu et al. (2016) indicated that increasing satisfaction through removing sources of dissatisfaction is likely to increase membership. However, it will not generate extra role behavior unless some source of motivation is present. Accordingly, it is vital for leaders to understand the personal and social traits of employees to increase the level of satisfaction.

Employees' Personal and Social Traits

According to Obeid, Salleh, and Nor (2017) and Hough, Green, and Plumlee (2015), to increase job satisfaction and improve performance, leaders must be aware of

several personal traits: first, employees' attitudes are important to determine employee

behavior. Second, informal work groups can influence individual performance. Third,

management supervision and attention influence productivity and employee job

satisfaction. Forth, increasing work satisfaction may result in increased productivity and

effectiveness. Finally, employees are motivated by personal and social factors and not

just by money. Hough et al., (2015) concluded that higher employee engagement levels

translate into higher performance. Humphries, Jamil, and Jordan (2016) indicated that

greater engagement is considered a source of value to organizations and hence leaders

must ensure such value is realized. Thus, the relationship between job satisfaction and

employees' behavior is complex and might be affected by several factors. For example,

the greater the employee skills and experience the higher the employees' expectations in

terms of reward and compensation (Block, Fisch, Lau, Obschonka, & Presse, 2016). To

this end, exploring strategies to increase job satisfaction through exploring employees'

behavior is vital for organization success and could influence the way that leaders deal

with subordinates. Leadership style and skills that enforce understanding the personal and

social traits of employees should be considered a factor in determining whether

employees are satisfied within their organizations.

Understanding strategies to increase job satisfaction and its impact on

performance is a core issue for small business leaders. According to Omoijiade (2015), a

leadership style that does not address job satisfaction strategies could trigger ineffective

and inefficient business performance within organizations. Cheng (2015) ranked

employee satisfaction level, along with the degree of educational attainment and

economic growth, as important factors in determining a nation's economic success. Todays, small businesses undergo significant development and have had to implement essential changes to keep up with international development and the emerging challenges. Accordingly understanding the employee's personal traits and social traits is becoming an increasingly important subject to improve job satisfaction and performance management.

Job Satisfaction and Performance Management

Ukko, Hildén, Saunila, and Tikkamäki (2017) indicated that performance management is an ongoing organizational process that focuses employee attention and motivates behavior toward maximizing the productivity of employees with the overall intention of improving the organization's effectiveness and strategy. There is a positive and significant relationship between internal marketing and employee satisfaction and that same positive relationship led to a significant relationship between internal marketing and perceived organizational performance (Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016). The Kanyurhi and Akonkwa (2016) findings confirmed the possibility of how job satisfaction might lead to improving performance in the organization. They showed that this relationship is strategic in nature and involves every person and all HR processes in the organization. All individuals are directly tied to achieving the organization's goals. Before leaders can begin the performance management process, two important prerequisites must occur. First, strategic planning must be completed because the performance management process builds on an organization's goals. Once organizational goals are established, employee goals cascade from there. An important objective of the performance management process is to enhance employees' contributions

to the organization's goals (Ukko, Hildén, Saunila, & Tikkamäki, 2017). The second prerequisite is a thorough understanding of the job. This is done through job analysis. If it has been some time since a job analysis was conducted for a position, it may be necessary to conduct a new analysis before starting the performance management process.

Managerial accounting systems could address not only financial but also non-financial performance indicators as well. Organizations use the BSC tool as a performance measurement device because it measures both financial and non-financial performance metrics (Quesado, Aibar-Guzman, & Rodrigues, 2016). Ghasemi et al. (2016) focused attention on managerial accounting systems' impact on competition and managerial performance. Management needs to choose the most appropriate managerial accounting system according to their company's business operations or management's need at the given specific point in time. The managerial accounting system that is utilized by a company today and deemed to be effective, may be not suitable for future use. The scope of managerial accounting has expanded from historical value reporting to include real-time reporting and predictive reporting (Appelbaum, Kogan, Vasarhelyi, & Yan, 2017). For example, manufacturing companies' leaders would utilize product costing methods to determine how different products affect a company's profitability by understanding the associated costs. The company managers could then use performance variance analysis to evaluate variances between the budgeted amount, planned amount, or standard amount and the actual amount incurred/sold. After the managers use performance variance analysis to evaluate favorable and unfavorable variances among actual costs, budgeted amounts, and standard costs, the managers of the company need to

take necessary corrective actions for significant variances and follows up with these actions. In exploring the intervening role of wisdom leadership in the link between leadership styles and employees' team performance and employees' satisfaction using data collected from 505 travel agents operating in Egypt, Elbaz and Haddoud (2017) found that not all leadership styles have a positive influence on employees' satisfaction and performance. However, the study confirmed that transformational leaders who develop wisdom leadership observe a direct and positive relationship between employees' satisfaction and organizational performance.

The Concept of Job Satisfaction

As a social and economic fact, employees are expected to spend most of their time at work. According to Hasmin (2017), job satisfaction has been traditionally utilized as a surrogate for a desirable organizational outcome. Accordingly, economic motive alone might not fully satisfy employees. It is always of greater interest to know why people work and at which level they are satisfied with their job so that the leader can focus on areas that mostly satisfy employees. Lane et al. (2017) reviewed the implications on manager behavior of goal setting, the perception of fairness, reward systems, and feedback linkages, as attributes in the BSC. Taken together, these attributes might affect employees' motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction. Accordingly, job satisfaction depends upon the extent to which the job that employees' do meets their expectations. The degree of satisfaction is determined by the ratio between what employees have and what they want.

According to literature, there are many factors affect the level of success in organization such as job satisfaction, the employee performance, and the level of employees' engagement in small business. Bin Shmailan (2016) indicated that job satisfaction could come from allowing employees to be self-directed and a strong relationship with fellow workers. Bin Shmailan (2016) examined the relationship between employee satisfaction and performance where the researcher confirmed that satisfied employees do perform better and contribute to the overall success of an organization. On the other hand, if employees' satisfaction level is low, the level of performance will drop, and accordingly will affect the success of organization. Bin Shmailan (2016) and Martin and Simmering (2016) affirmed that improving the level of satisfaction and performance will lead to a competitive advantage for organizations. One important strategy to improve job satisfaction and performance is to ensure that the right people are selected for the right jobs. Business leaders improve engagement, commitment, and enhance organization culture by selecting the right person for the right job (Bin Shmailan, 2016). When leaders improve organization environment and foster communication, the employees will be more satisfied at work, produce better results,and will demonstrate more enthusiasm (Bin Shmailan, 2016; Cheema, Akram, & Javed, 2015). According to Bin Shmailan (2016) and Vargas (2015) leaders must work continuously to improve internal process, foster communication, plan, encourage employees' personal growth, and ask for employees' input to improve the engagement. The higher the level of engagement, the more the employee will feel valued at work. This can be achieved through commitment and communication between management and staff

(Bin Shmailan, 2016). To this end, understanding employees' needs and keeping them committed and engaged can be the difference between success and failure. Bin Shmailan (2016) suggested further research to ask successful business leaders how they find the right job for the right person and turn that into a satisfied employee and to focus on in-depth strategies that employers use to increase satisfaction.

As a law of nature, as employees have more, they want more; hence the level of job satisfaction remains less. Thus, job satisfaction is dynamic, and constantly changing. It is a positive emotional state that occurs when a person's job seems to fulfill important values, provided these values are compatible with one's needs. Small business leaders must be aware of strategies, conditions, and factors that can increase job satisfaction and team excellence such as competency, collaboration, support, and achievement (Northouse, 2016). Achievement is a vital satisfaction factor for employees. Sometimes, it can be hard for team members to understand how they're contributing to the big picture. People feel more satisfied when they feel they are achieving something. Team members need to feel that they are part of something. Therefore, leaders must ensure the right mix of team members and train, engage, provide sufficient information, inspire, recognize, and treat all team members as a unified team to increase job satisfaction. At the same time, team members must stay technically and personally competent within the group. Recognition is an important psychological factor in increasing employees' satisfaction. If leaders do not recognize the accomplishments of the team, then that might be understood as an implicit message that leaders convey that they do not care about the employees' work. Leaders and employees must take ownership of their roles and responsibilities

to achieve organizational excellence and effectiveness (Rao, 2017). To this end,

leaders must also communicate positive accomplishments and not only negative ones. If

leaders only communicate negative outcomes but do not recognize accomplishments, this

may discourage the team from taking risks. Leaders must not only focus on the

challenges the team is facing but also spend some time reflecting on how much has

already been achieved. If the team members feel that their achievements matter and are

progressing toward stated goals, they will feel motivated to continue pursuing the

leaders' goals. Efficiently leading as a global change agent of an organization can be very

stressful and hence, leaders can maintain success by keeping effective communication

channels, enforcing positive feedback, setting clear goals, and recognizing employees. In

short, job satisfaction is synchronization of what leaders require of their employees and

what the employees are seeking from the organization.

