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Small Business Restaurant Marketing Strategies for Sustainability

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Lyle J. Hubbard

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Small Business Restaurant Marketing Strategies for Sustainability

by

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MBA, Columbia Southern University 2013

BS, University of Phoenix 1999

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2018

Abstract

Approximately 52% of food and accommodation businesses survive 5 years or more. Small business restaurant owners face greater challenges in marketing and sustainability than larger and well-established chain restaurants. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the successful marketing strategies of small business restaurant owners who sustained their businesses 5 years or more. The population was small business restaurant owners in Eugene, Oregon. The conceptual framework for this study was Porter's 5 forces. Data collection included semistructured interviews with 4 business owners, and data analysis consisted of coding and thematically analyzing interview data and data collected from the business and marketing documents of research participants. Five themes emerged: adherence to fundamental restaurant marketing principles; migration of restaurant promotions to websites and social media; innovation and flexibility in marketing; diner loyalty, reputation, and relationship marketing; and marketing evolution from hospitality experience. Each research participant emphasized the importance of food and service quality, flexibility in marketing, budgeting, and relationships with diners as marketing strategies for sustainability. Each restaurateur recognized the prohibitive costs of traditional television, radio, and print marketing and disclosed how social media and word of mouth were effective promotional channels with minimal costs. Findings may be used by small business restaurateurs to increase opportunities for duplicable and predictable sustainability and to increase revenues, job growth, and funds for environmental and philanthropic programs.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my mother, Barbara Yost Hubbard, and my father, D. Wayne Hubbard. My mom and dad have never wavered in their support of me and raised me with strong values and a love of education. My parents are both college graduates from Utah State University. My father also earned a Master's Degree in Instructional Technology from Utah State University. Their selfless examples of goodness to me and those around them, their lifelong support of me through both good and difficult times, their educational accomplishments, and their numerous life lessons taught, directly and indirectly, have never gone unnoticed by me. Although they are my parents, I hold my father and mother as two of my very best friends. Mom and Dad, thank you for your unconditional love, support, and lives well lived.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Two out of three private sector jobs in the United States are created by small businesses (SBA, 2016). Roughly half of small business owners fail in their efforts to sustain their firms for more than 5 years (SBA, 2014). Researchers studied the marketing initiatives of larger businesses more frequently than the marketing strategies of small businesses (Sorina-Diana, Dorel, & Nicoleta-Dorina, 2013). Sorina-Diana et al. (2013) posited that smaller businesses face different and peculiar challenges than larger ones and that small business leaders face challenges with measuring marketing performance because of these specific characteristics. Researchers identified multiple strategies for small business success, including marketing strategies that contributed to restaurant sustainability (Lee, Hallak, & Sardeshmukh, 2016). Thompson (2015) noted the disconnect between business marketing and operations personnel and found that increased coordination between them lead to better organizational development.

Researchers identified several reasons for failures in independent restaurants: limited resources when opening a restaurant, competition, restaurant density, failing to adjust to market conditions, and management incompetence (Rosalin, Poulston, & Goodsir, 2016). Svensson et al. (2016) recommended that businesses engage in sustainability efforts guided first by societal values, then by market dynamics. Svensson et al. encouraged business leaders to focus company sustainability efforts through active participation with internal and external stakeholders or face failure if only focusing on organizational goals. The focus of this study was small business restaurant marketing strategies for economic sustainability. Restaurateurs may further sustainability prospects

by minimizing waste and creating philanthropic relations with communities and stakeholders.

Background of the Problem

The food service industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the U.S. economy (Délano, 2014), suggesting that restaurateurs may positively contribute to the U.S. economy. The National Restaurant Association (2016) disclosed statistics from 2016 regarding (a) estimated restaurant industry sales of \$782.7 billion, (b) more than one million restaurant locations in the United States, (c) 14.4 million restaurant industry employees, and, (d) 1.7 million estimated new restaurant jobs created by the year 2026. Operators and owners in the hospitality industry manage the distribution of services including dining, lodging, and tourism, and often, hospitality leaders manage more than one of these services within an organization. Of the 46,528 food and accommodation businesses opened in 2011, only 52.5% remained in business after 5 years (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2016). Guchait, Paşamehmetoğlu, and Lanza-Abbot (2015) referred to service quality and its influence on competitive advantage regardless of the industry. Raja, Irfan, Akhtar, Muhammad, and Asad (2014) found that emphasizing customer satisfaction was a critical part of the foundation of any marketing program. Raja et al. concluded that factors of service, physical design, product quality, and price were key in successful full-service restaurants, but service quality remained the most important path to achieving customer satisfaction.

Researchers studied restaurant and small business success factors including cost management (Alonso & Krajsic, 2014), hospitality education (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015),

market orientation (Jakada & Gambo, 2014), location and management expertise (Hua, Xiao, & Yost, 2013), service quality measurements (Al-Tit, 2015), and performance measurements (Lin, Tou, & Yeh, 2014). However, researchers did not address definitive, small business restaurant marketing strategies. Restaurant owners and researchers may benefit from additional recommendations for improvements in small business restaurant marketing techniques for economic sustainability.

Problem Statement

Well-intentioned restaurateurs must continually improve methods to entice new and existing customers, and the long-term survival of restaurants depends on owners' abilities to develop, position, and market their services and dining selections to meet customers' needs (Duarte Alonso, O'Neill, Liu, & O'Shea, 2013). Only 52.5% of the 46,528 food and accommodation businesses opened in the United States in 2011 remained in business longer than 5 years (BLS, 2016). The general business problem is that ineffective marketing strategies may negatively affect small business restaurant sustainability. The specific business problem is that some small business restaurant owners lack marketing strategies to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the marketing strategies small business restaurant owners use to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years. The sample for this study was four small business restaurant owners in Eugene, Oregon who successfully used marketing initiatives to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years. The study may potentially affect social change as restaurateurs who incorporate the

recommendations from this research may achieve individual and duplicable sustainability. Restaurateurs may also generate revenues to promote health and wellness through education and provide philanthropic and environmental benefits to their stakeholders.

Nature of the Study

Researchers using the qualitative method ask participants to share their viewpoints (Burr, King, & Butt, 2014). Researchers also use the qualitative method to explore the lived experiences and understandings of participants (Gergen, Josselson, & Freeman, 2015). Researchers who conduct quantitative studies use numerical means to explain phenomena, primarily through statistics (Yilmaz, 2013). I did not need to test hypotheses, so the quantitative method was not suitable for the study. A mixed-methods approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods (Molina-Azorin, 2016). Because I intended to gain feedback from research participants on their small business restaurant marketing strategies for at least 5 years of sustainability through personal interviews and the review of documents, the quantitative and mixed-methods approaches were unsuitable.

Researchers use ethnography to explore the cultural activities of participants through observation (Sharman, 2017). Because I did not study cultures, the ethnographic design was unsuitable for this study. The phenomenological design is used to explore the experiences of participants (Letourneau, 2015). I did not explore the lived experiences of participants, so the phenomenological design was not suitable for this study. Researchers use narrative designs to explore personal stories (Safari &

Thilenius, 2013). Because I did not explore stories, the narrative design did not fit the purpose of my study. Researchers use case studies to explore detailed phenomena in real-world situations (Yin, 2013). I explored successful marketing strategies by triangulating data collection through interviews and document review; therefore the case study fit the purpose of this study.

Research Question

The central research question was the following: What marketing strategies do small business restaurant owners use to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years?

Interview Questions

1. What marketing strategies do you credit for sustaining your business for the first 5 years and beyond?
2. How much emphasis do you place on your marketing strategies?
3. What processes did you develop to create your marketing strategies?
4. How do you analyze the return on investment of your marketing strategies?
5. What barriers did you encounter to implement the marketing strategies?
6. How did you address the barriers encountered when implementing the marketing strategies?
7. How do you position your brand to maximize competitive advantage?
8. How do financial fluctuations in your business affect your marketing capabilities?
9. How do you revise your marketing strategies to compete with other restaurants?

10. What additional information can you provide regarding marketing strategies you used to achieve sustainability longer than 5 years?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Porter's five forces. According to Porter (1980), organizational leaders striving for competitive advantage address five primary forces: (a) threat of new entrants, (b) rivalries between industry firms, (c) threats of substitute products or services, (d) bargaining power of suppliers, and (e) bargaining power of buyers. Business leaders using Porter's five forces analyze the forces to develop strategies for success and identify new areas of profitability (Azadi & Rahimzadeh, 2012). Small business restaurant operators seeking effective marketing initiatives for sustainability could benefit from the framework of Porter's five forces as they strive for strategic business opportunities. Porter's five forces were relevant and applicable to researching small business restaurant marketing strategies for sustainability by four restaurant owners who remained in business for longer than 5 years. Small business restaurant owners with well-defined marketing plans may benefit from creating strategies based on Porter's five forces in competing with new entrants entering the industry, facing rivalries effectively, responding quickly to substitute products, and improving their bargaining abilities with suppliers and buyers.

Operational Definitions

Brand identity: Brand identity consists of all actions of a firm, along with internal values, to promote and communicate its history and current practices while using brand

name development, along with the company logo and slogan, to maximize a well-accepted brand image (Williams & Omar, 2014).

Brand orientation: Brand orientation is the development of processes and a firm's mission, vision, and values, to create, develop, and protect brand identity through constant customer relationships and using both internal and external strategies (Gromark & Melin, 2013; Urde, Baumgarth, & Merrilees, 2013).

Competitive strategy: Competitive strategy is the long-term, systematic steps focused on competitive environments to enable firms to effectively maneuver against other organizations (Tarasova, Snitko, Matuzenko, Meshechkina, & Voishscheva, 2016).

Identity marketing: Identity marketing is the connection of a business brand to the identity of a customer or consumer (Ghosh Chowdhury, Desai, & Bolton, 2014).

Market: The market is the network of people and organizations with needs to fulfill, money for purchases, and the avenues for needs fulfillment through the monetary acquisition of goods and services (Alvarez, Sanchez de la Cruz, & Zechariah, 2014).

Marketing: Marketing is the actions, institutions, and procedures that generate, communicate, deliver, and present value offerings for multiple stakeholders including consumers, clients, partners, and society (American Marketing Association, 2013).

Market orientation: Market orientation is the organizational intent to identify needs and wants in target markets with the goal to satisfy those needs more effectively than competitors and maximize business profits (Gebhardt, Carpenter, & Sherry, 2006; Slater & Narver, 1998).

Small business: A small business is one operated as an establishment mainly in the United States, is subject to taxation, is independently owned, and functions as a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation or other legal entity (SBA, 2015).

Sustainability: Sustainability is the economic success of an organization connected with responsibilities toward social and environmental citizenship (McFarlane & Ogazon, 2011).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are important to identify in research and the failure to consider them may invalidate the results of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Qualitative researchers make assumptions about ideas, theories, and beliefs and about whether that data qualifies as evidence or knowledge (Chandler, 2013). A researcher holds assumptions as believable, true, or realistic expectations (Silverman, 2013). Researchers must remain aware of the risks of assumptions to ensure valid results. The primary assumption of this study, which proved to be true, was that the participants understood overarching marketing concepts. Two other assumptions of this study that proved to be true were (a) the participants provided truthful responses about their marketing efforts, and (b) the qualitative research method and multiple case design were suitable for this study.

Limitations

Staller (2014) defined limitations as circumstances uncontrolled by researchers that may influence the validity of a study. Limitations are obstacles classified in the following categories: (a) real, (b) psychological, or (c) imaginary (Singh, 2015). A

limitation of this study was possible researcher bias as I was the only interviewer and collector of data. I mitigated bias in this study and had no preconceived notions of how the participants would respond to interview questions, by not being employed in any foodservice business, and by not having relationships with any of the small business restaurant owners or their staff. Another limitation was the pool of participants. The geographical region of Eugene, Oregon may have differed from the larger population of small business restaurant owners striving for sustainability through effective marketing strategies.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the boundaries and the scope of the study (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). A delimitation of this study was that the participants were independent, small business restaurant owners who demonstrated marketing successes for more than 5 years. The boundaries of this study included Eugene, Oregon small business restaurant owners who had achieved sustainability of 5 years or more through successful marketing strategies.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Based on the findings and recommendations from this study, restaurateurs may learn new marketing strategies or reinforce already incorporated marketing strategies to promote the economic sustainability of their businesses. Restaurateurs around the world face operational obstacles regarding heightened competition, increased food and labor costs, and more demanding clientele (Noone & Maier, 2015). Restaurateurs

implementing marketing strategies regarding product, place, promotion, and price and the framework of Porter's five forces may heighten competitiveness, enhance cost controls, and satisfy the needs of exacting customers. Noone and Maier (2015) recommended that well-designed and flexible menus along with strategic pricing and design decisions lead to sustained revenue in growth and profitability. Restaurateurs may discover new marketing strategies or confirm existing strategies regarding managing costs, pricing to guest satisfaction, promoting atmosphere and location, and increasing the chances for long-term business sustainability.