Advantages of Having Satisfied Employees

Long-tenured employees develop personal relationships with customers. The more

developed the relationship, the more the solid foundation and interaction between employees and

customers (Cheema et al., 2015; Rust, Stewart, Miller, & Pielakc, 1996). Cheema et al. (2015)

examined through a mixed sample of employees and managers in 22 restaurants the impact of

employee engagement and visionary leadership (vision guiding, emotional commitment) on

customer and employee satisfaction. Cheema et al. (2015) found a significant relationship

between employee engagement, vision guiding and emotional commitment on customer

and employee satisfaction. The results also supported a significant relationship between

emotional commitment and employee satisfaction. The more satisfied the employee, the better

interaction will happen with customers, which will eventually lead to fewer complaints from customers on employees and better service provided by employees to customers. Singh, Saufi, Tasnim, and Hussin (2017) and Cheema et al. (2015) indicated that higher employee job satisfaction increases service quality and this increases organizations' profit through future sales and customer positive goodwill. According to Pantouvakis and Patsiouras (2016), leadership style is a concept which has been associated with many variables such as service quality, performance and job satisfaction. In the marketing literature, it has been widely accepted that service quality is positively related to customer satisfaction (Pantouvakis & Patsiouras, 2016). Pantouvakis and Patsiouras (2016) examined the effect of leadership style on the service quality–customer satisfaction linkage under conditions of environmental uncertainty and instability and collected data from 118 small enterprises. The results supported that the level of leadership style moderates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction despite what is commonly believed that leadership actually is a prerequisite of service quality (Pantouvakis & Patsiouras, 2016).

Flexible leaders who pay attention to the strategic capabilities of employees, provide feedback and develop the employees' skills will have satisfied employees (Simon et al., 2015). Not receiving feedback can be quite discouraging for most employees. Effective feedback will help team members know where they are and how they can improve. Leaders also need to know what kind of feedback the team members respond to best. Negative feedback is as important as the positive feedback; it's not enough to simply point out what is wrong. Accordingly, leaders must explain why something employees did is not working, and how it might be corrected. There is a relationship between

employees' satisfaction, customers' satisfaction, and profitability. When employees are happy at work, they will tend to take extra miles to enforce a positive behaviour and relationship toward the customers, and accordingly customers will be happy and continue to deal with organization. The more satisfied the customers, the more profitability organizations can achieve from repeated sales (Simon et al., 2015). Employees who are satisfied have higher intentions to continue working in an organization, becoming more innovative, more responsible, more productive, and will have lower levels of absenteeism (Hays & Lou, 2015).

Consequences of Job Dissatisfaction

Hays and Lou (2015) have attributed job turnover, absenteeism, and job burnout to a lack of job satisfaction. Hays and Lou (2015) found support for a possible causal chain leading to job turnover/retention. The chain proceeded from individual expectation through commitment propensity, along with meaningfulness of the job to increased commitment, through intention, and finally to turnover/retention. The impact of job dissatisfaction goes far beyond the previously mentioned consequences. For instance, the negative effects of job turnover on organizations may include: increased costs to recruit, select, and train new employees; demoralization of remaining employees; negative public relations; disruption of day-to-day activities; and decreased organizational opportunities to pursue growth strategies. To curb the negative consequences associated with job dissatisfaction, a thorough understanding is required as to which factors or strategies lead to job satisfaction and which create job dissatisfaction. The more organizational support employees perceive, the higher the job satisfaction they experience (Simon et al., 2015). Employees want to know that their workplace care about them. This can be expressed through a

multitude of messages, from how superiors treat them, to the benefits they receive and other, more subtle messages. Even if organizations can't offer the employees all the benefits and perks they would like to receive, the important thing is that employees perceive their leaders support them.

Determinants of Job Satisfaction

According to Lane et al. (2017), job satisfaction is derived from and is caused by many inter-related factors. Although these factors can never be completely isolated from one another for analysis, they can by the use of statistical techniques, be separated enough to indicate their relative importance to job satisfaction. Lane et al. (2017) examined many determinants of job satisfaction. Feedback, supervision, flexible leadership, personal factors, manager behavior of goal setting, perception of fairness, and reward systems linkages are becoming the attributes of BSC. Taken together, how these attributes affect managers' and employees' motivation, commitment, and satisfaction explain the differences observed in prior research.

According to Martin and Simmering (2016), feedback enhances motivation and performance through perceived impact. Increased fairness and positive feedback from supervisors can improve organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance (Martin & Simmering, 2016). To the worker his supervisor is the company; hence worker's feelings towards his supervisor are usually similar to his feelings towards the company. This supervisor-subordinate relation and interaction link the job satisfaction subject to knowledge management. The existence of knowledge management (KM) in the working environment is also significantly related to high job satisfaction (Aino, Mika, & Pia, 2016). Accordingly, managers must implement KM activities in their

firms, not only to improve knowledge worker performance but also to improve their well-being at work. Flexible leadership with an innovative vision, strategic and dynamic capabilities, ability to select and retain good staff will contribute significantly toward organizational financial and non-financial performance (Simon et al., 2015). Offering flexibility such as 1-2 days of remote work per week is a way to show the team members that leaders trust them. The gift of time is one of the most appreciated workplace perks. Smart people work best when they can choose their own schedule. Flexible hours can increase engagement and productivity but that same flexibility may decrease collaboration. Accordingly, leaders must find a balance within what the team is looking to achieve.

Personal factors such as gender, number of dependents, age, work status on the job (i.e., whether employed as a part-timer or a full-timer) have different perception toward job satisfaction (Alghamdi, Topp, & AlYami, 2017). Most investigations on gender as it relates to job satisfaction found that women are more satisfied with their jobs than men as long as the work life balance is maintained (Anuradha & Pandey, 2017; Ayadi, Ojo, Ayadi, & Adetula, 2015). The number of dependents in which the employees have also influences the level of satisfaction. The greater the number of dependents the less satisfaction employees have due to the stress of greater financial needs. Age also influences the level of satisfaction. There is higher intrinsic job satisfaction among older employees as they have less entrepreneurial intentions and want to spend the rest of their career at the current organization (Hatak, Harms, & Fink, 2015). Eunjeong (2017) examined job satisfaction of elderly employees focusing on linking the career job (dream

job) by person-job fit (current job) and found that job satisfaction level is high when career job and the elderly employee job are similar. The linkage between job satisfaction and job fit indicate that the employees' quality of life will decline when they are engaged in unrelated career jobs. To this end, older employees in simple manual work without having the opportunity to use their accumulated knowledge and skills, experience lower overall job satisfaction.

According to Karatuna and Basol (2017), work status has an impact on the level of satisfaction. They collected and analyzed data through questionnaires among 1,158 sales workers, and found that those working part-time as compared to full-time reported lower job satisfaction. Cantekin, Altunkaynak, and Esen (2016) indicated that satisfaction is relatively high at the start, drops slowly to the fifth or eighth year, then rises again with more time on the job which proves that most employees are satisfied in general at their work. Rassa (2017) indicated that low salary packages, low benefits, lack of supervision, insufficient professional trainings and recognition are the more important factors of dissatisfaction; therefore, leaders must increase levels of job satisfaction to obtain higher levels of employee satisfaction and accordingly ensure high quality service delivery. Employees' feelings about the fairness of pay are related to their job satisfaction. If employees believe that they are paid unfairly they are more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs. This relationship extends beyond salary and hourly pay to include fringe benefits as well. In fact, when employees can select the fringe benefit they most desire, their job satisfaction tends to rise (Lien, 2017); accordingly, there is a significant increase

in the number of organizations that allow their employees to structure their fringe

benefits such as medical, dental, and life insurance.

Transition

In this section of the study, I covered the foundation of the study, assumptions,

limitations, delimitations, and the significance of the study. I also discussed the problem and

purpose statement and addressed the general and specific business problems that small business

leaders lack job satisfaction strategies to improve the performance of small businesses. I

conducted a review of literature that covered many aspects related to job satisfaction along with

an overview of the small business sector in the province of Alberta. In my review of the

professional literature, I attested to a common finding among scholars that organizational leaders

are responsible for motivating employees and increasing job satisfaction. I paid extra attention to

studies related to the impact of transformational leadership and job satisfaction that were

published in the last five years and that have indicated the existence of a causal relationship

between job performance and employee satisfaction. I covered the evidence that shows how the

conditions of an organization worsen when organizations have a low level of job satisfaction and

how leaders must establish a healthy organizational environment to keep employees motivated

and satisfied. In section 2, I covered the research method and design, participants, and data

collection instruments and techniques. I also addressed the anticipated data analysis and the

validity and reliability of this qualitative study. In section 3, I discussed the findings, the

applications for professional practice, and the implications for social change. Also, in section 3, I

provided recommendations for future research and closed with a brief summary, conclusions,

and a reflection of the study process.

Section 2: The Project

In this section, I have included the purpose statement and discussions of my role as researcher, the participants, the research method and design used for the study, and the population sampling criteria. In the other parts of Section 2, I have included my rationale for the methodology and design used in my study along with detailed descriptions of methods of data collection, organization, analysis, ethical concerns, and methods for verifying validity and reliability.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies small business leaders use to increase employees' overall job satisfaction. The targeted population were small business leaders working in 10 different industries in Alberta, Canada, which is representative of industries in many nearby cities in Alberta such as Edmonton, Leduc, St. Albert, Calgary, Red Deer, Cold Lake, Hinton, and Lloydminster. The implications for positive social change include providing small business leaders with practical strategies to (a) increase employee job satisfaction, (b) become more efficient at improving internal processes, and consequently (c) overcome some of the challenges presented by large competitors. Providing small business leaders with new strategies might enforce the sense of social responsibility in giving back to the community through training new graduates and existing employees, and providing a way to support communities by fostering self-development and self-support along with engendering pride in creativity.

Role of the Researcher

Upon receiving Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct this study (IRB approval number 12-21-18-0713484), I conducted interviews with 10 small business leaders who are registered to conduct businesses in the province of Alberta. One of my roles was to protect the integrity of the investigation by working to protect the identity of participants. I called the participants and arranged to set up a time for interviews. Before starting the interviews, I gave participants time to go through the consent form that detailed the voluntary nature of the study, the risks, privacy information, and their freedom to decline or consent. I reviewed the Belmont Report (1979) protocol, which summarized the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects. Following the Belmont Report, I ensured the required information was provided to participants prior to their participation in the study. I mitigated bias and avoided viewing the data through a personal lens by ensuring that questions were thoughtfully posed and delivered in a way that allowed respondents to reveal their true feelings without distortions. I followed the three basic ethical principles including (a) respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice.

I respected the participants by recognizing their anonymity, uniqueness, and freedom. I respected them by recognizing that each person has the right and capacity to make their own decisions. I achieved beneficence by maximizing possible benefits and minimize possible harms to participants, and by being responsible for the physical, mental, and social well-being of participants. I ensured justice by the fair and equal

distribution of benefits and risks of participation. To this end and to update my ethical research skills, I successfully completed the national institute of health (NIH) certificate.

I collected the answers to my interview questions, observed, and did not allow my personal experiences in the small business sector or my emotions to impact the leaders' answers to my interview questions. A primary researcher facilitates the interviews, observes, and engages in sampling, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data. The primary researcher makes sure to avoid allowing their personal experience to affect participants responses (Chintaman, 2014; Ward, 2013). I used an interview protocol (Appendix B) to stay focused on the study topic and mitigate bias, and as a reminder about how I intended to proceed during interviews. In the final stage of my study, I evaluated and explained associations that the analysis revealed, and I offered recommendations to small business leaders and future researchers.

Participants

As a primary tool in qualitative studies and to assure the participants' relevance to the research questions, I selected the participants using purposive sampling in this study (Cairney & Denny, 2015). According to Bernard (2013), purposive sampling might limit a researcher's ability to generalize results; however, this technique is inexpensive and practical. I sent a letter of invitation to potential participants to describe the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. As Grady (2015) noted, participants should have access to the informed consent form before the interview. I provided each participant with a consent form that outlined their voluntary and confidential participation in the study in an effort to ensure honest and accurate

responses. In addition, I assured participants that I would code the personal information

to protect their identities. I ensured that participants were well informed about the

purpose of my study, the expectation from them, and time required for interviews to build

the trust and rapport. Building rapport and providing full disclosure with the participants

is essential in the data collection process (Baker & Moore, 2015; De Poy & Gitlin, 2015;

Peters, Abraham, & Crutzen, 2015).

The eligibility criteria for participant selection were that the participants must

have been a leader or decision maker in the organization whose decision could impact the

employees' work life and satisfaction level. Also, the organization must have been

registered to conduct business in the province of Alberta for more than 5 years. Mainly,

this meant that the participants were the CEOs, presidents, or senior managers with a

leadership position in their organizations for at least 3 years. My 20 years of experience

in small business was key in understanding the population needs and eligibility for

participation.

Research Method and Design

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore job satisfaction

strategies to increase performance of small business in Canada. In this section, I provide

justification for using a qualitative research method and a multiple case study design.

Research Method

I chose a qualitative methodology for this study. Qualitative research is primarily

exploratory research used to and gain an understanding of underlying reasons and

opinions (Silverman, 2016). A qualitative method is appropriate if the researcher wants to

investigate a human behavior by letting participants answer open-ended interview questions. The qualitative method can provide insights into a problem or assist in developing ideas or hypotheses for a potential quantitative study (Saunders et al., 2015). Therefore, the qualitative method was appropriate for this study. Conversely, researchers can use a quantitative study to examine variables' relationships or differences, and use estimated relationships to make predictions (Koy & Adams, 2015; McNabb, 2015; Saunders et al., 2015). Quantitative researchers can answer questions about the relationships or differences among variables in the form of correlation or comparisons (Bilgin, 2017). A mixed method design includes attributes of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Saunders et al., 2015). Neither a quantitative or mixed methods approach was appropriate for this research, because quantitative researchers examine the relationship, or correlation, between variables or seek to test the hypotheses and identify cause-and-effect relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2015). Besides, I did not intend to calculate statistical significance or statistical insignificance.

Research Design

After exploring all qualitative study designs, I chose to use a multiple case study. Saunders et al. (2015) and Thomas (2015) recommended that researchers use case studies when they want to focus on how and why to observe a behavior and further understand a given phenomenon. Other designs, such as correlational design, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative research, historical research, and phenomenology were not the best fit for this study. The researcher can use correlational design to show the relationship between two or more independent variables and one dependent variable (Bilgin, 2017;

Miksza & Elpus, 2018). Anthropologists use ethnography to explore cultures (Saunders et al., 2015). The primary data collection method in ethnography is observation over an extended period which was not an available option for this research. Scholars use phenomenology to identify events and focus on subjective experiences to understand the structure of those lived experiences (Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers use phenomenology to describe, in depth, the meaning participants' attribute to experiencing phenomena that have occurred, which was not the purpose of this study.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study represented all small business leaders or members in leadership positions within their organizations in the province of Alberta. I did not consider the size of their organizations as a factor in this study. In this study, I used purposive sampling. Researchers can use judgment in purposive sampling to select participants who could provide accurate and valuable information to answer the research question or achieve research objectives (Abdullah, Patterson, Pegg, & Abdullah, 2015). After selecting 10 potential participants who met all eligibility criteria through purposive sampling, I contacted each of them via phone to explain the purpose of my research. Purposive sampling is one of the pioneer techniques for qualitative research (Bryman, 2015). Upon receiving confirmation that individuals were willing to participate in the study, I sent them the informed consent form and an invitation letter. I interviewed the 10 leaders to explore job satisfaction strategies they used to improve performance of their small businesses.

I achieved data saturation with 10 small business leaders. In qualitative case study design, researchers must focus on selecting participants who can articulate perspectives relevant to the research question (Tong & Dew, 2016). To achieve saturation, the researcher must select a sample size large enough to ensure overlap and redundancy of data and achieve the study objectives (Lampard & Pole, 2015). Fusch and Ness (2015) indicated that the minimum number of participants can increase, based on the need for additional information to reach data saturation. Morse (2015a) indicated that the phenomenon will become clearer and more understandable only after data saturation is achieved. Overlapping of information will potentially eliminate unknown issues or factors that if become known, will change the results of the study. Morse (2015a) confirmed that researchers can cease the interviews and justify the selected sample when data saturation is achieved. Morse (2015a) recommended that researchers start their interview process by selecting a small sample (initial analysis sample), collect and analyze data to find themes, and then conduct more interviews until no new themes or data are available.

According to Sivell et al. (2015), researchers must conduct interviews in settings that are comfortable for the interviewees to communicate openly. I restated the purpose of the interviews and the purpose of my research to each participant. To increase the likelihood that the interview will take place, researchers must remain flexible and proactive in providing different convenient places and timing to their participants (Wilson, 2014b). I conducted the interviews at the time and location chosen by the interviewee; the interviews occurred in a private area of a local library, or at the leader's

office or boardroom. The purposively selected participants had a personal knowledge of the organization, employees, and the performance history of their organization. A weakness of purposive sampling is the fact that the researcher might leave a quality sample out of selection, and, in turn, might not capture all characteristics to fully the explore the research question (Sivell et al., 2015).

Ethical Research

Walden University doctoral students must adhere to established research guidelines. Before the researcher can collect data, the student must obtain the approval from Walden University institutional review board (Walden, 2016). The researcher distributed the consent form that included the Walden IRB approval number and expiration date to participants, followed by an invitation letter. I asked the participants in the study to sign the consent form. I informed the participants before commencement of the interviews that they have the option to withdraw from the study even after the interviews are completed without any consequences. VanderStoep and Johnston (2008) indicated that the participants must understand that they have the right to withdraw from participation at any time, and the researcher must ensure that participants know about this right, accordingly, I ensured that each participant understand this right before conducting the interviews. I did not offer any incentives to participants in order to avoid a distortion of reasoning. According to Resnik (2015), incentives can be harmful when they are excessive or unwarranted and might distort reasoning, possibly leading an individual to act against his or her interests. I stored the collected and analyzed data in a password protected safe, with strict confidentiality and will continue doing so for at least 5 years.

After 5 years, I will shred or destroy the data. I remained considerate for the safety and wellbeing of participants and their names and organization names were anonymous by using L01, L02 and so on.

Data Collection Instruments

As a primary instrument to collect data in this research, I selected the participant through purposive sampling. In qualitative research, Yin (2015), and Lewis (2015) stated that the researcher is the principle instrument used to collect the data. I collected the data through one-on-one semistructured interviews, and I asked open ended questions to participants. As the data collection instrument, I investigated the object of this multiple-case study to produce evidence that may lead to understanding the case study and provide answers to the research question. Through the semistructured interviews, I investigated the participants lived experiences and perspectives to explore job satisfaction strategies to improve small business performance. According to Shirani (2015), the semistructured interview method allows for focus, structure, and provides the flexibility of participants to talk freely, and allows the clarification of responses with follow-up questions to gain more information from the interview. During the interviews, I gathered leaders' experiences and analyzed how they give meaning to those experiences. Face-to-face interviews are beneficial because it allows the researcher to establish a rapport with participants and get the support needed to obtain accurate and valid data. Each interview lasted approximately 15-30 minutes and were conducted at the participant's choice of location. Elsawah, Guillaume, Filatova, Rook, and Jakeman (2015) recommend not conducting lengthy interviews for fear of losing the participant's involvement.