Implications for Social Change

Researchers posited that restaurateurs contributed significantly to economic growth by yearly revenue, number of outlets, or transaction metrics (Rule, 2014), including restaurant growth in the United States (Délano, 2014). Wood (2016) explored the concept of social marketing to encourage awareness of obesity initiatives, a significant and global health problem. Marketing representatives occasionally neglected the promotion of healthy consumer food and drink choices (Wood, 2016). Wood recommended that business leaders promoting early childhood education and care, along with parental support programs, could deliver economic, social, and educational rewards to reduce both social and health issues for children and families, especially in at-risk populations. In situations where hospitality owners lack skilled laborers, governments could provide funding for university and hospitality small- and medium-size enterprise (SME) partnerships to encourage collaboration between them (Seilov, 2015). Restaurateurs may find the impetus for social change from this study and contribute to

economic growth, encourage healthy dining choices, and create public and private partnerships to benefit the industry.

Significance of the Study

Researchers studied the success factors of restaurateurs and noted the constant challenges business owners face (Duarte Alonso et al., 2013). Researchers also studied the success of independent restaurants and noted that restaurateurs who developed business plans experienced more success than those without plans (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). The BLS (2015) reported that 21% of all employees in the United States worked in the 10 largest U.S. occupations in 2014 and those occupations included restaurant workers, food preparation employees, servers, waiters, and waitresses. Beginning or struggling small business restaurateurs could gain insights into effective marketing strategies from this study to promote long-term business sustainability. Findings may help small business restaurant owners (a) overcome the obstacles hampering sustainability, (b) encourage comprehensive marketing and business plans, and (c) continue to support the employment of and expand the opportunities for workers in the U.S. restaurant industry. Small business restaurant owners operate in a highly competitive industry and by focusing on effective marketing strategies, they could improve their sustainability and innovative processes. Researchers noted how sustainability from an economic, social, and environmental perspective fuels innovation and increases competitive advantage (Theyel & Hofmann, 2012).

The results from this study could encourage social change by recommending proven marketing strategies to independent restaurant owners, as well as other types of

small businesses, to promote their long-term survival and affect their communities in positive ways. Business owners who create profitability might use the extra revenues to improve their communities by assisting disadvantaged populations, minimizing waste, and promoting health and wellness by educating stakeholders on nutrition and healthy dining alternatives. The results of this study may also provide community culinary arts students with duplicable insights to pursue profitable restaurant ownership opportunities. Accomplished culinary arts students could combine their skills in the kitchen with effective marketing strategies as future restaurant owners to promote long-term sustainability operating a restaurant in a highly competitive industry.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

I conducted a review of the professional literature pertaining to the following research question: What marketing strategies do small business restaurant owners use to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years? To answer this question, I completed a multiple case study to explore the common success factors of small business restaurant marketing strategies for sustainability. I covered in the professional review of the literature marketing background and concepts, the 4Ps of marketing, marketing organization, leadership, measurements, market orientation and identity, and marketing differences between large and small businesses. I reviewed the literature for sustainability concepts, marketing, stakeholder relationships, sustainability ethics, and sustainability leadership and measurements. I addressed the literature for restaurant marketing, restaurant market orientation, success factors and measurements, leadership, nutrition, and cost management. The conceptual framework for this study was Porter's five forces. I

addressed the body of literature regarding Porter's five forces from multiple angles. I concluded the literature review with alternative conceptual frameworks.

I used sources in my research for the literature review including books, industry references, academic and peer-reviewed articles, and government data. I used EBSCO Host, ProQuest Central, Emerald Management, Sage Journals, ABI/Inform, and Hospitality and Tourism Complete library databases. I also used the Google Scholar search engine. I used the following keywords for my searches: *small business marketing, restaurant management, restaurant marketing, restaurant success factors, small business, restaurant leadership, small business success, restaurant cost management, restaurant menus, restaurant locations, marketing strategies, identity and brand marketing, competition, restaurant atmosphere, and sustainability*. In the literature review, I collected 93 references from a government source, a restaurant industry website, a reference from a sustainability paper, and journals; 93.55% of the references in the literature review were peer-reviewed (87 journal references), along with one government reference. A total of 84, or 90.32% of the references, were published within 5 years of my expected completion year of the study.

Marketing Background and Importance

Business leaders may maximize their marketing efforts by understanding basic marketing concepts and definitions. Marketing is defined as the activities, institutions, and processes that produce, communicate, deliver, and present value offers to consumers, clients, partners, and society (American Marketing Association, 2013). Researchers defined marketing as the processes used to determine and satisfy the needs, wants, and

desires of targeted markets (Walsh & Lipinski, 2009). Marketers must realize the importance of understanding the definition of marketing in business performance. Lam and Harker (2015) noted that the concept of marketing proliferated in the 20th century. Katona (2014) indicated that some business leaders fail to realize the importance of marketing. Some business managers failed to see marketing as a clear concept or misunderstood marketing as only advertising (Katona, 2014). Academic and business researchers may add to long-term sustainability by studying effective marketing strategies.

Researchers should encourage additional studies into the successful application of marketing strategies for businesses of all types and sizes, including restaurants. Some business leaders minimized the need for marketing or claimed they lacked funding or subject-matter experts in their efforts (Katona, 2014). Other scholars confirmed the findings of earlier studies that business founders accepted marketing as a stand-alone concept and an integral indicator of business achievements (Lam & Harker, 2015). Other business managers used entrepreneurial actions, and untested marketing techniques, to contribute to new venture accomplishments (Jayawarna, Jones, Lam, & Phua, 2014). Business leaders must familiarize themselves with marketing strategies that effectively introduce products and services to customers and provide the revenues required for sustainability. A forward-thinking business owner might leverage sustainability by combining both marketing strategies and entrepreneurial strengths.

Marketing Ps: Product, Place, Promotion, and Price

Business owners managing marketing efforts may find a benefit to defining them with fundamental theories for implementation. As early as 1960, researchers promoted the 4Ps of marketing as a fundamental theory: product, place, promotion, and price (Borisavljevic, 2013; McCarthy, 1960). Other researchers described the 4Ps as an effective model that is flexible in application, and managers in any market segment can incorporate them (Festa, Cuomo, Metallo, & Festa, 2016). Business managers applying the 4Ps to various efforts in commerce should modify them to help them reach performance objectives, regardless of the size or focus of their business. Bellin (2016) posited that leaders use the 4Ps to position products to the target market and gain a competitive advantage. Marketing managers and business owners applying the 4Ps in their organizations may maximize their competitive edge, regardless of the size and scope of their enterprises.

Marketing Plans

Business leaders maximize their success with defined business plans and using the 4Ps may provide a solid foundation for those plans. Owners who develop business plans may increase their chances of meeting defined performance objectives. Many small business leaders fail to develop effective business and operational plans (Fox, 2013). Lam and Harker (2015) found that marketing managers from an entrepreneurial perspective saw marketing initiatives as important to achieving performance objectives. Lam and Harker emphasized how entrepreneurs modified their marketing initiatives at different times during their business life cycle. In the competitive environment of business,

business owners who fail to adjust their business plans in changing markets, even according to the guidelines of the 4Ps, risk failure.

Marketing Adjustments

Business owners reacting to the market must remain vigilant to changing trends in the consumption of their products and services. Successful firm leaders modify their marketing initiatives to market conditions (Arnett & Wittmann, 2014). Business leaders exhibit different strategies and priorities and incorporate multiple marketing initiatives in their business lives (Lam & Harker, 2015). Cordeiro (2013) recommended strategic planning actions including researching strategies, assessing those strategies, and monitoring progress in the implementation of strategies. Business owners maintaining awareness of changing market conditions should study updated marketing techniques to stay abreast of local, regional, and global success benchmarks.

Marketing Leadership

Business owners may face different challenges marketing their products and services at different points in their life cycle. New firms cannot fit their marketing strategies into a singular blueprint for success (Jones & Rowley, 2011). Leaders of small businesses experienced increased chances of success with reasonable, pragmatic, and individualized marketing programs (Sorina-Diana et al., 2013). From a leadership standpoint, an entrepreneur or owner's style and individual personality influences business decisions (Sadler-Smith, Hampson, Chaston, & Badger, 2003). Business leaders striving for market longevity should assess current and future challenges and modify business objectives accordingly.

Researchers corroborated previous research findings indicating that managers in new businesses relied more on intuition and informal techniques, rather than traditional marketing practices (Jayawarna et al., 2014). In the life cycle of a business, each owner launches his or her venture at a beginning point. Researchers discovered that business owners started their organizations in commerce for various reasons (Blackburn, Hart, & Wainwright, 2013). Restaurant owners with different motivations for starting their businesses and with multiple backgrounds may justify the research required to balance marketing practices against their long-term objectives in commerce. Jayawarna et al. (2014) found that general marketing practices like selective distribution, market segmentation, and advertising had minimal results on the successes of new ventures. Business managers in new ventures that incorporated service and product innovations, market research, and service functionality and quality established a competitive advantage (Jayawarna et al., 2014). Organizational leaders implementing marketing programs along with personal qualities may react more quickly to customized business and marketing plans regardless of the tenure of their organization.

Business leaders seeking ownership in marketing initiatives may benefit by including their organizational staff in their strategies. Managers should share marketing knowledge throughout the organization to maximize effectiveness (Arnett & Wittmann, 2014). In addition to effective organizational communication, firm leaders should develop and leverage organizational structure to solve marketing problems (Lee, Kozlenkova, & Palmatier, 2015). Stakeholders in an organization must expect senior leadership to communicate strategically regarding defined business plans. Business

owners with an effective organizational structure might maximize communication effectiveness through department heads and lower-level managers. Researchers studied partnerships between small business owners and external stakeholders to understand how innovators outside the organization could promote competitiveness within a business (Silva, Rocha Dacorso, Barreto Corsa, & Di Sario, 2016). Silva et al. (2016) discovered that business leaders who partnered with external innovators enhanced their strategies and knowledge to further sustainability.

Small and Large Business Marketing Differences

Business owners may face different marketing challenges depending on the size of the organization. Leaders in larger businesses possess more structure and decision-making hierarchy, and owners and entrepreneurs of smaller businesses rely more on individual efforts (Walsh & Lipinski, 2009). In comparison, small business leaders engaging in marketing view the concept from a unique perspective (Katona, 2014). Armstrong (2013) posited that scholars typically created management strategy theories for larger organizations. With a similar conclusion, Cordeiro (2013) wrote that large organizations most likely engage in strategic planning, but smaller firms struggle with the concept. In contrast, Katona (2014) surmised that even rudimentary elements of marketing might be sufficient in operating and managing small business endeavors. Small businesses compete more effectively against larger organizations by differentiating their strategies through offering higher quality products or services (Armstrong, 2013). Firm leaders might adjust their marketing efforts appropriately to increase operational effectiveness by adjusting their strategies depending on the size of their business.

Market Orientation

Business leaders who understand marketing concepts like market orientation may benefit by applying those concepts to their unique situations. Market orientation is identifying the wants and needs in target markets to deliver the satisfaction of those needs better than competitors and to increase profits (Gebhardt et al., 2006; Slater & Narver, 1998). Managers increased market share through market orientation and discovered influence and appeal in similar, fundamental marketing concepts (Jakada & Gambo, 2014). Jakada and Gambo (2014) also found that managers using market orientation more effectively than their competitors increase sustainable competitive advantage by creating superior and distinctive value for clients. Restaurateurs who engage in a market orientation may increase their attraction to existing and potential clients.