Yin (2018) proposed six sources of evidence in qualitative research as follows: (a) interviews, (b) archival records, (c) direct observation, (d) documentation, (e) participant observation, and (f) physical artifacts. For the purposes of this study, the chosen sources of evidence will include interviews, direct observation, and document analysis as a secondary mean of data collection. Schneider (2016) indicated that document analysis is vital as researchers can use the collected documents to develop a good understanding of the phenomenon under study. I ensured that the content of original collected documents helped in explaining the phenomenon under study. I reviewed policy and procedure documents related to employee satisfaction, when available. Multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, document analysis, and observations form part of methodological triangulation (Oesterreich & Teuteberg, 2016; Wilson, 2014b; Yin, 2018). In this case study, I used several sources of data such as methodological triangulation to enhance the confirmability and dependability of the data.

To remain consistent throughout the process, I followed strategies developed by Hunt, Chan, and Mehta (2011). I critically thought of prior interviews and experiences, was thorough in preparing for the interview, mindful of power dynamics within the interview, observant of verbal signals, and evaluated the ongoing process. To achieve rigor, reliability, and generalizability, I used member checking with participants to ensure the validity and accurate interpretation of participants' responses to interview questions. Morse (2015b) indicated that researchers achieve meticulousness, trustworthiness, and generalizability through member checking. I documented all interviews on a digital recorder, and then I preserved, and secured all recordings in a personal secured place to

protect the information and assure the privacy of the participants. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) recommended using an interview protocol to gather the data. As a researcher, I used a protocol to, stay focused on the study topic and mitigate bias, as a reminder about how to conclude the interview with participants, as a reminder to collect consent forms, and to make use of additional propping questions.

Data Collection Technique

According to Hancock and Algozzine (2015), conducting interviews are the primary form of data collection in qualitative case study research. Interviews assist the researcher to access a depth of personalized information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015). Bauman (2015), and Bowden and Galindo-Gonzalez (2015) recommend following a full disclosure of the interview process to participants to ensure comfortability and to obtain a rich description of participants' experiences. I maintained a good and healthy relationship with participants before, during, and after the time of the interview to establish confidence and collect accurate data. I met each participant at a convenient location of their choice and I started the interview by thanking them and providing an overview of the research topic. I provided each participant with a copy of the consent form and collected a signed copy of this form. I asked for participants' permission to record the interview using a smart device or laptop and reminded them about the member checking process to ensure accuracy of data collected. I reviewed any policies or procedures pertaining to job satisfaction and performance.

In this multiple case study, I have ensured data saturation in exploring the job satisfaction strategies that small business leaders use to improve performance. Since data

saturation depends on uncontrollable factors to the researcher such as participants' knowledge about the research question, I ensured standardization of the sample size. Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2015) indicated that jeopardizing the possibility of reaching data saturation will be high if participants do not fully answer the question. Standardization of a sample size requires all participants answer the same questions in a standard manner using the same format, and also the researcher must analyze the responses in the same manner (Malterud et al., 2015). One of the main advantages of conducting semistructured interviews with open-ended questions is the fact that participants and researcher connect face to face on a personal level, which will help in exploring the lived experiences of participants (Wilson, 2014b). Interviews allow the researcher the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the stories of those interviewed and ask probing questions when needed (Granot & Greene, 2015). In semistructured interviews, researchers must refrain from bias and mitigate potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions and beliefs to impair the information collected and the way the data is analyzed.

To gain as much information as possible, I collected documents to better understand the strategies that leaders use to increase job satisfaction. According to Yin (2018), collection of documents must be a part of explicit data collection plans. I accessed documents from the last 5 years related to my research study. To avoid the disadvantages of collecting documents such as edited documents that lose literal meaning or exposure to a confidentiality breach, I used collected data and ensured member checking to obtain an accurate interpretation and accuracy of data collected. According to

Morse (2015b), researchers achieve rigor, reliability, and generalizability through member checking.

Data Organization Technique

To organize the data of my research study and have flexibility in manipulating the data, I used technology as a main tool. I coded, transcribed, interpreted, and summarized data collected for ease of reference using many programs such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Yin (2018) recommended the follow steps to organize and secure data starting with (a) data checking, (b) maintaining data in journal, (c) entering data into CAQDAS, (d) reviewing researcher notes throughout the study, and (e) storing all data on an external storage device. I recorded the interviews, if allowed by participants, either through a smart phone application or through laptop software. López, Tormo, Mármol, Calero, and Pérez (2014) indicated that digital recordings of interviews allow for easy storage and access of data when needed. I also backed up the data on a secure external device or on a cloud for a period of 5 years as a secondary mean of security, after which the data will be damaged or shredded. The American Psychological Association and institutional review board guidelines requires researchers to keep and secure research data such as transcripts, consent forms, researchers notes, and audio records for a minimum of 5 years in a secured and locked place (American Psychological Association, 2012; Walden, 2016). To maintain confidentiality, I used an alphanumeric code beginning with the letter L01 (for leader), followed by the appropriate number for each participant. The alphanumeric numbering ranged from L01 to L10. Also, I transcribed the data obtained from interviews

immediately upon completion to maintain accuracy and remembering the interview information.

Data Analysis

Yin (2018) indicated that data analysis comprises examining documents, categorizing data, tabulating the data, and testing the evidence. In this qualitative research study, I used methodological triangulation. I collected data from multiple sources including interviews, documentation as allowed by participants, and direct observation to collaborate facts. Hussein (2015), and Fusch and Ness (2015) defined triangulation as the use of several methods such as interviews, documentation, and observations to study and explore different levels and perspectives of the same phenomenon. Triangulation is a common method used to ensure the validity of the study results (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Using triangulation assisted me in analyzing the data collected from semistructured interviews, documentation review, and observation. I crossed reference the data collected from interviews and compared the transcript with documents to determine any common themes. I created a matrix for individual interviews to find themes easily and connect the information. I used member checking to verify the accuracy of my interpretation of the data collected with participants via short meetings. During the member checking process, I provided participants with a copy of my interpretations of the interview and no corrections were needed. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated that two-way analysis and interpretation is a primary form of obtaining constructive feedback from participants, which the researcher uses to verify the authenticity, interpretation and comprehension of the interviewee statements. To organize and conduct my research study, I followed the

six steps recommended by Shoaib and Mujtaba (2016): (a) determine and define the research questions, (b) select the cases and determine the data gathering and analysis techniques, (c) prepare to collect the data, (d) collect data in the field, (e) evaluate and analyze the data, and (f) prepare the report.

Due to multiple interviews and the complexity of data organization and analysis in qualitative studies, I used computer assisted qualitative data analysis software as recommended by Saldaña (2015). I used NVivo 11 software to manage and organize the data. NVivo is a qualitative software for coding thematic categories and extracting themes from qualitative data (Clarke, 2015). I transcribed the raw data into a Microsoft Word document, and uploaded the Word documents into NVivo 11, along with copies of the policy and procedure documents. Using the software, I was able to manage the qualitative data and code the data (Clarke, 2015). I used NVivo 11 software to obtain flexibility which is vital for identifying nodes and matrices. I coded, organized, and transcribed the audio recordings and documents obtained using NVivo 11 to identify the themes related to the main research question. I reviewed the data collected during the interview process to identify all of the themes and patterns. I compared the themes from this study with those indicated in the transformational leadership theory literature, the conceptual framework of this study. The transformational leadership theory themes or direction include (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. I assessed and analyzed if my study themes aligned with the various dimensions of the conceptual framework to gain an

informed understanding of job satisfaction strategies needed to improve the performance of small businesses.

Reliability and Validity

In this qualitative study and to have a trustworthy study, I ensured reliability and validity by addressing four vital criteria as recommended by Shoaib and Mujtaba (2016). In this study, I ensured dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Qualitative researchers can achieve reliability and validity of study by adhering to the trustworthiness of a study. As indicated by Yin (2018), the quality qualitative study depends on withstanding the test of reliability and validity. I established rigor through member checking, transcript review, and data triangulation. The use of member checking helped to ensure accuracy and added credibility to the data. Accordingly, I ensured that each participant received a copy of the interpretation of the interviews to validate the findings and make corrections if needed.

Reliability

In qualitative research, the researcher must ensure data strength and consistency among interviews (Yin, 2015). I used an interview protocol, a rich description of interview content, and the same sequence of interview questions to maintain consistency. Qualitative researchers recommended multiple perspectives on the significance and relevance of the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured dependability through focusing on all of the changes affecting the research process to ensure data strength. I ensured data strength by using an interview protocol, consistent and clear interview questions, transcript review, and provided a copy of the transcript to the participant for validation.

Harvey (2015) indicated that dependability is an indicator of quality in qualitative research. Fusch and Ness (2015) and Yin (2015) indicated that member checking increases the dependability of the study findings and recommended that researchers utilize member checking to validate data when conducting qualitative interviews. Fusch and Ness (2015), and Yin (2015) recommended member checking over transcript review to ensure dependability of the collected data. I scheduled a time with each participant to complete member checking to ensure accuracy of interpretation and provide a copy of the interpretations of the interviews. No corrections were made. To this end, reliability refers to consistency with which the research will produce the same results if repeated.