Marketing Identity

Restaurateurs focused on market orientation to compete for customers may experience benefits when implementing identity marketing. Identity marketing is the connection of a brand to the identity of a consumer (Ghosh Chowdhury et al., 2014). Customers may avoid adhering to a singular brand or a few restaurant brands as they may select dining options varied in cost, ethnic origin, genre, or location. Researchers conducted studies that highlighted both the benefits and risks of identity marketing (Bhattacharjee, Berger, & Menon, 2014). Bhattacharjee et al. (2014) concluded that consumers required freedom in their expressions of consumption and that promoting consumption that overtly defines identity expression minimized brand purchases. Small business restaurateurs who implement identity marketing through social media and cost-

effective strategies may entice their consumers into purchasing. Bhattacharjee et al. reported that customers minimized consumption in express identity marketing especially when they valued agency with purchases. Consumers may embrace identity marketing efforts productively when choosing a brand and product that enhances their image like clothing, automobiles, and electronics. Restaurateurs who focus on market orientation may maximize their returns through strategic competition. Small business restaurant owners who engage in identity marketing may capitalize on clients choosing from multiple dining locations while avoiding allegiance to one or a few restaurants because of food variety, atmosphere, nutritional value, time, or budget constraints.

Sustainability Fundamentals

Business leaders may succeed in multiple sustainability platforms by first generating the revenues required for organizational longevity. Organizational leaders may provide employment opportunities, goods or services, programs that protect the environment, or initiatives that benefit stakeholders by generating positive revenues for operation. The general definition of sustainability is fulfilling the needs of the current generation while not compromising the needs of upcoming generations (Visser & Bruntland, 2009). Lim (2015) defined sustainability as focusing on people, planet, and profits, and described the relationship between social, environmental, and economic facets of sustainability using these descriptors. The topic of sustainability is a provocative research subject (Lim, 2015). The platforms of sustainability are the trifecta to maximizing a bottom-line approach to both organizational and societal benefits (Lim, 2015). Small business owners and restaurateurs may simply struggle to remain profitable

and may lack the resources or knowledge to promote social and environmental sustainability. As noted in the operational definitions, organizational leaders should focus on economic sustainability concerning social and environmental aspects and as responsible global citizens (McFarlane & Ogazon, 2011). Business owners who fail to achieve economic successes may fail to generate the resources and perspectives needed to implement all platforms of sustainability including social awareness (Perrott, 2014). Business owners may promote the concepts of sustainability by generating the profitability required to support long-term operations.

Sustainability Marketing

Small business leaders may maximize their opportunity for achieving sustainability concepts by focusing on profitability. Organizational leaders generating profit may increase opportunities for social and environmental sustainability. A discerning business leader who leverages social and environmental sustainability initiatives to create long-term profits may exemplify overarching sustainability. Jones and Rowley (2011) indicated marketing managers should avoid a singular marketing plan and Lim (2015) concluded that organizations increase performance by implementing flexible sustainability marketing. Lim contrasted sustainability marketing with more commonly accepted marketing from an economic standpoint where organizations seek only to maximize profits. Lim posited that an organization seeking only profits leads to unsustainability. In contrast, researchers posited that small businesses engage less in philanthropy for strategic purposes or sponsor events only for financial benefits; the researchers also described that family-owned businesses experienced advantages from

community involvement (Fitzgerald, Haynes, Schrank, & Danes, 2010). Competitive business leaders may increase their success by incorporating marketing strategies along with sustainable initiatives. Walsh and Lipinski (2009) highlighted the competitiveness of small firms and emphasized that business managers using marketing, strategy, and entrepreneurship contributed to their sustainability and growth. Lim emphasized that organizations improve sustainability marketing when focusing on economic, social, ethical, and technological initiatives. Business leaders striving for sustainability must demonstrate flexibility in their initiatives and customize their strategies to meet their needs.

Sustainability and Stakeholders

O’Cass and Sok (2014) found that the relationships SME managers hold with multiple business stakeholders contribute to market-sharing to improve marketing efforts and that these partners assist in promoting the firm, leading to reputational connections. Pivoda (2016) researched organizational image and the importance of sharing business values with stakeholders. Employees may knowingly or unknowingly participate in any organization as stakeholders. Employee participation in sustainability programs produces positive results (Pivoda, 2016). Businesses of many sizes must remain profitable or may risk closure. Leaders communicating strategies for sustainability may increase possibilities for growth. The successful business owner that understands the importance of communicating with both internal and external stakeholders may exceed performance objectives.

A discerning business manager may influence their internal stakeholders more easily than external stakeholders. As business leaders understand the role of external stakeholders more fully, the partnership opportunities for success with these stakeholders may increase. Researchers wrote that stakeholders should exhibit detection prowess to identify organizations that claim sustainable practices without following them (Crilly, Hansen, & Zollo, 2016). Sustainability is defined as the economic, social, and ecological processes that firms implement to reach short-term financial objectives without affecting the current or future needs of the organization (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014). Discerning scholars should display skepticism about SME claims of sustainability as SME leaders may only feign sustainability in practice.

Researchers correlated market orientation to people and relationship building (Lam & Harker, 2015). Lam and Harker (2015) discovered that founders interacting with their environments, including social contacts, accentuated the entrepreneurial process. Lam and Harker demonstrated the correlation between entrepreneurship and marketing based on relationships between stakeholders, social contacts, and entrepreneurial efforts. Researchers recommended that SME business leaders become competent in sustainability practices, including economic initiatives for longevity (Darcy, Hill, McCabe, & McGovern, 2014).

Sustainability Ethics

As business leaders incorporate economic, environmental, and social initiatives to promote their survival and build these initiatives into marketing strategies, managers should encourage an ethical atmosphere of compliance. Guerci, Radaelli, Siletti, Cirella,

and Rami Shani (2015) recommended that managers might foster ethical climates by improving employee selection and training initiatives involving those employees. Researchers wrote that ethics contributed to stakeholder interests (Hawker & Edmonds, 2014). Walsh and Lipinski (2009) found that smaller business leaders struggle with advanced structures for decision making and often rely on individual efforts when making decisions. SME owners enacting reasonable standards of ethics and sustainability may benefit from a favorable environment. Guerci et al. (2015) found that human resource managers (HRM) influence an ethical climate within a firm. Business owners might lack structure, but even if they act in the role of their own HRM, they may promote business longevity. Guerci et al. discovered that SMEs' ability, motivation, and opportunity influenced ethical workplace atmospheres and that an organization's sustainability leanings increased the coordination between HRM programs and ethical environments. Business leaders may increase longevity by implementing marketing and sustainability platforms.

Sustainability Measures

Business owners may use key performance measures to gauge the success of their ventures. Similar to measuring marketing results, Johnson (2015) highlighted 36 tools that leaders used for measuring sustainability progress including accounting methods, audits, benchmarking, employee improvement strategies, management systems, reports, and stakeholder interactions. Pivoda (2016) encouraged business leaders to measure the success of sustainability efforts through tracking logistics like transportation costs, energy use, or emissions generated. Pivoda referred to sustainability from an

environmental perspective. Business leaders may promote longevity through awareness of cost containment efforts in financial expenditures within their organizations.

Johnson (2015) developed a model to discover the reasons why certain SMEs adopted sustainability management tools more than others. Johnson assessed several economic outcomes of sustainability including status between competitors, costs, acquiring and retaining customers, product innovation, and sales. Business managers evaluating business performance might use status, costs, customer retention, innovation, and sales as indicators of marketing and sustainability success. Business owners may increase their longevity when they align their marketing strategies with economic sustainability.

Business owners should measure internal successes and may find benefits to awareness of external forces that may influence their sustainability. McDonagh and Prothero (2014) wrote that consumers supporting sustainability consume differently to influence change. McDonagh and Prothero identified these consumers as downshiffters, voluntary simplifiers, and sustainable or ethical buyers. Researchers explained that while consumers may promote sustainability, investors also recognize the importance of sustainability on financial performance (McDonagh & Prothero, 2014). Business owners assessing their performance against external parties like customers and investors may find performance benchmarks that promote sustainability.

Sustainability Leadership

Business owners may promote philanthropic or environmental sustainability by generating revenues for long-term survival. Researchers found that the leadership of a

firm should incorporate sustainability efforts into their business plans and that sustainability affects an organization's current and future success (Müller & Pflieger, 2014). Business leaders choose from several types of sustainability strategies: risk mitigation, extroverted sustainability, and visionary sustainability (Müller & Pflieger, 2014). Business leaders may perceive these as advanced strategies, although Agarwal and Dahm (2015) indicated that business leaders create more opportunities for success with the development of business plans. Leaders may use risk mitigation, sustainability measures, and efficiency benchmarks to cut costs as part of an effective business plan to promote long-term business survival and in alignment with sustainability practices.

Researchers posited sustainability as leadership's responsibility for a firm's environmental, economic, and social initiatives (Müller & Pflieger, 2014). Small business leaders may engage in all three platforms of sustainability, and those leaders must remain focused on economic longevity first to address environmental or social programs that may benefit stakeholders. Organizational leaders seeking economic success must consider the risks, benefits, and costs of achieving sustainability (Müller & Pflieger, 2014). Business leaders considering strategies in their business plans may track marketing and economic sustainability efforts to promote their longevity. Researchers wrote that firm leadership must promote sustainability with a focus on the future because inflexible management no longer suffices (Pearce & Stahl, 2015). Pivoda (2016) proclaimed the importance of sustainability as a requirement for competition especially considering the proliferation of business globalization. Business owners who exhibit

leadership qualities in marketing and sustainability may possess qualities that failing business owners lack.

Small Business Restaurant Marketing

Restaurateurs may benefit from marketing strategies in an industry with a global presence and an increased focus on customer satisfaction. The food service industry is expanding in the U.S. economy (Délano, 2014). Jakada and Gambo (2014) wrote that hospitality focuses on a host receiving, welcoming, and serving guests in temporary situations away from the guest's residences. Researchers posited that entrepreneurs desire to enter the business to create new ventures to gain profit and that business managers achieve these objectives by finding, keeping, and maintaining customers (Lam & Harker, 2015). Restaurateurs acting in the roles of gracious hosts may maximize customer retention, regardless of their geographic location.

Restaurant Market Orientation

Restaurateurs may encourage repeat customers by appealing to the tastes and likes of their clients. Jakada and Gambo (2014) wrote that hospitality managers should use market orientation as a critical success factor in organizational marketing. Restaurateurs in the hospitality industry focusing only on dining options may just require focus on the dining needs of their clients without the distraction of lodging, transportation, or travel planning services. Hospitality managers created customer-centric workplaces through in-depth training on marketing basics, listening to and engaging customers, and upselling (Jakada & Gambo, 2014). Researchers posited that product offers and competitive demand required methods to differentiate between similar technology, products, services,

and strategies (Alvarez et al., 2014). Restaurateurs engaged in market orientation may compete more effectively in their geographical locations and to differentiate their food and services from other restaurants.

Restaurant Success Factors

Researchers studied multiple restaurant success factors to determine the successful attributes of sustainability. Self, Jones, and Botieff (2015) posited that researchers failed to define specific reasons for restaurant failures. Other researchers discovered that a restaurant's location, the speed of growth and differentiation, along with management expertise or inexperience and other factors influenced the success or failure of restaurants (Hua, Xiao, & Yost, 2013). Researchers found that location contributed to a restaurant's survival (Self et al., 2015). Researchers recommended that restaurant operators innovate in marketing management by using social networking, smartphone applications, continuous staff training, creating career-path programs, along with succession plans, and implementing compensation plans (Lee et al., 2016). In family businesses, researchers found that the loyalty of the relationships within the operation provided a competitive edge (Rosalin et al., 2016). Researchers also recommended that loyalty may provide a competitive advantage but restaurant managers, family or otherwise, still required business strategies and operational skills (Rosalin et al., 2016).

Researchers addressed success factors achieved by restaurant operators. Researchers found that new businesses and business operators who generated business plans maximized growth and employment rates (Blackburn et al., 2013). Researchers studying small business restaurant sustainability may benefit from success factors

regarding longevity in the food service environment. Researchers defined relationship marketing investment (RMI) as initiatives that promote mutual interactions (Ryu & Lee, 2013). Restaurateurs may increase their opportunities for success through RMI programs. Customers engaged in RMI efforts enjoyed the process and reported satisfaction and gratitude for RMI programs (Ryu & Lee, 2013). Many restaurateurs with similar distribution and pricing strategies differentiated their offerings with customized plans (Ryu & Lee, 2013). Restaurant owners may increase their opportunities for longevity by becoming students of successful marketing initiatives.

Operators of manufacturing SMEs experienced slower growth compared to hotels, restaurants, consumer services, and retailers (Blackburn et al., 2013). Business leaders and researchers studying small business restaurant marketing strategies may benefit by analyzing growth, demonstrating flexibility, and creating business plans to determine the attributes of restaurant sustainability. Other researchers studied innovation, entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), and human capital as components of restaurant performance (Lee et al., 2016). Restaurant operators improved marketing management by using social networking, smartphone applications, employee training, developing succession and compensation plans, and creating career-path programs for employees (Lee et al., 2016). Each initiative that a restaurant owner engages in for sustainability may categorically relate to the 4Ps of marketing. Restaurateurs who assess performance benchmarks may find areas of improvement for economic sustainability.

Restaurant Success Measures

Small business restaurant owners may promote sustainability with techniques to measure their effectiveness. Researchers used the measurement tool of SERVQUAL to assess the physical environment of restaurants and the service quality of restaurant employees (Al-Tit, 2015). SERVQUAL is a tool restaurant operators used to measure service quality even though researchers in previous studies applied the same parameters of SERVQUAL inconsistently (Al-Tit, 2015). Al-Tit (2015) concluded that the quality of food and service influenced customer satisfaction and that customer satisfaction produced customer retention. Other researchers studied the actions of service employees to increase opportunities for customer satisfaction and delight (Barnes, Meyer, & Kinard, 2016). The researchers emphasized that customer delight and customer satisfaction remain in separate categories (Barnes et al., 2016). Delighted customers expressed loyalty through repeat business (Barnes et al., 2016). Researchers found that delighted customers displayed emotions from transactions that encouraged loyalty (Chun Wang, Wang, & Tai, 2016). Satisfied customers agreed that services only met expectations without promoting long-term loyalty to (Chun Wang et al., 2016). Researchers found that customer delight increased through unsolicited server recommendations (Barnes et al., 2016). Servers should avoid general statements and instead focus on unscripted and specific recommendations (Barnes et al., 2016). A challenge for restaurant operators may be how success is measured for quality and satisfaction to promote economic successes. Restaurateurs who consistently measure the factors of customer product and service quality may create sustainability.

Business owners who implement quality and service performance measurements and compare them to financial incentives may generate higher revenues. As business leaders may risk personal funds to operate successfully, they must choose performance measurements and incentive programs wisely. Lin et al. (2014) observed the use of financial measures in management and how only measuring financial performance produced undesirable results. Lin et al. studied the performance measures of chain restaurant store managers and how cleanliness, ambiance and atmosphere, comfort, and food quality influenced restaurant growth. Al-Tit (2015) identified customer satisfaction in which client expectations were met or exceeded by service performance. Restaurant owners measuring the quality of service, food presentation and temperature, and ambiance, benefit from current and future research on customer satisfaction (Al-Tit, 2015). Researchers discovered that performance bonuses earned by restaurant chain managers contributed to growth (Lin et al., 2014).

A restaurant owner may improve service and quality performance metrics with employee incentives. Al-Tit (2015) adopted the critical success factors of food quality as freshness, deliciousness, nutritional, variety, and the enticement created by smell. Researchers posited that service quality and revenue benchmarks for store managers create relevancy in an organization (Lin et al., 2014). Restaurateurs may achieve sustainability by creating performance bonuses for managers and employees. A small restaurant owner adhering to an initial business plan may achieve sustainability by understanding the performance standards of chain restaurants.

Researchers may contribute to the literature about hospitality success yet fail to provide success measurement factors. Jakada and Gambo (2014) indicated that hospitality managers engage in proactive and efficient responses to market needs and demands. Raja et al. (2014) recommended training initiatives, smart pricing, enhanced service quality, and the responsiveness of employees as key areas of focus for full-service restaurant owners and managers. Lin et al. (2014) emphasized the importance of performance measurements for any incentive system and concluded that quality-related performance indicators improved chain restaurant growth. A restaurant manager may use financial incentives to promote quality and service success. Restaurant managers achieved performance results when monitored for performance (Lin et al., 2014). Restaurant managers who exhibit leadership capabilities may affect the strategies required for sustainability by implementing success measurements.

Restaurant Leadership

Stakeholders may benefit from leadership and marketing skills. Struggling restaurateurs correcting operational errors may promote longevity by focusing on servant leadership. Carter and Baghurst (2014) studied servant leadership in the context of restaurant employee engagement. Carter and Baghurst explained the philosophy of leadership through service and its use with scholars. Managers implemented servant leadership initiatives within groups and improved customer relations, identified and corrected performance errors, and minimized attrition (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). Chatterjee and Das (2015) identified the entrepreneurial characteristics of achievement, center of control, self-efficacy, tolerance of ambiguity, risk-taking, and innovation as

leadership traits. Business owners who familiarize themselves with successful entrepreneurial traits may identify characteristics of sustainability.

Restaurateurs striving for growth and measuring growth performance success may contribute to small business sustainability. Not all small business owners intend to grow (Reijonen, Párdányi, Tuominen, Laukkanen, & Komppula, 2014). Reijonen et al. (2014) studied SMEs with growth strategies and found they varied from others on market and brand orientation and discovered that firms desiring growth implemented market and brand strategies. The education that restaurateurs attain may provide a foundation for success in business. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) found that restaurateurs achieved minimal formal hospitality education and that most restaurant operators held college degrees or had owned businesses previously. Managers highlighted a common theme of restaurant success with ethnic restaurateurs along with culinary experience and technical skills (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). As restaurant operators and owners prepare for success through leadership skills and experience, they may contribute to economic growth.

Restaurateurs influence the economy of the United States and Alsallaiy, Dawson, Han, and Martinez-Dawson (2015) noted that food sector employees comprised 19% of the workforce income in the United States. The U.S. Small Business Administration (2014) found that, regardless of the industry, restaurants included, two out of every three jobs in the private sector are created by small businesses. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) discovered in a study that hospitality education achieved by restaurateurs factored unimportantly in success indicators. Restaurateurs striving for sustainability may benefit from business experience and continuing education. Blackburn et al. (2013) wrote that

business leaders advanced their business goals through processes and the leader's age, educational level, and gender contributed to performance. Restaurateurs with leadership skills may create sustainability by implementing marketing strategies suited for their needs.

Restaurant Nutrition

Restaurateurs may delight clients through marketing initiatives. Customers presented with healthy dining choices may experience higher levels of satisfaction. Managers engage in customer delight by creating emotions that increase loyalties, client retention, and long-term relations (Chun Wang et al., 2016). Hospitality managers focused only on customer satisfaction may ignore the competitive advantage of customer delight strategies (Chun Wang et al., 2016). Bedard and Kuhn (2015) conducted a study examining the results of offering Nutricate receipts to customers of Burgerville, a burger restaurant chain located in the Pacific Northwest. Bedard and Kuhn explained that Nutricate receipts generate personal food recommendations where customers use information from the receipts to make healthier eating purchases. Bedard and Kuhn summarized that when customers were presented information on healthier food choices, consumers reacted positively. Some restaurant managers claimed nutritional access burdensome, yet restaurateurs in other instances experienced customer benefits because they disclosed nutritional content (Ye, Cronin, & Peloza, 2015). Ye et al. (2015) posited that restaurants aligning with corporate social responsibility benefit from the disclosure of nutritional facts. A restaurateur striving for customer delight may find nutritional information an effective strategy for marketing.

To promote marketing in independent restaurants, restaurateurs may use personalized dining choices using technology to enhance the customer experience. Bedard and Kuhn (2015) addressed this shift in information technology where business leaders can measure consumer-purchasing behaviors and recommend healthier selections. Restaurant operators may improve their sustainability, including client relationships, by promoting access to nutritional information.

Multiple Restaurant Marketing Strategies

Consumers of dining products and services may perceive nutritional information and streamlined menu ordering techniques useful. Beldona, Buchanan, and Miller (2014) studied e-tablet menus and their benefits versus printed menus. Beldona et al. (2014) researched e-tablet menus regarding order quality, ease of use, and the perceptions of customer satisfaction using electronic menus. Beldona et al. concluded that electronic ordering devices improved customer dining interactions and maximized the ease of placing an order. Researchers found that in restaurants with higher prices for menu selections, the purchase of extreme options increased if also offered price variations (Pinger, Ruhmer-Krell, & Schumacher, 2016). Pinger, Ruhmer-Krell, and Schumacher (2016) found that restaurateurs maximize choice and compromise menu options through menu design and if menu options are sub-categorized. The 4Ps of marketing are defined as product, place, promotion, and price (Borisavljevic, 2013). In alignment with the 4Ps, easy to use and informational menus may increase a restaurant owner's market share in an environment when clients internalize menu choices. A restaurateur may capitalize on

product, place, promotion, and price marketing efforts with strategized menu and ordering techniques.

Restaurateurs considering effective marketing strategies may evaluate multiple avenues to maximizing client satisfaction and profitability. Researchers reviewed the topics of touch, socio-spatial placement, gratuity effects, and restaurant intimacy (Clauzel & Riche, 2015). Diners spent less time and money at restaurants when closely seated to other guests and near frequent guest and server traffic (Clauzel & Riche, 2015).

Restaurant operators may find the choice of background music influential to the length of time spent dining and the amount of the final check. A researcher concluded that slow music prolonged customer dining time and faster music contributed to diners spending less time in the establishment (Yang, 2015). Restaurateurs may consider recommendations on table layout, background music, the intimacy between servers and guests, and atmosphere critical to marketing strategies and organizational objectives.

A restaurateur may have to personalize marketing strategies to determine if shorter dining experiences with smaller checks are more important than longer dining periods where the final check might be larger. Clauzel and Riche (2015) concluded that diners seated apart from other diners extended their stays. Clauzel and Riche recommended front-line employee training in hospitality, providing relationship building between restaurant employees and clients, and intelligent table layout as adjustments to dining strategies. The small business restaurant owner who addresses the dining environment on their sustainability may incorporate marketing techniques to generate profitability. Restaurant operators encouraged customer loyalty by promoting dining

emotions through strategic atmosphere, price, value, loyalty programs, image, and branding initiatives (Tanford, 2016). Loyal hospitality clients contribute to business sustainability (Tanford, 2016).

Restaurant Cost Management

Business leaders may evaluate pricing considerations in the 4Ps marketing model by factoring cost management into their business model. Many small business owners begin their ventures with money from private funds and even credit cards (Barnes & Westrenius, 2015). Business owners who fund their operations in such manners may compromise sustainability by minimizing cost management factors. Alonso and Krajsic (2014) conducted a study using semistructured interviews to explore the areas of cost management (CM) as business operators handling costs contributed to long-term success. Business leaders incorporating marketing strategies for their firms may benefit from the study as their focus on CM affects each of the 4Ps: product, place, promotion, and price. Alonso and Krajsic encouraged restaurant managers to perform CM controls effectively. Alvarez et al. (2014) explained how capital investment required strategies and clear when allocating resources. Alonso and Krajsic discovered a common theme among research participants regarding the constant need for vigilance in applying CM because of flexible business environments. Alonso and Krajsic identified tacit knowledge as the principles and ideas helpful in perpetuating CM platforms. Alonso and Krajsic found that most owners used tacit knowledge when implementing CM controls. Restaurant operators who shared tacit knowledge contributed to their business success and employed skills in awareness, alertness, and dynamism to react to unpredictable operational and industry

forces (Alonso & Krajsic, 2014). Restaurateurs may increase their chances of sustainability with the assessment of cost control and capital investment expenditures.

Successful business leaders may succeed in managing costs yet still experience economic conflicts beyond their control. Rollins, Nickell, and Ennis (2013) wrote that the recession between 2008 and 2010 affected the United States and worldwide economies and businesses more than any event since the Great Depression. Business-to-business leaders responded to the effects of the 2008 recession with (a) an increased analysis of performance metrics, (b) streamlined activities between sales and marketing, and (c) the increased use of social media (Rollins, Nickell, and Ennis, 2013). Likewise, small business restaurant owners may improve marketing efforts by analyzing performance and communications with sales and marketing personnel, even with smaller numbers of employees who might promote sales and social media use. Restaurateurs focusing on short-term strategies can create organizational sustainability (Demirer & Yuan, 2013). The proactive restaurant owner may find more long-term success as they assess the benefits of their capital expenditures from immediate to future situations.