Validity

Validity is a primary indicator of research quality, and hence the researcher must ensure an accurate interpretation of data to achieve accurate conclusions. If during the research process, the validity is impaired, then the quality of research will be compromised (Yin, 2015). The researcher must confirm adherence to quality of research by conformity with the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In general, qualitative researchers depend on subjective, interpretive and contextual data. Therefore, it is critical that researchers take steps to ensure the reliability and validity of their research findings (Proctor, 2017). The findings must be believable, consistent, applicable and credible if they are to be useful to readers and other researchers. In order to withstand the scrutiny, researchers should spend time giving serious consideration to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To achieve credibility

(internal validity) the researcher must ensure accuracy, richness, and trustworthiness of data rather than the quantity of data (Proctor, 2017). Triangulation is a common method to ensure accuracy through cross checking data interpretation with participants from multiple perspectives (Proctor, 2017). Cope (2014) recommended using member checking to establish credibility and ensure the accuracy of the interpreted data. To support credibility, I showed prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and external audits. To achieve transferability (external validity), the researcher must ensure that results are generalizable and can be applied to other settings or populations (Proctor, 2017). I thoroughly described the context of the research to assist readers in appropriately applying the results to other settings. To achieve dependability and because qualitative research often results in an ever-changing research setting and changing contexts, I documented all aspects of any changes or unexpected occurrences to further explain the findings and to assist researchers who may want to replicate the study. I ensured confirmability by adhering to objectivity during the research process and avoided participants' personal biases. I achieved data saturation with 10 small business leaders. I ensured standardization of the sample size. Malterud et al. (2015) indicated that jeopardizing the possibility of reaching data saturation will be high if participants do not fully answer the question. Standardization of a sample size requires all participants answer the same questions in a standard manner using the same format, and also the researcher must analyze the responses in the same manner.

Transition and Summary

In section 2, I covered the qualitative research process and the justification for why multiple case study is important to examine the specific business problem regarding some small business leaders lack of strategies to increase the overall job satisfaction of their employees. I described the role of the researcher, participants, and the sampling technique for the study. I also covered the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study to explore strategies small business leaders use to increase employees overall job satisfaction. I covered the targeted population and data sources for the study, which included semistructured interviews, direct observations, and the use of document review to answer the research question: *What strategies do small business leaders use to increase employees' overall job satisfaction?*. I presented the meaning and application of ethical research and provided an overview of the data collection instrument and techniques I used for data organization analysis. I covered the importance of using NVivo software to generate emerging themes from the data analysis and compare them to the conceptual framework and literature to answer the research question. I ensured trustworthiness of my study by adhering to validity and reliability, using member checking, and conducting methodological triangulation. The implication for social change includes investigating small business leaders' practices and suggesting solutions to improved health and quality of life for employees. Small business leaders can potentially utilize the findings from this study to improve both employee and business performance to benefit their communities. In section 3, I included a review of the purpose of the research and the presentation of findings. I also included the applications of the

study to professional practice and implication for social change, as well as

recommendations, reflections, and conclusions that result from conducting the research.

The results from this multiple case study might lead to a better understanding of effective

job satisfaction strategies that increase the overall job satisfaction for small businesses. I

closed section 3 with my personal reflections on the DBA study process, and final

conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies small business leaders use to increase employees' overall job satisfaction. I conducted in-depth face-to-face semistructured interviews with 10 small business leaders who had at least 3 years of management experience, who were leaders in a senior position who currently owned or worked for a small business, and who had demonstrated success in small business for at least 5 years. I interviewed participants between December 25, 2018, to January 31, 2019. Prior to conducting the interviews, I sent potential participants invitation letters. After they accepted my invitation, I immediately emailed the potential participants the consent form, which I asked to be signed, scanned, and emailed before conducting the interview. For participants who did not email the scanned copy of consent form, I obtained an original signed form at the time of interview. All interviews took place in a private area of a local library or the leader's work office in the cities of Edmonton, Leduc, St. Albert, Calgary, Red Deer, Cold Lake, Hinton, and Lloydminster. I asked seven interview questions, and two follow-on questions (Appendix A) following a standardized interview protocol (Appendix B) to gain an understanding of the strategies small business leaders use to improve overall employee's job satisfaction. In this section, I present the findings, discuss applications to professional practice and implications for social change, and offer recommendations for action and for further study. This section ends with reflections of the study process and conclusions.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this qualitative multiple case study was: What strategies do small business leaders use to increase employees' overall job satisfaction? To answer the question, I conducted semistructured interviews with 10 small business leaders in the province of Alberta, each of whom had 3 or more years of experience in managing a small business. I obtained consent from each participant and audio-recorded the interviews. Upon completing the interviews, I transcribed the interview data into Microsoft Word files to ensure the accuracy of responses with the audio records. I extracted the following three themes during the analysis process:

- Theme 1: Provide supportive leadership.

- Theme 2: Improve financial rewards.

- Theme 3: Provide non-financial rewards.

I described each of these themes in the sections that follow.

Theme 1: Provide Supportive Leadership

The first theme that emerged from the analyzed data was that providing supportive leadership and understanding employees' individual needs improved job satisfaction. All of the leaders asserted that their employees were more satisfied with the job and work environment because of the supportive leadership environment. The participants employed many methods to develop and maintain support and promote a sense of teamwork. All leaders indicated the importance of supportive leadership and how supportive leadership has had a positive influence on the employees and their organizations as a whole.

Supportive leadership. In their responses, all participants implied that small businesses are unique and managed closely by owners and family members, which is different from large business operations. Most leaders mentioned that small business leaders must possess leadership skills, be role models, and inspire employees. All expressed the importance of providing support to employees and described how the support fosters trust between subordinates and their leaders. Leaders indicated that support could come through various means such as having clear job goals, maintaining effective communication channels, providing immediate feedback, assessing leaders decision on employees, and complementing good work.

L06 indicated that team bonding is vital and mentioned team bonding as one of the company's "secret weapons" to create an understandable work relationship between leaders and subordinates. To foster team bonding, L06 recommended a weekly short meeting between employees and their leaders or supervisors. According to Lane et al. (2017), small business leaders must be role models in empowering, engaging, and motivating employees to get the best out of each one and build the trust among the team members to achieve the organizational objectives and values.

Leaders must assess the impact of their decision making on many aspects of the organization and the stakeholders before making that decision (Baker, 2016). Accordingly, leaders need to evaluate the effects of their choice on creativity, growth, effectiveness, success, goal accomplishments, and job satisfaction of their employees. The more the leaders thoroughly analyze their proposed decisions, the lesser the negative impact on employees' job satisfaction (Esmaelzadeh et al., 2017). Exploring job

satisfaction strategies might have a positive impact on performance. Implementing transformational leadership practices that support and inspire followers to change their expectations, perceptions, and motivations when working toward a common goal could lead to better performance. L02, L04, L06, L09, and L10 reported that if each leader put himself in the employees' shoes, s/he will understand the various issues that arise at work and will provide the necessary support. All participants mentioned that a supportive leader maintains a comfortable, manageable, low stress, and fun work environment.

L04 explained how he supported his employees. Due to the nature of his business in the contracting industry, he has to work side by side with employees and subcontractors and provide continuous feedback daily. L04 also indicated that leaders must provide continuous support to their employees and give them guidance for job-specific issues to avoid any penalties that could adversely impact his net income. L04 indicated that leaders must not ignore the power of words, and a manager or leader should complement employees daily and express appreciation for the successful completion of each job.

L02 and L05 own medical clinics and wellness centers. They indicated that leaders must follow a supportive leadership style to reduce employees' stress and frustration in the workplace because the nature of their work in the medical industry requires patience and compassion. Both mentioned that supportive leadership is effective when work tasks are dangerous, tedious, and stressful, but is not effective if the work tasks are intrinsically motivating because employees do not need to be motivated to do the work. Participants recommended setting clear goals for employees and establishing

the path for achieving that goal. To achieve goals, leaders must clarify tasks, employees'

roles and responsibilities, the criteria for success. They must also provide guidance,

inspire employees, remove obstacles that can prevent task completion, and finally

provide individualized psychological support and awards when appropriate.

Understanding employees' individual needs. Every participant indicated that

the more employers offer to employees, the more likely the employee is to engage fully

in their work. Employees set their expectations in a way to maintain status, get rewarded,

and engaged in exchange for giving back to employers through their knowledge,

education, and experience (Malik et al., 2017). L05 and L06 made it clear that if

employees do not meet their job expectations, they become dissatisfied and will not work

at their full capacities and capabilities. Thus, this dissatisfaction affects the organization

in different ways including a reduction in performance and higher turnover rate. All

participants indicated that job satisfaction is important for a person's motivation and

contribution to production, and it is proven to diminish irregular attendance at work,

reduce replacement cost of workers, and even reduce the rate of accidents. L01, L02,

L04, L06, L08, and L10 mentioned that leaders must understand what employees need

from the organization. For example, are employees concerned with looking for a paying

job or they more interested in career and personal development? All participants

mentioned that, in general, experienced employees are concerned with advancement,

bonuses, and salaries, while inexperienced employees are concerned with education and

training in the field to gain experience. Once inexperienced employees gain the

knowledge and necessary skills to do the job, they will get the wage raise and advancement.