Grocery Supply Marketing

Grocery managers may experience many of the business problems faced by restaurant owners because both sell products meant for consumption. Researchers found that small grocery store owners required training to improve marketing strategies (Alvarez et al., 2014). Likewise, restaurateurs using the Porterian model and the 4Ps may increase the likelihood of success by incorporating the same techniques. Grocery business owners require the use of the 4Ps to achieve sustainability (Alvarez et al., 2014).

Business owners offering food for consumption may benefit from similar marketing techniques on food quality. The challenge for business owners may be to enhance their brand to promote recognition and client familiarization. Food quality increased customer satisfaction but not trust or identification (Swimberghe & Wooldridge, 2014).

Porter's Five Forces

Individuals in academic and business fields may recognize how the 4Ps of marketing corresponds with Porter's five forces. Business leaders compete within an industry by analyzing Porter's five forces to minimize threats from new entrants, posturing against existing industry rivals, responding to the influence of substitute products and services, and positioning for supplier and buyer bargaining power (Porter, 1980). Suwardy and Ratnatunga (2014) referred to Porter's five forces as the Porterian model. Suwardy and Ratnatunga discovered that in the Porterian model, enhanced competition occurs when all five forces are high. Toor (2014) identified differences in Porter's five forces in horizontal and vertical competition: horizontal: existing rivalry, substitute products, and new competitors; vertical: bargaining power of suppliers and bargaining power of consumers. Pulaj and Kume (2014) wrote that business leaders compete within the arena of industry and that factors within the industry environment affect the level of competition, maximizes success against rivals, and influences company profitability. With the competition business owners face within their respective industries, they may increase their effectiveness against rival establishments by understanding and implementing the concepts of Porter's five forces.

Business leaders, including restaurant owners, may assess how to apply the forces in Porter's model to their competitive situations and should increase opportunities for sustainability. Organizations in highly competitive industries lessen the attractiveness of that industry for achieving profitability (Toor, 2014). Business owners may face competition in many different industries and should apply tested sustainability theories for success. Managers may struggle with comparisons between Porterian principles applied through different industries like manufacturing and service firms, and Rajaseker and Rae (2013) posited Porter's five forces as a significant method to assess many industries in different geographical locations. Vining (2011) applied Porter's forces and explained that managers using them find the application of them across different organizations. The discerning business owner may produce financial success by applying Porter's five forces in competitive industries, regardless of the size, type, or geographic location of their business. Competitive entrepreneurs may find the Porterian model simple in its scope and broad in application, even though Porter proposed the five forces in the 80s.

Business, academic and even public agency leaders who implement Porter's five forces may find many uses in Porter's model. Private-sector leaders in many countries seek favorable market environments in regulatory matters (Sutherland, 2014). Public-sector managers may also seek favorable operating conditions from government regulators, even though they may be a department within the government they serve. Private sector leaders incorporated Porter's five forces to understand external and unique external competitive forces and public sector managers might also incorporate the same

forces to analyze public agency competition (Vining, 2011). The application of Porter's five forces may be an applicable model for leaders in for-profit, non-profit, and public agencies. Vining (2011) disclosed that private and public-sector performance indicators differed and that the goals of organizations varied. The application of Porter's model was even used by researchers to study the competitiveness of nations (Kordalska & Olczyk, 2016). Vining demonstrated that public-sector leaders might not strive for profits like counterparts in the private sector. Vining noted that fiscal public agency managers took financial autonomy seriously in their endeavors. The business manager applying Porter's five forces may find how the model applies to competitive environments in many organizations.

Vining (2011) wrote that public agencies feared substitute products and services more than the threat of new entrants. A discerning reader may see the monopolistic nature of public agencies as a critical component to competing with the threat of new entrants. Business leaders may benefit by scanning commercial environments and note changing economic trends and technologies as possible threats. Vining posited the challenge faced by the U.S. Postal Service where people's use of the Internet substituted for traditional mail correspondence. Vining suggested that the threat of new entrants and substitute services were the same. Restaurateurs may fail to consider direct competition from governments that threaten sustainability, but restaurant operators must be aware of national, regional, and local regulations that might influence success. Researchers contrasted the benefits of the privatization of services like electricity from the public to the private sector (Kwon & Kim, 2017). Organizational leaders implementing Porter's

five forces may facilitate the transfer of services from the public to the private sector. Consumers of privatized goods and services like electricity benefit from competition, organizational efficiency, and equitable distribution (Kwon & Kim, 2017). The model proposed by Porter's five forces is applicable in many instances to assess competitive advantage.

Small business restaurateurs may find competitive advantages without experiencing intensive government regulations found in industries like telecommunications, healthcare, or utility providers. Rajaseker and Rae (2013) conducted a study regarding the heavily regulated telecommunications industry with government involvement. Sutherland (2014) studied Porter's five forces and noted that the telecommunications industry is scrutinized through government regulation and oversight. Rajaseker and Rae used the foundation of Porter's five forces to analyze the larger and smaller relevant competitive factors of the Oman Telecommunications industry. For small restaurateurs, their use of the five forces is similar although they may face minimal challenges in regulation and government oversight. For business managers, including small business restaurateurs, incorporating the Porterian model may provide flexibility in application.

Indiatsy, Mwangi, Mandere, Bichanga, and George (2014) wrote that Porter's model received praise for its effectiveness. Indiatsy et al. conducted mixed-methods research on the use of Porter's five forces in Kenyan banks to understand the advantages and drawbacks of the model. Indiatsy et al. compared Porter's five forces to the similarities of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and political,

economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) models. Indiatsy et al. found that Kenyan banking leaders experienced poor performance because of the inadequate implementation of Porter's five forces. Researchers applied Porter's five forces to the liquid petroleum gas industry in Spain to assess the competitive attraction of the industry (Pintado, 2016). Pintado (2016) evaluated the liquid petroleum gas industry using the same five forces to recommend protections for consumers, promote competition, and entice new entrants. Business leaders managing operations of all sizes, along with public agencies, may increase their competitiveness by measuring the threat of new entrants, substitute products, the bargaining power of suppliers and consumers, and evaluating market conditions from existing rivalries.

Indiatsy et al. (2014) discovered that there was a significant and positive relationship to Porter's five forces as it contributed to Kenyan Cooperative Bank performance. Indiatsy et al. recommended product diversification as well as bargaining of consumption to retain quality service providers with low costs and in efforts to reduce rates. Restaurateurs who likewise offer diversified products and services and focus on economic sustainability through cost management and value pricing may position themselves better for longevity.

Restaurant operators minimizing kitchen waste and using just-in-time food ordering may increase Porterian model benefits and improve their competitiveness. An et al. (2014) researched kitchen waste management efforts in Shanghai. An et al. recommended public education, technological advancements, and a focus on waste management to minimize kitchen waste in Shanghai. Restaurateurs participating in

initiatives for waste management may find benefits from applying Porter's five forces in their establishments. Restaurateurs who manage waste could reduce costs, which may contribute to competitiveness in alignment with Porter's five forces.

Restaurateurs may increase their opportunities for competitive advantage and sustainability by recognizing the use of technology, including the use of technology to minimize kitchen waste. Alford and Page (2015) posited that tourism business owners' lacking technical knowledge failed to capitalize on its benefits. A business owner competing globally or a small business owner with closer rivals may assess the results of Porter's five forces through technological means. Researchers studied technological platforms in hospitality and noted its use in transportation networks like Uber along with accommodation and lodging companies like Airbnb (Pomykalski, 2015). Alford and Page summarized that small businesses desire to use technology in business strategies and promote market orientation. Restaurateurs seeking may increase competitiveness with the Porterian model, including technological platforms to assess the forces of competition for sustainability.

Business leaders may maximize sustainability through the analysis of competitive forces in different industries. Veterinary industry analysts in the U.K. incorporated Porter's five forces to ask questions about industry attractiveness, current competition, substitute providers, the influence of suppliers, and the power of customers ("Assessing the industry using Porter's five forces," 2014). The authors posited that developing a future business plan requires an analysis of the current state of business ("Assessing the industry using Porter's five forces"). Small business operators building their business and

marketing strategies may apply the 4Ps of marketing and Porter's five forces, along with other strategic models, to increase sustainability. Business leaders may find similarities in the application of the Porterian model in both veterinary services and small business restaurant survival. The veterinary industry analysts recommended that an online presence increases the chances of success in the veterinary business in the U.K. ("Assessing the industry using Porter's five forces"). Likewise, small business restaurateurs with a strong Internet footprint may increase their economic sustainability by promoting an online presence using the competitive forces of Porter's model.

The analysts who evaluated the state of veterinary businesses in the U.K. determined that the threats posed by new entrants remained more likely if those entrants held corporate capital, grading the threat of those new entrants as medium to high ("Assessing the industry using Porter's five forces," 2014). Business owners addressing the possibility of opening a business may find that applying Porter's five forces creates sustainability. The veterinary analysts noted that substitute supplier products provided minimal challenges in switching providers ("Assessing the industry using Porter's five forces"). Pulaj and Kume (2014) recommended against businesses operating with only differentiation strategies as they perform less effectively. Pulaj and Kume suggested that leaders who compete with low-cost and differentiation strategies maximize performance and maximize profits. Restaurateurs focused on limited dining selections may benefit from vigilance regarding new entrants if clients desire variety and selection in menu choices. If clients desire multiple dining choices, restaurant operators may face challenges in preventing clients from switching to other providers.

In the application of Porter's five forces, organizational leaders may use the concepts for sustainability. Toor (2014) found that in the case of a contact lens manufacturer, that manufacturer needed to appeal to non-traditional competition between rivals and create strategies in the industry to compete against substitute products and the bargaining capabilities of customers and distributors. Hawker and Edmonds (2014), from an antitrust standpoint, encouraged viewing competitors from a rivalry standpoint and a stakeholder standpoint that might imply cooperation with them. Mathooko and Ogutu (2015) suggested in a study of response strategies by public universities in Kenya that educational leaders from schools with like resources form allegiances between them, and with a focus on older universities, to improve cost efficiencies and minimize rivalries. Mathooko and Ogutu gave an example of competing and complementary businesses with Apple, Google, and Microsoft and their independent software systems that integrated with the other's operating platforms. Restaurateurs seeking a competitive advantage over rival firms may benefit from non-traditional marketing techniques to hedge the influence of substitute products and client and distributor bargaining powers, including possible networking possibilities.

Competitive business owners may increase sustainability by assessing the commercial environments of their industry. Pulaj and Kume (2014) mentioned the lack of a definition of what competition entails in business settings and they highlighted their view of competition as procedures whereby business operators turned assets into results. Hawker and Edmonds (2014) emphasized that business owners focus on shareholder profits as a singular objective along with stakeholder interests, cooperative action items,

and ethical sustainability. Hawker and Edmonds concluded that business leaders use Porter's concepts, strategies, and five forces as a platform for strategic management analysis. Mathooko and Ogutu (2015) identified stakeholders as competitors and suggested that organizational leaders consider competitor interests in the decision making of a firm. Hawker and Edmonds posited that pursuing competitive advantage may be fundamentally different than maximizing profits. Considering the relationship between competitors and stakeholders, restaurateurs incorporating Porter's five forces may see a benefit to viewing other restaurants as important stakeholders in developing sustainability strategies.

As a segment of the hospitality industry, hoteliers may face similar competitive and sustainability challenges as restaurateurs. Cheng (2013) analyzed the global hotel industry using Porter's five forces, furthering the model as useful in many aspects for businesses in competitive environments. Cheng posited that hotel managers face a minimal threat from new entrants and wrote that hoteliers face threats from new entrants because of market segments and strategic groups. Owners striving for success in business may benefit by applying Porter's forces to their sustainability strategies.

Indiatsy et al. (2014) recommended that bank leaders in Kenya assess substitute products and offer similar banking products to compete with rivals. In the hospitality industry, Cheng (2013) found that hotel operators maintained an advantage regarding substitute products except in times of recession where international travelers might choose domestic destinations because of cost constraints. Restaurant operators likewise should remain vigilant with regards to substitute products and effectively prepare for

them with proactive business strategies. Business owners may also implement Porter's five forces to leverage their successes during times of economic struggles beyond their control. Small business restaurant owners may face more threats from new entrants as the barriers to entry differs than barriers faced by larger hotels.