All leaders interviewed except L06 indicated that knowing and understanding the individual needs of employees and customizing a reward system that fit each one helps leaders to address the employee needs efficiently. However, L06 did not support the idea of having an individual reward system that fits each employee due to the complexity of the process. L06 indicated that to understand what each employee needs mean the leader must be deeply involved in the employees' personal life, which may breach the employees' privacy. Instead, L06 implemented a fair reward system for all employees working the same job. L06 treated and rewarded employees similarly based on the job and individual needs. L06 said that individual needs might be unlimited and the more employers provide, the more the employees may want. L06 stated that meeting unlimited individual needs is difficult for small business leaders who face resource constraints.

Leaders need to understand their employees' motivations, why employees come to work every day, what makes them stay, and what drives them to perform at their best (Northouse, 2016). The best leaders are those who can build a cadre of employees who have satisfying inner work lives: consistently positive emotions, strong motivation, and favorable perceptions of the organization, their work, and their colleagues. L01, L03, L04, L05, L06, L07, L08, L10 addressed the importance of enhancing employees' inner work lives every day, even through a compliment, to boost long-term creative productivity and maximize employees' performance.

Correlation to conceptual framework. Theme 1 is a reflection of the TL theory. Burns (1978) developed the transformational leadership framework by studying political leadership. TL theorists explained how leaders could inspire followers to change their expectations, perceptions, and motivations when working toward a common goal when its elements are applied. Bass (1985) extended Burn's (1978) work and affirmed that authentic TL is grounded in moral foundations that are based on four fundamental elements and three moral aspects which I addressed in detail in Section 1.

According Effelsberg et al. (2014), Hernandez and Long (2014), and Tourish (2014), transformational leaders have various essential characteristics to manage subordinates and sustain the growth of small businesses. For example, transformational leaders inspire employees to make personal sacrifices to achieve higher team goals (Chan & Mak, 2014; Groves, 2014); accordingly, small business leaders with the transformational approach to leadership might lead organizations effectively, therefore mitigating small business failures and sustaining small business growth. L01, L03, L04, L05, L06 L07, L08, L10 indicated that most employees are willing to give more to help other colleagues and customers as long as they are satisfied at work and inspired by the leader vision. Employees giving includes the personal scarifies that employees undertake if they perceive that management is giving them performance bonuses, salary increases, and career advancement. Bonuses, salary increases, and career advancement consider factors that have a positive influence on the employees' job satisfaction, and hence, leaders must always consider these factors to retain employees. Leaders must recognize supportive leadership and individual employees' needs as this will directly influence

employees' feelings about the workplace. All participants mentioned that company

policies should include flexible working hours, a flexible rewarding system that take into

consideration the individual needs. Individualized consideration is one of the four

fundamental elements of transformational leadership theory. All participants used

supportive leadership to make a positive impression on individual team members. The

analyzed data also revealed that the organizational leaders had created an environment

focused on removing dissatisfying factors from the work environment and having a more

friendly and fun work atmosphere. The leaders interviewed all had at least 3 years of

experience in the small business field, so they are fully aware of what helps to make the

work environment satisfying and increase performance. Creating a satisfying work

environment is considered an inspirational motivation which is another fundamental

element of TL. All interviewed leaders indicated that to motivate and satisfy employees

leaders must take control of the situation by conveying a clear vision of the group's goals,

a marked passion for the work, and an ability to make the rest of the group feel recharged

and energized. TL is a leadership style that can inspire positive changes in those who

follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate.

Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process; transformational

leaders help every member of the group succeed as well. Another fundamental element

from TL theory that ties in theme 1 is the idealized influence. The idealized influence is

behaviors that leaders possess to become role models by setting an example of dedication

to courage employees to see leaders as their best role model. The findings in theme 1

indicated alignment with idealized influence. For instance, leaders interviewed stated that

when employees perceived that leaders are always putting themselves in employees'

shoes and try to understand how completing task would be from employees' perspective,

the employees will consider leaders a role model.

Findings Related to Existing Literature

From analyzing theme 1, participants affirmed that successful leaders who display

authenticity and provide support to subordinates would achieve higher performance

results. Participants reinforced Belias and Koustelios (2015) assertion that authentic and

ethical leaders create a positive impact on building a supportive work environment. The

existence of a supportive work environment will develop leader-follower relationships

and kindle higher employees' performance. All interviewed leaders indicated that their

employees appreciate leaders that are authentic and supportive. Hutchinson (2017)

indicated that authentic leadership has an impact on building a healthy work environment

and will contribute to the development of empowering leader-follower relationships. That

authentic leadership significantly and positively influenced staff empowerment, which

has undoubtedly motivated employees and increased job satisfaction and productivity

(Hutchinson, 2017; Lien, 2017). Transformational leaders who have personal integrity

can inspire employees to make personal sacrifices to achieve higher team goals (Diliani,

2016); accordingly, small business leaders with the transformational approach to

leadership might lead organizations effectively, therefore mitigating small business

failures, sustaining small business growth, increase performance, and maximize the value

of stakeholders.

Theme 2: Improve Financial Rewards

The second theme that emerged from the collected data is that pay raises, health benefits and bonuses are vital to employees. All participants asserted that they had found pay raise in the form of an hourly wage above the minimum provincial hourly rates, health care benefits, and quarterly or monthly bonuses are important factors. The existence of these financial benefits will motivate employees to remain with organization and remove any negative mood or feeling toward the job. All leaders indicated how pay raise, health benefits, and bonuses have directly contributed to job satisfaction. For example, L03 asserted that he connected pay bonuses with goal performance each month. L03 noted that he determines the monthly bonus based on how the employee met or exceeded the organization monthly target. L03 indicated that the organizational leaders had used this reward system for many years and the organizational leaders witnessed significant revenue and profit growth. L05 affirmed the same and said that pay raises and bonuses connected to performance increased workplace satisfaction and improved the turnover rate compared with years that organizational leaders did not pay bonuses. L06 mentioned that pay raises and verbal complements for a job well done are among the most important satisfying factors. L06 indicated that if employees did not get paid above provincial minimum wage or above what other businesses in the same industry paid, employees would have a negative feeling toward the organization. L07 explained the annual award helped to create a more satisfying and committed work environment.

L01 and L10 both spoke about the requirements for the awards program, which

allowed every employee to compete with teammates to get financial rewards. L05 and L06 mentioned that leaders must be fair in pay raise and bonuses to avoid destructive actions by employees. Mabaso and Dlamini (2017) indicated that pay fairness and compensation strategy is essential in retaining employees and must improve over time. Pay fairness and compensation strategy will have a broader impact on firm performance, and employees who perceived that pay was not fair made comparisons with others or felt that compensation did not reflect their effort might reduce the performance or create an unhealthy work environment (Chrisman, Devaraj, & Patel, 2017). L06 and L08 recognized the importance of staying competitive with employees in similar jobs. Also, L06 and L09 indicated that competitive pay and bonuses have contributed to employees' satisfaction and organizational commitment besides creating loyalty to the employer and reducing the turnover rate. The findings reflected in this theme echo those of Roche et al. (2015) who affirmed that employees dissatisfied with pay resulted in a high turnover ratio with a replacement cost that ranged between $17,728 to $104,686 per full-time employee (FTE).

L01, L02, L04, L07, L10 asserted that most employees in small organizations work for the salary and they look at their work as a job that satisfies a need, not as a career for the long run. Conversely, L02 and L06 mentioned that one of the most important responsibilities of the leaders is to understand if the employee views the job as a means to a salary, or as a career, and based on that, the leaders must develop the employee to achieve his or her long term goals. L01, L04, L07, and L10 did not ignore the importance of other factors, but in their opinion, the primary motivator for an

employee to stay with an organization was the competitive pay and bonus. L06 stated that

from his experience, he found that pay helped make the work more satisfying and

worthwhile for employees. L06 also explained that by being paid adequately for their

work, the employees become more engaged, committed, and loyal to employers. Pay and

bonuses play an integral part toward achieving organization goals. L05 indicated that if

employers remained competitive with pay to employees and conducted regular revisit of

pay raise and bonuses, the employer will find it easy to retain good employees. Rasool,

Jundong, and Sohail (2017) expressed similar sentiments when they stated money is an

essential factor in increasing job satisfaction in the short run. L03 gave an example of

how the monthly bonuses created a competitive work environment among employees,

resulting in a competitive workforce working hard to outdo one another in an effort to get

higher bonuses. The sentiments of this statement echo those reported by Tam (2017),

who asserted that bonuses or pay raises based upon good work performance resulted in

increased job satisfaction, productivity, and greater organizational commitment. Similar

to Tam, EL Baroudi, Fleisher, Khapova, Jansen, and Richardson (2017) noted that

employees' career satisfaction will increase when ambitious employees receive an

increase in pay.

Correlation to conceptual framework. Theme 2 correlates to the tenets of

transformational leadership theory in that leaders of small businesses understand the

importance of competitive pay and bonuses for their employees and how competitive pay

and bonuses contribute to highly satisfied, committed, engaged, and loyal employees.