Cheng (2013) posited that hotel managers experienced competitive forces through supplier bargaining power from labor and hotel employees with extensive training. Indiatsy et al. (2014) recommended that Kenyan bank leaders use equal employment opportunities to retain employees. Cheng suggested that the clients with the most bargaining power regarding hotel reservations arose from customers with large buying power like tour operators, airline operators for both foreign and domestic carriers, and convention organizers. Restaurateurs seeking sustainability through effective marketing and using the Porterian model may maximize their opportunities for success through ongoing industry analysis.

Business owners incorporating the Porterian model in a competitive environment may find a benefit to applying the principles to promote sustainability. Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2015) wrote that organizations use business strategy tools as part of a process and not just as a unique solution. Cheng (2013) covered the competitive forces and wrote that rivals face competition from other hotel operators when differentiation and switching costs are low. Cheng applied Porter's model to other departments of hotels where managers faced elements of Porter's five forces: food and beverage, exhibitions and conventions, entertainment, neon signage, and parking services. Cheng concluded their analysis of hotel successes in using the Porterian model by writing that two factors

influence hotel differentiation: strategic location for the intended market and service quality. Business operators of all sizes and from different industries may increase their success by also addressing locational strategy and service quality. Business leaders and researchers may uncover areas of research angles to pursue by applying Porter's five forces to the long-term survival of hotels and similar tourism and hospitality establishments, including restaurants.

Business leaders may fail to find the Porterian model the only useful one to create strategic actions. When choosing to implement Porter's forces, firm managers may measure their successes with predetermined benchmarks. Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2015) listed Porter's five forces as only one tool of many in creating business strategies. Jarzabkowski and Kaplan cautioned against the leader's use of strategic tools simply to aggrandize a pre-existing and selfish interest or that of a political nature. Pulaj and Kume (2014) indicated that profitability, market share, and productivity might comprise some measures of competitiveness. Jarzabkowski and Kaplan posited that business leaders using strategic tools like Porter's five forces implement them as parts of individual and collective organizational goals and not just for a temporary solution.

Business owners may promote sustainability by assessing Porter's five forces because of changing political, technological, and international business environments. Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2015) discovered that the use of strategic tools by organizational leaders could lead to negative outcomes if managers only use those tools obligatorily while ignoring comprehensive improvements. Strategic business managers may suffer negative consequences to sustainability efforts without constantly assessing

competitive environments and analyzing performance objectives. Nag, Han, and Dongqing (2014) studied supply chain management practices and noted how managers must handle changing technology and fluxing business models since the introduction of Porter's forces. Salavou (2015) emphasized that in the upcoming years, researchers will continue to study competitive strategies for organizations of differing sizes, industries, or countries. Like Nag et al., Salavou wrote that researchers face challenges in revising the theory to reflect current realities better. Salavou emphasized that up until 1980, researchers failed to answer questions regarding how to maximize the competitive advantage in strategic business levels of companies.

Salavou (2015) suggested that current and future scholars focus on hybrid strategies for competition as business owners using Porter's 1980 model alone fail to address all components of a competitive strategy. Academic, business, non-profit, educational, healthcare, and governmental leaders may increase opportunities for sustainability through the effective implementation of Porter's five forces and to address competitive environments. Organizational leaders may apply other strategies to promote sustainability. Researchers praised Porter's five forces as a valid and flexible model for assessing competitive forces in business (Prasad & Warriar, 2016).

Alternative Conceptual Frameworks

As researchers and leaders in multiple organizations may research and apply Porter's five forces effectively, differing strategies for sustainability may also provide alternative platforms for success. Researchers identified resource-based theory (RBT), also referred to as resource-based view (RBV), as a far-reaching theory of management

(Kellermanns, Walter, Crook, Kemmerer, & Narayanan, 2016). Davis and Simpson (2017) defined RBT as business leaders creating strategic, long-term competitive advantages with the use of the company's internal resources, especially unique employee competencies. Kozlenkova et al. (2014) identified the assumptions of RBT as a competitive advantage, the rarity of resources held by minimal numbers of competing firms, and organized efforts to maximize resources and capabilities. Barney (2014) posited the significance of RBT in relation to marketing practices.

Kozlenkova et al. (2014) explained that RBV preceded RBT and that researchers studying marketing strategies use RBT more frequently now than RBV. Kozlenkova et al. (2014) disclosed the criticisms of RBT as rigid, a failure to address sustained competitive advantage, and researchers unable to test RBT empirically. Barney (2014) mentioned the challenge in theoretical applications that contextual differences in their application were at times confusing. With some of the criticisms of RBT, Kozlenkova et al. concluded that scholars using RBT would become more frequent. Kozlenkova et al. wrote that RBT experienced higher than a 500% increase in marketing research since 2004 indicating its significance as a foundation for explaining and predicting an organization's performance. Acar and Polin (2015) wrote about the inadequacies of RBT as a singular theory and different from earlier theories of management. In the competitive business arena, business leaders may increase their opportunities for sustainability through an assessment of strategic models that assist them in achieving performance goals.

Barney (2014) identified the central theme of RBT as the possible gain from an organization's strategy derived from their grouped resources and capabilities. Leaders of

firms who built trust and value in resources, themselves or partnered with other firms, benefitted economically (Barney, 2014). Acar and Polin (2015) wrote that organizational theory and RBT used by how leaders look internally at a firm, the concepts are fundamentally different. Barney wrote about the time they asked an associate to define a brand, and the associate described it uniquely as commitments made by a firm to its clients. Barney (2014) drew the correlation between this definition of a brand and its relationship to a complex, social partnership and one that created competitive advantage. Acar and Polin explained that managers apply the use of organizational theory internally and devoid of the outside environment while RBT is used by business leaders to analyze competitiveness internally but from an external perspective.

Transition

Section 1 consisted of the foundation of the study, the background of the problem, the business problem, method, and design that I used to conduct my study. I included in the literature review the need for the further exploration of marketing strategies used by small business restaurants to promote economic sustainability. Section 2 comprised an overview of the qualitative multiple-case study design chosen, the sampling technique, the process to collect data, and the measures for the reliability and validity of my research. I included in Section 3 the presentation of the findings and recommendations.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the marketing strategies small business restaurant owners use to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years. The population for this study was four small business restaurant owners located in the Eugene, Oregon area who successfully used marketing initiatives to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years. My study may potentially affect social change as restaurateurs who incorporate the recommendations from this research may achieve individual and duplicable sustainability and generate revenues to provide positive environmental, nutritional, educational, and philanthropic benefits to their stakeholders.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to listen, learn, and observe (Rossetto, 2014). The researcher is the primary research instrument in a qualitative study, as well as a part of the study (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). My role as the researcher in small business restaurant marketing strategies for sustainability was to (a) choose the research methodology and design, (b) select a conceptual framework, (c) select prospective participants, (d) collect data using semistructured interviews and document collection, and (e) analyze and evaluate the data.

I conducted my study while adhering to ethical research standards that protect human participants. I treated all participants in this study professionally and complied with the definitions and standards of ethics in the Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). I chose to ask exploratory questions in my qualitative

research. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) recommended against asking leading questions. A researcher who asks a leading question implies a bias or an assumption that differs from the perspective of the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I completed the web-based training for adherence to ethical requirements and the protection of human research participants through the National Institute of Health (NIH), obtaining NIH training certification number 1719746 (Appendix A).

The role of a researcher includes identifying and preventing possible bias when conducting the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Researchers may often find difficulty in understanding the perspectives of other individuals (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2008). To reduce bias, I adhered to an identical protocol for all interviews and self-identified any personal biases during the collection of data. I defined my interview protocol and adhered to the standards of the College of Management and Technology at Walden University (see Appendix B). I had no existing or prior associations with any research participants.

I spent 23 years working in customer service, client care, and sales. My experiences in various fields could provide insight to small business restaurant owners as I interacted with thousands of customers regarding their customer service and purchasing decisions with multiple businesses. Business operators faced with high competition and limited operating margins gain competitive advantage through excellent customer service (Mani Nta & Srivalli, 2014).

Participants

The participants for this study were four small business restaurant owners in Eugene, Oregon who sustained their business for more than 5 years and attained were 18 years of age. Researchers in case studies can achieve data saturation by interviewing as few as three participants (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). A small business is defined as a for-profit, independently owned, taxed establishment, operating mainly in the United States and exists as a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity (SBA, 2015). The participants in this study met the classification of a small business restaurant owner by managing an independent proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity in which the owner retains all or most of the shares of the corporation. I protected human participants with ethical actions and approached participants after I obtained approval from Walden University's institutional review board (IRB).

I conducted Internet searches for participants through Yelp, Zagat, Zomato, Google, MenuPages, restaurant review sites, local Chambers of Commerce, and city and county business listings. I expanded the search for qualified participants through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is identifying initial research participants, asking them for network referrals, and networking further with those individuals for more participants (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). Researchers use snowball sampling to discover relevant information from study participants (Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014). Locating successful participants is critical to data collection. Before I began my research interviews at the business owner's restaurants, I confirmed that restaurateurs qualified for

the study. I identified other qualified participants by requesting word-of-mouth referrals from Facebook contacts and searching for restaurateurs with Facebook business listings.

Research Method and Design

Mixed methods, qualitative, and quantitative research methods were considered for this study. Researchers choose the quantitative method to generate numbers and percentages to conduct statistical analyses (Barnham, 2015). A researcher should choose the best method and design to address the problem of their study. A qualitative case study design best met the needs of my research. Researchers using the qualitative method adhere to its methods and ensure an in-depth exploration of a topic (Yin, 2014).

Research Method

I selected the qualitative research method to understand the experiences of participants who exhibited marketing strategies to create sustainability longer than 5 years. Researchers use four strategies in the qualitative method: (a) conducting interviews, (b) analyzing the data, (c) checking the data for quality, and (d) conducting a synthesis of literature to understand the phenomenon (Holt & Goulding, 2014). Researchers use the qualitative method in a proven manner to explore the defined problem and to understand the topic from an in-depth perspective (Yin, 2014). Researchers use the qualitative method to provide simultaneous structure and relevancy and promote the emergence of practice (Myers, 2013). A researcher chooses a quantitative method to examine statistics and understand the dynamics of the data (Baxter, Bedard, Hoitash, & Yezegel, 2013). Mixed methods research includes the benefits and disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Terrell, 2012).

The qualitative methodology of research applies to the social sciences, including business research (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2011). Because I explored a business problem that required semistructured interviews with business owners, the qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate for this study.

Research Design

Qualitative researchers may choose one of these designs: (a) ethnography, (b) phenomenology, (c) narrative research, and (d) case study (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Researchers use ethnography to conduct a long-term study of people in groups and gather data through observations, interviews, and assessing cultural influence (Kriyantono, 2012). Researchers face time restrictions when conducting an ethnographic study, so this design was not chosen for the current study. Researchers seek to understand participants' experiences using the phenomenological design (Letourneau, 2015). Conklin (2013) posited that researchers use a phenomenological design by uncovering meaning of the lived experiences of individuals. The phenomenological design was unsuitable for exploring small business restaurant marketing strategies for sustainability. Researchers use the case study design to explore occurrences of limited or minimal knowledge (Yin, 2014). Researchers choose between either single, multiple, exploratory, or explanatory case study designs (Singh, 2014; Yin 2014). Because I explored the marketing strategies of small business restaurant owners, the multiple case study was the most appropriate design. The researcher using the case study investigates individuals, groups, or events and employs multiple methods to collect data (Yin, 2014). Researchers

find the use of the case study helpful when exploring the experiences of individuals (Gelling, 2015).

Population and Sampling

The population for this study was four small business restaurant owners in Eugene, Oregon who used effective marketing strategies to generate more than 5 years of sustainability. I initially searched Eugene, Oregon Chamber of Commerce restaurant business listings for research participants. I discovered that the businesses included independent restaurants with minimal contact information for the proprietor, along with corporate and chain restaurants that did not meet the qualifications for this study.

I expanded my search for restaurant owner contact information through Eugene, Oregon Yelp, Zagat, Zomato, Google, and MenuPages websites. I listed the address and phone number for each possible participant in a Microsoft Excel document. I created a list of 61 possible participants, but the contact information and length of time in business for the restaurateurs was minimal. I modified my search for owners' names by searching Facebook and Google restaurant listings. The Facebook and Google searches were more effective than the information from the Eugene Chamber of Commerce website. I identified 12 restaurant owners using this modified search and prepared informed consent forms for delivery. I included the invitation to participate in the study on the first page of the informed consent form. I delivered the consent forms to the 12 restaurateurs before the Thanksgiving holiday on November 23, 2017.