Leaders view TL as a significant determinant for all satisfying factors of the employee

such as engagement, commitment, as well as pay satisfaction. Thus, for organizational leaders to be successful, they need to train leaders on transformational leadership skills, which in turn would help keep employees engaged and satisfied. Malik et al. (2017) investigated the impact of TL components by exercising dilemmas as the employees' satisfaction and commitment and found a positive correlation between transformation leadership and organizational commitment. Mahenthiran (2017) found that TL is positively related to commitment and performance where organization commitment mediates the relationship between TL and job performance.

All participants explained in detail how pay raise and bonuses have a direct influence on employees' job satisfaction and the possibility to stay longer with organizations. The theme also connects to new research by Tourangeau et al. (2017) who indicated that employees remain in the organization when they are satisfied with their monetary package and fringe benefits. Also, my findings in this theme relate closely to a recent study by Ezam (2018) who examined the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation through a comparison between lower middle and middle-income groups in different banks in Karachi, Pakistan and found that employees only consider monetary benefits as satisfiers.

Findings Related to Existing Literature

L05 and L06 mentioned that leaders must be fair in pay raises and bonuses to avoid destructive action by employees. I found alignment between this theme and existing literature; Chrisman, Devaraj, and Patel (2017) indicated that pay fairness and compensations strategy would have a broader impact on firm performance, and those

who perceived that pay was not fair made comparisons with others or felt that compensation did not reflect their effort. The qualitative insights indicated that pay fairness and compensations strategy is essential in retaining employees and must improve over time (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017). The direct impact of incentive compensation on firm performance in the family as well as nonfamily firms are perceived to be positive, and this has mostly been borne out by empirical research (Long & Fang, 2015). Ezam (2018) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation through a comparison between lower middle and middle-income groups in different banks in Karachi, Pakistan and found that employees only consider monetary benefits as satisfiers. Rassa (2017) indicated that low salary packages, low benefits, lack of supervision, insufficient professional training and recognition are the more important factors of dissatisfaction; therefore, leaders must increase levels of job satisfaction to obtain higher levels of employee satisfaction and accordingly ensure high quality service delivery. Employees' feelings about the fairness of pay are related to their job satisfaction. If employees believe that their wages are unfair, employees are more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs. This relationship extends beyond salary and hourly pay to include fringe benefits as well. When employees can select the fringe benefit, they most desire, their job satisfaction tends to rise (Lien, 2017); accordingly, there is a significant increase in the number of organizational leaders that allow their employees to structure their fringe benefits such as medical, dental, and life insurance.

Theme 3: Provide Non-Financial Rewards

Despite the importance of monetary reward analyzed in theme 2, all leaders interviewed recommended a well-balanced and structured reward system that included monetary and non-monetary rewards. All leaders interviewed mentioned that a flexible, reward system includes flexible working hours, medical care benefit, work-life balance, employee perks, friendly work atmosphere, task variety, and individualized development programs for employees are among their strategies to keep employees satisfied. Small business leaders indicated that employees are not only concerned with monetary rewards, but also they place an equal emphasis on other non-monetary aspects of compensation. A good compensation package ensures retention to reduce the turnover rate of the company and reduce replacement cost. Also, interviewed leaders mentioned that a good compensation package must ensure motivation for employees to push themselves to strive for success and increase productivity continuously. All leaders interviewed except L02 and L06 mentioned that task variety is important to satisfy employees and avoid letting employees do the same work repeatedly which will become boring. However, L02 and L06 indicated that task variety would not necessarily lead to satisfaction. L02 and L06 indicated that leaders must assess employees' personality toward giving him or her new job responsibilities or doing different work before deciding any job variety. L02 and L06 indicated that some employees like to do the same job because they learned how to complete the task efficiently so when employers compare their efficiency with others doing the same work, they will stand out of the crowd, and hence will get better chances for recognition.

L01, L02, L03 L04, L06, L07, L10 mentioned that employee motivation offers a reason to work hard in achieving organizations' goals. All leaders mentioned that employee performance and efficiency could be drastically affected if no good compensation packages are available. L06 mentioned that a friendly and positive work atmosphere is one of the three main strategies to increase job satisfaction besides pay raise and recognition. L06 said to have a positive and friendly atmosphere, employers must think of different ways to bond with employees using activities or monthly trips. All leaders indicated that if no motivation was available, then employees feel underappreciated and derive low satisfaction from their job. L02, L03, L06, L08, L09, and L10 said that if employees are not satisfied with what they get from an employer, they will not utilize their utmost capabilities when completing jobs. Unbalanced compensation packages may lead to displeasure amongst employees and affect their loyalty. Leaders interviewed said poor compensation is always attached to poor or low productivity as employees do not strive for excellence. If the reward versus effort ratio is low, employees are incentivized to cast their sights away from their current job. Employee voluntary loss will increase the cost of rehiring and waste time. To this end, a well-crafted compensation package that includes both monetary and non-monetary is important to the success of the small businesses. L02, L03, L06, L08, and L10 indicated that because small businesses have limited resources and sometimes can not afford to continue increasing wages, one possible solution for leaders who are unable to support salary growth is to examine their overall benefits package especially the non-monetary one. L04 who is in the construction industry and L06 who is in the retail industry said

that the verbal complement through simple words during and after each job or task well done is essential and has a significant impact on employee's job satisfaction. All leaders interviewed mentioned during a period of limited financial resources; employers must evaluate the overall non-monetary benefits. For example, employers must offer flexible work hours to promote the feeling by employees that the leader cares about them and looks for opportunities to develop them, and increases employees leadership skills. All interviewed leaders believed that developing employees for the next level based on employees' individualized skills is an effective leadership practice. When employees realize that there is a potential for self-development and advancement in the organization, employees will likely become loyal and committed to the leader and organization. The leaders' attention to individual needs and self-development is a fundamental component of TL. L01, L04, L06, L07, L09, and L10 indicated that it is important to guide employees about the best ways to do the job. However, employees must be independent on how to do the job to promote creativity and innovation. Accordingly, autonomy is considered another non- monetary factor that increases job satisfaction. The interviewed leaders indicated that the care toward employees in developing their skills is an impeded moral and ethical behavior that leaders must possess. The interviewed leaders mentioned that competent leaders must prompt non-financial factors such as respect, advise, commitment, trust, and loyalty of the employees

Correlation to conceptual framework

Individualized consideration implies leaders are paying attention to each follower's needs and wants by mentoring, supporting, encouraging and coaching

followers to use their competence and foster autonomy. Understanding this fundamental element of TL might enable the creation of value system congruence between the leader and followers, thus facilitating the condition where the leader and followers motivate each other to achieve the organizational goals (Jalal et al., 2012). According to Effelsberg et al. (2014), Hernandez and Long (2014), and Tourish (2014), transformational leaders have various essential characteristics to manage subordinates, foster autonomy, improve team bonding to sustain the growth of small businesses. Themes 3 ties in with the individualized behavior as a fundamental component of TL and the three moral components of transformational leadership. The three moral aspects which are the moral character of the leader, the ethical values embedded in the leader's vision, and the morality of the processes of social, ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue. In theme 3, leaders make employees lead and give an opinion during meetings to develop leadership competencies and groom the next generation of leaders. When leaders empower employees, increase their self-confidence, self-reliance, creativity, and innovativeness, that will create a more satisfactory work environment and will lead to higher levels of productivity.

Findings Related to Existing Literature

Small business leaders with TL skills play an integral part in designing the reward system, meeting employees' expectations, and inspiring them. Quesado et al. (2016) asserted the importance of how leaders must design a reward system that addresses not only financial but also non-financial rewards. L06 indicated that his organization used the BSC tool as a performance measurement device to measure employees' satisfaction. L06

indicated that BSC helped in measuring both financial and non-financial performance metrics, which is a concept aligned with literature by Quesado et al. (2016). Ghasemi et al. (2016) focused attention on reward systems' impact on competition and managerial performance. L08 indicated that management needed to choose the most appropriate reward system based on individual needs. Participants noted that successful organizations depend on the leader in mapping the way and model consummate behaviors that inspire employees for extraordinary performance.

Besides financial rewards, results indicated a competent leader prompts non-financial factors such as respect, advise, commitment, trust, and loyalty of the employees. Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) examined the impact that the leader-follower relationship had on productivity and employee loyalty. Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) suggested that the more interaction between leaders and followers, the more the organization would achieve its potential. To be specific, Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) found that employees who receive support and advice from their managers became both more loyal and more independent. Abouraia and Othman (2017), and Sayadi (2016) found that transformational and transactional leadership are positively related to the effectiveness of the leader, the subordinate's effort, job satisfaction, and the subordinate's organizational commitment. Malik et al. (2017) indicated that leadership, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and trust had become vital and integral processes for businesses. Malik et al. (2017) investigated the impact of components about TL by exercising dilemmas as the employees' satisfaction and commitment. Mesu et al. (2015) found a positive correlation between transformation leadership and organizational

commitment. Leon and Marcu (2016) emphasized that leaders who nurture and foster trust in the follower-leader relationship in their decisions and inspire followers to work hard will have more satisfied, motivated and loyal employees which something confirmed by participants in this study.

Applications to Professional Practice

Ismail, Romle, and Azmar (2015) affirmed that job satisfaction is vital to enhancing organizational performance. For small business leaders, job satisfaction directly relates to better job performance, which results in maximizing profitability (Correia Dinis & Fronteira, 2015). Small business employees play a key role in conducting the day to day activities of the business, and hence their job satisfaction is fundamental to organizations (Belias & Koustelios, 2015). The employees' tendency to stay at a position for a longer period is positively correlated with higher job satisfaction. As indicated in the problem statement of this study, the dissatisfaction of employees resulted in a high turnover ratio with a replacement cost that ranged between $17,728 to $104,686 per full-time employee (Roche et al., 2015).

I conducted this qualitative multiple case study to explore the strategies that small business leaders use to increase the overall job satisfaction of their employees in the province of Alberta, Canada. The interviews provided valuable information about the strategies used by small business leaders to increase job satisfaction and improve performance. Non-monetary rewards improved employees' job satisfaction, reduced voluntary turnover, and improved workers productivity. Examples of the non-monetary reward were effective communication, clear job roles, career development, autonomy in

completing tasks, supportive leadership, flexible working time, support during continuing education programs, job varieties, and competitive remuneration. Similar to data analysis from this study, other researchers found that job satisfaction directly relates to better job performance, which results in the quality of services provided to customers (Correia Dinis & Fronteira, 2015).

Findings of this study provide insights and strategies to small business leaders to better manage the work place within the organization and improve performance. Leaders who demonstrate supportive leadership create healthy work environments and are more likely to enhance employees' job satisfaction (Fallatah & Laschinger, 2016). Employees remain in the organization when they are satisfied with their monetary package and fringe benefits (Tourangeau et al., 2017). Although this study focused on small businesses in the province of Alberta, findings related to job satisfaction might be transferable to other provinces due to the similar nature of businesses in Canada. These findings add to literature and the current knowledge a solid foundation useful to small business leaders in addressing job satisfaction and employees' performance. The findings can help small business leaders in realizing the importance of being supportive to employees who are the main business drivers. Also, it is vital for business leaders to communicate the organization vision with employees so they can understand the direction and priorities of the organization. The professional implication of this study is to provide small business leaders with job satisfaction strategies that, if implemented, will give meaning to employees' work. Leaders must then follow with clear goals, and strategies of implementation to obtain the desired outcome. Employees must be confident that such an

organization's vision is SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound), and at the same time satisfies their needs.

Implications for Social Change

Small business employees play a vital role in running the daily operations to the extent that some small business owners depend on one or two employees to do everything related to that business; accordingly, keeping satisfied employees is critical for organizations success (Snavely, 2016). The findings of the study through the three themes identified established that dissatisfied employees might adversely impact the quality of services provided to customers and as a result, might reduce the retention rate of customers who conduct business, and consequently profits might decrease. To improve profitability, small business leaders can contribute to the community through developing employees' skills, improving the communication channel, recognizing employees through monetary and nonmonetary incentives so employees can be more involved and give back to the community. That monetary and non-monetary rewards tie with theme 2 and theme 3 in two perspectives. From a social perspective, satisfied employees provide quality services for the families living in the community through their employers. Investigating small business leaders' practices and suggesting solutions might have significant implications for social change such as improved health and quality of life for employees. From the business perspective, small business leaders can potentially utilize the findings from this study to improve both employee and business performance to benefit their communities.

Further implications for social change include the potential for small business leaders to apply the findings of this study to improve the retention rate of employees to reduce the rehiring cost and improve the quality of services provided to customers, which could have a positive influence on the organization success and families in the community. If employees are satisfied at the workplace, then leaders can reduce the percentage of employees who quit the job. As indicated in theme 1, knowing what is important to employees and providing individualized feedback will increase job satisfaction and improve profitability, thus increasing the tendency to expand the businesses. Small business leaders who expand their businesses can positively impact unemployment by creating more jobs and having a positive social change. The implication for social change includes the potential for small business leaders to gain a better understanding of leadership practices in the small business, thereby enabling the development of socially responsible organizations and to better meet the expectations of society.

Recommendations for Action

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies small business leaders used to increase job satisfaction and improve performance in the province of Alberta. Findings of this study confirmed how leadership practices could have an impact on employees' job satisfaction. In this study, I uncovered the strategies small business leaders used to increase employees' job satisfaction and improve performance. The findings of this study confirmed the mutually beneficial relationship between employees and employers and showed when employers meet or exceed the employees' expectation and

need at work; employees tend to go beyond their responsibilities to keep customers satisfied and increase organization profitability. Leaders can build their job satisfaction strategies based on the practices implemented by successful organizations and align with their organization as needed. Supportive leadership, financial and non-financial rewards are the strategies followed by successful organizational leaders who stayed in business for more than five years and hence were among a limited number of small firms who survived beyond five years as per the problem statement of this study.

I intend to make the study available for every business leader. I will distribute the findings of my study to each participant and permit distribution of the findings to business leaders connected to participants. Moreover, I will try to connect with professional business journals and discuss publication options. I will seek out opportunities to disseminate the results of this study with the Charter Professional Accountants - Canada (CPA - Canada) and the universities that I currently work at through their annual conferences, training sessions, and public business forum.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, I focused on the strategies small business leaders use to improve the employees' overall job satisfaction. The strategies identified in this study are important to business practices. The results of this study reflect the opinions of small business leaders from multiple organizations in the province of Alberta. I recommend conducting a similar case study at different small businesses in different provinces in Canada to see if small business leaders have different opinions and strategies toward increasing job satisfaction. Since many factors affect job satisfaction and employee performance, quantitative

researchers can examine the magnitude of the relationship between different factors and how they affect job satisfaction and employee performance. In addition, quantitative researchers might consider examining the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance and other factors such as pay and bonuses, non-monetary factors, and supportive leadership. Future researchers can expand the population to include other provinces in the study to overcome the generalization limitation of this study and further leaders' understanding of the effective strategies used to increase job satisfaction and improve performance.

Reflections

Obtaining a DBA from Walden University was one of the best and most challenging decisions in my life. During DBA journey, I was able to gain significant academic writing skills, knowledge, and learning experience on how to conduct a research. When I compare my previous writing with my DBA study, I notice the tremendous improvement in academic writing. What I learned from my residencies on how to draft the problem statements, purpose statement, formulating the research questions helped me to craft the path to success. The networking opportunities throughout the DBA process with colleagues, professors, and small business leaders taught me how to conduct semistructured interviews with small business leaders and improve my research skill exponentially. Upon reviewing the literature, I learned that the small business sector is more complex than I previously thought due to its family nature and the limited resources. This study offered me the opportunity to learn more about the complexities of the small business sector. The recommendation of the University

Reviewer to use a multiple case study design and qualitative methodology proved to be the best decision as I was able to finish the doctoral study on time.

My academic experience along with accounting and management experience in the field of small businesses were the cornerstone in streamlining the process and interacting with small business leaders during the interview sessions. I had no preconceived ideas about the study participants or findings at the commencement of the research, and I collected data without bias. I ensured that findings emerged directly from analyzing interviews. The Walden doctoral process provided me with a great opportunity to learn from small business leaders and network with senior managers and leaders. I learned how leadership and senior management could have a significant impact on employees' job satisfaction and profitability of the firm.

Conclusion

The findings from this qualitative multiple case study revealed that bonuses, pay increase, compliment, individualized feedback, job varieties, flexibility at work and leadership skills are all strategies small business leaders use to increase employees' job satisfaction and improve performance. Using data collected from semistructured interviews, I originate that leaders implemented similar actions to increase job satisfaction. It is important for small business leaders to understand that their leadership skills are vital in daily communication with employees to retain and keep employees satisfied. The relationship between employers and employer was clear to be mutual in which the more the employer meets the needs of employees, the higher the performance and giving back to the employer.

To maintain profitability in the firms, small business leaders must take necessary measures to reduce the factors that increase job dissatisfaction and improve working conditions over time. Research has proven that job satisfaction is directly related to enhanced performance. To this end, if leaders take steps to address the individualized needs of their employees and financially and non-financially reward them, and be supportive, it is likely to realize improved employee satisfaction and, therefore, increased employees' performance.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

The central research question for this study is: What strategies do small business leaders use to increase employees' overall job satisfaction?

1. What strategies have you developed and implemented to increase your employees' job satisfaction?

2. How did you assess the effectiveness of your strategies for improving employees' job satisfaction?

3. How do you reward your experienced and non-experienced employees?

4. In what ways do you provide individualized feedback to your employees?

5. As a leader, when and how many times a manager should communicate and provide a direct and clear information to employees about effectiveness of task performance?

6. How would task varieties impact employee job satisfaction?

7. In what ways do you explore if job satisfaction affect the employees' tendency to improve their performance?

Follow on Questions

1. Based on the strategies you indicated in interview question 1; did you implement a flexible rewarding system based on specific individual needs and if yes, have you observed if implementing such flexible reward system could impact job satisfaction?

2. Based upon the feedback experience you mentioned in interview question 4, in what ways, if any, do leadership skills assist in guiding employees and creating the right working conditions?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview: Job Satisfaction Strategies to Improve Performance of Small Businesses

The face-to-face interviews will begin with introductions and an overview of the topic.

A. I will advise the participants I am sensitive of their time and thank them for agreeing to participate in the study.

B. I will remind the participants of the recorded interview and the conversation we are about to have will remain strictly confidential.

C. I will turn on the recorder and I will announce the participant's identifying code, as well as the date and time of the interview.

D. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes to obtain responses for nine interview questions and follow-up questions.

E. I will also explain the concept and plan for member checking, by contracting participants with transcribed data, and request verification of the accuracy of collected information as soon as possible.

F. After confirming answers recorded to the satisfaction of the participants, the interview will conclude with a sincere thank you for participating in the study.