I recognized the time constraints of restaurant owners because of the approaching 2017 holiday season. As I initially canvassed for participants, I only spoke to two

restaurant owners directly and invited them to participate. I found that most owners were not present when I visited, or the restaurant staff agreed to deliver my sealed informed consent forms to the owners. Although searching for restaurateurs was more effective when I modified my search strategy, I discovered that one of the initial restaurateurs had moved permanently from the United States while retaining full ownership of their business. The first study participant called me within 24 hours of the delivery of the informed consent form and agreed to participate in the study.

I did not approach any potential participants until I received IRB approval on November 17, 2017. After receiving IRB approval, I delivered 30 informed consent forms to restaurateurs with initial qualifications for the study. I personally delivered the informed consent forms to restaurant owners, so I did not write a phone or e-mail script. If I was unable to meet with the restaurant owner on my initial visit, I followed up on the invitation to participate with a phone call asking the restaurant owners if they received the informed consent form and politely asked them if they would volunteer to participate. Upon meeting the participants who volunteered for this study, I confirmed that they met the qualifications for the study.

I conducted only one interview before December 1, 2017. Because there was a lack of response for participation, I visited 18 more restaurant locations to invite owners to participate. During follow-up phone calls to restaurant owners, two research participants suggested they would not be helpful in the study, and one asked me to call back in January of 2018 due to their busy holiday schedule. I resorted to snowball sampling to identify willing participants for the study. Snowball sampling is used to

identify evasive populations and study sensitive topics (Waters, 2015). Researchers also use snowball sampling in the study of less sensitive topics (Waters, 2015). Researchers use snowball sampling for populations of participants who networked frequently (Waters, 2015). Two acquaintances with restaurant industry connections recommended the remaining three participants for this study. Out of 30 qualifying participants, four participated in the study. No participants withdrew from the study after agreeing to participate.

A large sample size is not needed if study objectives are clear, the research questions are effective, data are of high quality, and data saturation is achieved (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen, and Kyngas, 2014). Qualitative researchers should avoid excessive interviews because no new insights are collected (Marshall et al., 2013). Researchers achieve saturation when the results are valid, robust, and fail to produce new data (Constantinou, Georgiou, & Perdikogianni, 2017).

I scheduled interviews with research participants at a time and place convenient for the restaurant owners. To minimize distractions, I agreed on an interview location either in a comfortable office at the owner's place of business or another agreed-upon location. I anticipated that the interviews would last no longer than 45 minutes.

Ethical Research

To adhere to standards of ethical research, I received approval from the Walden University IRB of 11-17-0545323 before obtaining the required permissions from participants and gathering needed data for the study. Researchers must allow voluntary consent from participants to promote ethical research standards (Won Oak, 2012). All

restaurateurs who volunteered for the study participated through completion. Because no restaurant owners withdrew, no electronic or physical documents required destruction. Participants read and understood the informed consent form and their participation was devoid of any coercion or harm. I physically delivered the consent forms to the participants and collected them personally upon completion. I offered no incentives or compensation for participating in the study. I avoided the use of participants' names in the study. Researchers use coding to identify participants (Carlström & Ekman, 2012). I referred to the participants as Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 4. To protect the privacy of participants, I will store the data for 5 years in a locked and fire resistant safe.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary collector of data for this study. I conducted semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to obtain necessary data. I asked participants 10 open-ended questions regarding marketing strategies for sustainability to obtain data concerning their perspectives and experiences (see Appendix B). I adhered to acceptable interview protocol for this study (see Appendix B).

Data Collection Technique

My goal in this qualitative multiple case study was to understand the marketing strategies of small business restaurant owners for sustainability. I was the primary instrument for collecting data. Researchers use interviews to collect data in case studies to explore human experiences and behaviors (Yin, 2014). Researchers choose the

qualitative method to collect data because flexibility is a primary characteristic of qualitative studies (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012).

I identified 61 potential participants for the study from Facebook and Google restaurant business searches, delivered informed consent forms to 30 restaurateurs, and interviewed four small business restaurant owners. I visited the restaurants of the 30 potential participants to deliver informed consent forms personally. I only exchanged introductions with five potential participants. Three of those participants were referrals from acquaintances with restaurant industry connections. I called 17 restaurant owners to confirm the receipt of the informed consent form and asked those I spoke to participate in the study. Two participants who declined invitations explained their participation would be unhelpful. Two other potential participants were too busy to volunteer, and one of them mentioned the increased traffic to their restaurant because of a recently published local newspaper feature on their business. One restaurateur went out of business after I delivered the informed consent form. Thirteen restaurant owners never replied to the invitation. Out of the four restaurant owners participating in the study, three of them were referrals from snowball sampling. All potential participants received a list of the interview questions included in the informed consent form.

After the participants volunteered for the study, I coordinated the date and time to meet with the first participant through e-mail and the remaining with phone conversations. I invited the participant to provide copies of marketing documents for use in the study. The confidentiality, storage, and destruction of supporting documents was ensured by adherence to the guidelines of Walden University. Each participant suggested

a meeting at their restaurant was most convenient. I ensured that the participants felt comfortable with the date, time, and location of the interviews.

I met the four participants at the appointed times, introduced myself and prepared a Sony digital recorder for the interview. I explained the length of the interview, asked if the participants had any questions, reminded the owners of the need for supporting documents, and confirmed the voluntary nature of the study with no compensation paid to participate. I collected the signed informed consent forms and supporting marketing documents from the restaurant owners. The supporting documents consisted of a website analytics report from Participant 2 and a list of local, organic vendors and a menu from Participant 4. Participant 1 and Participant 3 provided no documents, so I deferred to secondary documents for Participants 1 and 3 by reviewing their websites and Facebook business listings.

Each participating restaurant owner invited me to interview them at a dining table at the business location when they were closed or between prime dining hours. I recorded the interviews with a digital Sony recorder. No interview exceeded 21 minutes. I toured each participant's restaurant upon the completion of the interview taking data collection notes. Participants 1 and 2 displayed awards received for their businesses and restaurant reviews from local publications highlighting their accomplishments. I confirmed from Participants 3 and 4 how they arranged their dining spaces to encourage intimate diner interactions. Participant 4 prominently displaying an updated list of local, organic vendors. I confirmed that the same vendors appeared on the restaurateur's website. There were minimal interruptions during the research interviews with one passing diner

greeting a restaurant owner, an important phone call a restaurateur had to field, and a friend of one owner and the vendor of another who greeted the proprietors. There were no other extraordinary events during the research interviews.

Upon thanking the participants for their assistance and departing, I uploaded the recorded interviews to a secure computer hard drive with password protection. I honored participant confidentiality by securing any supporting documents following the protocol for physical and electronic security. The supporting documents consisted of informed consent forms, field notes, photos from the restaurant tour, the website analytics report, and the list of local, organic vendors and the menu for Participant 4.

Data Organization Technique

Researchers enhance reliability by using organizational techniques during data collection (Anyan, 2013). Researchers organize, transcribe, and code data to identify themes (Elo et al., 2014). I conducted all research interviews with a digital audio recorder. I took notes during each interview to compare to the data collected from the participants. To maximize the organization of data collection, I labeled the participants in my interviews as Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3 or other participants as needed. Researchers using participant labeling organize and manage data and categorize information without identifying the interviewee (Haendel, Vasilevsky, & Wirz, 2012). I stored all written, electronic, and audio recordings in a fireproof safe for 5 years upon the completion of the study. I protected electronic data on a password-protected USB drive. Any written, recorded, and electronic data, along with a USB device, will be destroyed 5 years after completion of the study.

I uploaded the audio files from participant interviews into the VoiceBase website for speech recognition and requested an automated transcription of the audio. I transcribed the audio recordings into text within 72 hours upon completion of the interview with the participant. To ensure accuracy, I listened to the audio files of the participant interviews during transcription and corrected errors from the automated transcription. I used Microsoft Excel to log responses and organize the data. I organized the data using Microsoft Excel to manage written notes, business documents, observations, consent forms, and common themes from data collection. Camfield and Palmer-Jones (2013) recommended that data storage enhances data verification and confidence.

Data Analysis

Researchers conduct data analysis by reorganizing the information gathered, placing it in chronological sequences, and mapping the dominant points gathered, as well as interpreting the main topics (Petty et al., 2012). After collecting the data, I conducted member checking to ensure that the answers of the participants were accurate. I e-mailed the interpretation of the data collected to the participants upon completion of the initial data analysis. I asked the participants to verify the accuracy of the data collected. Upon verifying the accuracy of the data, I reviewed and analyzed it using NVivo 11 for themes and redundancy.

I addressed the themes in the data where restaurateurs incorporated competitive forces as defined by Porter (1980) and the marketing concepts of product, place, promotion, and price (Borisavljevic, 2013). I discovered areas of improvement for small

business restaurateurs by analyzing the data for themes of competitive advantage and effective marketing strategies. I recommended actions that beginning and struggling small business restaurant owners may implement to increase opportunities for economic longevity and sustainability.

Researchers engage in data analysis in qualitative research by (a) collecting data, (b) analyzing the data, (c) organizing data, (d) conducting data synthesis to identify, compare and contrast themes and patterns, (e) uncovering critical data and understanding learning opportunities, and (f) disclosing the primary findings of the data (Lawrence & Tar, 2013). After I collected the data, I organized, analyzed, compared, and identified the common or emerging marketing strategies for sustainability. I compared the findings in the review of the professional literature with themes from this study and assessed commonalities, differences, and similar findings promoting the sustainability of restaurateurs. I included the results of my findings in Section 3 of this study with recommendations and applications to professional practice.

Applying methodological triangulation during the analysis of the data maximizes the credibility of how the findings are interpreted (Van Dijk, Vervoort, Van Wijk, Kalkman, & Schuurmans, 2015). Researchers triangulate data through sampling techniques involving the collection of data from multiple participants at different times and various social environments (Denzin, 2012). As I obtained consent forms from qualifying participants, I invited them to share internal business documents, financial reports, website marketing strategies and reports, business and marketing plans, restaurant review websites, or employee handbooks or training. The participants provided

minimal documents for this study. Participant 2 shared a website analytics report, and Participant 4 shared a local, organic vendor list and a restaurant menu. Because of this scenario, I referred to the participants' websites or online restaurant reviews to access additional data.

With the data collected during interviews with qualifying restaurateurs, I compared the business documents, website information, and online restaurant reviews to the information obtained. I analyzed commonalities, themes, and successes for sustainability. I analyzed the website analytics report from Participant 2 and compared the information from that report to the theme of the migration of promotional marketing to website and social media. I noted the consistency of the interview and vendor data from Participant 4 and confirmed their marketing strategy to source products from local, organic vendors. I include in the presentation of the findings the use of each participants' website and social media marketing.

I triangulated the data to assess the methods, marketing or otherwise, which restaurateurs implemented to sustain their businesses. By collecting the restaurateurs' business documents, I triangulated the data obtained during interviews with the supporting documents to explore multiple perspectives on marketing strategies. Triangulation is beneficial in data collection because gathering data from multiple sources reduces bias, promotes analytical correctness, and minimizes errors (Joslin & Müller, 2016). Beginning and struggling restaurateurs may benefit from marketing strategies for sustainability where the data is reliable, valid, and free of errors or bias.

I used NVivo 11 for Windows to explore the data for themes. Researchers used NVivo software for coding purposes and qualitative data analysis (Gläser & Laudel, 2013). NVivo 11 is the latest version of the software, and I chose NVivo over ATLAS.ti for simplicity. ATLAS.ti is a complex software program used by researchers for qualitative data analysis (Scales, 2013). NVivo 10 is recommended in qualitative research for its flexibility and transparency (Kaefer, Roper, & Sinha, 2015). Researchers selected NVivo software for user-friendly functions to collect, organize, and analyze data (Castleberry, 2014). Qualitative researchers may easily import multiple documents, audio, photo, video, and social media data into NVivo (Castleberry, 2014). I chose NVivo 11 for my qualitative analysis because I was familiar with it and I accessed multiple Walden University and website resources to maximize its usage in generating results. Researchers use NVivo for ease of analysis and validity and reliability for coding data (Zapata-Sepúlveda, López-Sánchez, & Sánchez-Gómez, 2012).

Reliability and Validity

Researchers use credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to establish valid and reliable results qualitative research (Nelson, 2016). Researchers engage in transferability to ensure other researcher's generalization of outcomes (Elo et al., 2014). Dependability is proving research validity through replication, triangulation, and examination (Funder, Levine, Mackie, Morf, Sansone, Vazire, & West, 2013).

Reliability

A researcher should demonstrate the method for generating the results of a study, which strengthens its validity (Elo et al., 2014). Researchers use validity in qualitative

research to generate findings and conclusions (Yildirim, 2010). Researchers promote exactness in research with reliability and validity (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). I ensured accuracy with each participant by following uniform steps to collect and analyze data. I collected data from multiple sources: interviews, website usage reports, social media platforms, vendor documents, restaurant review websites, media from local, online publications, and by touring each restaurant. I assessed the unspoken communications of participants to develop accurate conclusions. Researchers who strategically produce and implement reliability and validity measures generate accurate and trustworthy results (Wahyuni, 2012).

Validity

Researchers ensure the validity of a study by selecting the appropriate tools, processes, data collection techniques, and research method and design for analysis (Leung, 2015). In qualitative research, researchers demonstrating trustworthiness and experience maximize the validity of a study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I addressed the issues of credibility, dependability, reliability, and transferability in this study. In this study, I used member checking to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. Participants invited to member check review the accuracy of the researcher's analysis of the responses to ensure completeness and credibility (Elo et al., 2014). After I completed my qualitative, semistructured interviews with the participants, I summarized the information collected during the interviews and distributed summaries to the participants to check for accuracy. Researchers recommend member checking following transcription and before

data analysis (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). I conducted member checking before I analyzed the results.

Researchers maximize credibility through engagement, documenting observations techniques, auditing results, and confirming the results (Cope, 2014). Researchers provide credibility in studies with plausible criteria and valid evidence from the findings (Amado, Arce, & Fariña, 2015). Researchers striving for dependability check the data gathered from other researchers and verify that the results align (Houghton et al., 2013). The fundamental concept of triangulation is the exploration of two other known data sources; researchers use more than one reference point to minimize bias or incorrect analysis in data collection (Joslin & Müller, 2016). Researchers gathering data from various and diverse participants and by accessing multiple documents in their studies promote triangulation and validity (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015). I interviewed four small business restaurateurs in this multiple case study and discovered the marketing strategies used to sustain their restaurants for more than 5 years. In addition to the data collected during recorded interviews, I explored data from business documents including marketing reports, business websites, restaurant review websites, social media channels, vendor lists, and restaurant tours. A researcher interviewing three case study participants achieves data saturation (Marshall et al., 2013). I added to data collection by securing business documents gathered during participant interviews. Researchers following reliable procedures demonstrate compliance with accepted standards in the collection and analysis of the data (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015). A researcher demonstrates confirmability

through research objectivity, acting in good faith, and devoid of bias or modifying the results to achieve preconceived findings (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Transition and Summary

Section 2 included the process for selecting participants, the choice of research method and design best suited for this study, and an intensive literature review covering topics of marketing, sustainability, restaurant success factors, and the selected conceptual framework. The conclusion of Section 2 disclosed the techniques and processes for data collection and how the data was organized and analyzed. I outlined the methods to be used for reliability and validity as well. I completed Section 3 with the presentation of the findings, the application to professional practice, and the results and recommendations from the study for small business restaurant marketing strategies for sustainability.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

I analyzed the data from this qualitative multiple case study to explore the marketing strategies used by four small business restaurateurs to achieve business sustainability for at least 5 years and to answer the research question. The research participants demonstrated knowledge of restaurant success fundamentals. Researchers discovered innovation, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and human capital as components of restaurant performance (Lee et al., 2016). Participants adjusted their managerial and marketing approaches to achieve sustainability. Loyal diners contributed to the success of the restaurateurs in the study, and reputation, word-of-mouth, and customized promotional marketing influenced restaurant sustainability. The participants confirmed marketing strategies consistent with many of the research findings in the review of the professional literature. Hospitality industry experience, managing location challenges, innovation, employee relations, and enticing dining experiences were successful marketing strategies presented in the findings. Bihamta, Jayashree, Rezaei, Okumus, and Rahmi (2017) posited that the physical details of a restaurant influence both food and service quality. Restaurant managers should promote the positive mannerisms of restaurant staff and the appearance of employees and the physical restaurant to increase diner satisfaction (Sweeney, Armstrong, & Johnson, 2016).

Presentation of the Findings

The primary research question was the following: What marketing strategies do small business restaurant owners use to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years? I

identified common themes for sustainability and discovered that many themes confirmed findings addressed in the review of the professional literature. I established the need for future research and provided recommendations for small business restaurant marketing that contributes to the existing field of knowledge.

I listed in Table 1 the frequency of occurrence of the themes found in this study. I analyzed the data for additional themes related to the primary themes and identified numerous additional themes disclosed in the presentation of the findings. The presentation of the findings is a comprehensive analysis of primary and related themes regarding marketing strategies used by small business restaurant owners to achieve sustainability.

Table 1

Frequency of Themes for Small Business Restaurant Marketing Strategies for Sustainability

Theme	<i>n</i>	% of frequency
Adherence to fundamental restaurant marketing principles	26	15.5%
Migration of restaurant promotions to websites and social media	28	16.7%
Innovation and flexibility in marketing	57	33.9%
Diner loyalty, reputation, and relationship marketing	27	16.1%
Marketing evolution from hospitality experience	30	17.9%

Note. *n*= frequency.

Theme 1: Adherence to Fundamental Restaurant Marketing Principles

Each study participant mentioned restaurant service excellence, food quality, consistency of offerings, atmosphere, expense allocation and budgeting, relationships

with diners, and promoting their locations, as factors in sustainability. Restaurateurs maximize physical quality through appropriate décor, cleanliness, comfortable seating, sufficient lighting, and enticing restaurant aromas (Bihamta et al., 2017). Participant 1 explained that the basic marketing principles of a family-friendly atmosphere, desirable products, and adherence to proven restaurant strategies, created sustainability. Guchait et al. (2015) found that quality of service contributed to differentiation among competitors. Participant 2 reported that adjusting to restaurant location challenges, creating an environment of hospitality, implementing the engagement and selling skills of staff, and ensuring restaurant quality and consistency were areas that differentiated the restaurant from competitors. These areas of focus are consistent with the findings of Raja et al. (2014) who discovered that physical design, product quality, price, and an emphasis on service excellence maximized customer satisfaction. Bihamta et al. (2017) posited that the physical details of a restaurant influence both food and service quality. Participant 3 reinvests restaurant profits primarily to staff and food and emphasizes the quality and uniqueness of menu offerings. Participant 4 pointed out that diners felt connected to the restaurant in part due to the owner's presence daily physical presence and the quality of organic food offerings.

Porter (1980) defined the five competitive forces as existing industry rivals, the threat of new entrants, the bargaining power of suppliers, the bargaining power of buyers, and substitute products and services. By adhering to fundamental restaurant marketing strategies, participants leveraged themselves for sustainability within the framework of Porter's five forces. The restaurateurs maneuvered against existing and new industry

rivals by offering quality products and services; by differentiating their offerings from substitute products with unique, organic, or core menu items; and by addressing the bargaining powers of suppliers and buyers through effective relationships and cost management and pricing. Restaurateurs generate customer loyalty by creating unique and prestigious restaurant environments, promoting brand recognition, minimizing client risk, and ensuring quality service (Jin, Line, & Merkebu, 2015).

The participants each disclosed that they created a client base from restaurant experience of at least 5 years or longer, whether in their current location or employment in previous culinary endeavors. Restaurateurs influence the positive dining choices of customers by recognizing brand strength as a marketing strategy while implementing core restaurant practices (Sornsaruht & Sawmong, 2017). Participant 3 mentioned that 20 years in quality food production was one of the primary marketing accomplishments, and the clients who followed from those years contributed to current sustainability.

Participant 1 and Participant 3 said that successful restaurant operations were more effective than advertising or proactively promoting their establishments. Raja et al. (2014) found that emphasizing customer satisfaction was a critical part of the foundation of any marketing program. Factors of service, physical design, product quality, and price were key in successful full-service restaurants, but service quality was critical to customer satisfaction (Raja et al., 2014). Restaurateurs operate their businesses in extremely competitive environments, and business managers must strive for favorable perceptions from customers, especially after a client purchase (Kukanja, Omerzel, & Kodrič, 2017).

The participants all mentioned that staff engagement, teamwork, dedication, personal sacrifice, cost controls, and inventory management created sustainability. Chatterjee and Das (2015) identified entrepreneurial characteristics such as achievement, center of control, self-efficacy, tolerance of ambiguity, risk-taking, and innovation as successful business leadership traits. Participant 1 explained that when restaurant revenues were insufficient to meet payroll, employees received payments before the owner. Participant 3 bartered for personal services in exchange for restaurant offerings and this payment allows Participant 3 to reinvest revenue into the restaurant for quality products and staff for quality service. Each participant discussed examples of trade or barter as a form of payment for certain vendor services. Participant 2 referred to this form of payment as vouchers. Restaurant owners should manage cost controls seriously (Alonso & Krajsic, 2014). The research participants each discussed the financial challenges of restaurant ownership and modified their financial approaches to achieve sustainability.

The study participants each credited their staff as integral to their marketing efforts. Each participant realized the importance of staff as part of sustainability. Participant 1 used the word *egalitarian* to describe the approach to employee management and teamwork. Participant 2 partners with staff to promote client participation in an e-mail club. Participant 3 explained that when a referred diner patronized their restaurant, they invested in staff and focused on referred guests with exceptional products and service excellence. Participant 4 trains a tenured staff to

embrace their same philosophies on organic food, quality preparation, and partnerships with local, organic, and sustainable vendors.

All participants noted the expenses incurred in their sustainable restaurants. Alonso and Krajsic (2014) stressed the strategic use of financial resources through clear objectives. Participant 1 manages inventory for freshness and to minimize food waste. Participant 1 composts appropriate restaurant food items and collects restaurant compost for personal gardening while harvesting seasonal gardening products for use in the restaurant. Restaurant operators with food inventory and waste management strategies increase their competitive opportunities (An et al., 2014).

Each participant highlighted the quality of food as contributing to sustainability. Al-Tit (2015) concluded that the quality of food and service positively influenced customer satisfaction and that customer satisfaction enhanced customer retention. Participant 4 purchases organic food products from local farmers and providers. Participant 4 pointed out that similar competing restaurants may generate higher profit margins by purchasing lower quality food while charging similar prices to their organic food offerings. McDonagh and Prothero (2014) posited that consumers supporting sustainability consume differently to influence change. Participant 4 stated that offering organic food was not only a competitive advantage but organic food offerings aligned with the restaurateur's personally held sustainability ethics. In the assessment of Porter's five forces, Indiatsy et al. (2014) recommended product diversification and the retention of high-quality service providers with low costs to generate competitive pricing. Participant 4 capitalizes on product differentiation with organic products. According to

Toor (2014), manufacturing leaders used unique strategies to combat the threat of substitute products from competitors and the bargaining power of customers and suppliers.

Participant 2 maintains a monthly promotional budget and allocates extra revenue from December holiday business to annual restaurant events held the first month of each new year. Participant 3 pointed out the prohibitive expense associated with marketing promotions and allocated revenues directly back into restaurant operations. Participant 4 disclosed that the current restaurant budget does not account for promotional marketing but would specify funding for advertising in future endeavors. Demirer and Yuan (2013) discovered that the implementation of short-term operational strategies maximizes sustainability. The research participants explained the influence of marketing costs and assessed reasonable cost controls to manage promotional marketing. The restaurateurs indicated that word-of-mouth dynamics, reputation, and online and social media marketing were affordable and fundamental channels for promoting their businesses.

Theme 2: Migration of Restaurant Promotions to Websites and Social Media

Each participant disclosed that traditional marketing methods have become costly and mostly ineffective, and the results for success were difficult to measure. Participant 3 uses word-of-mouth as their primary method of promotional marketing. Participant 3 acknowledged the costs involved with any form of marketing and advertising while specifically mentioning radio. Participant 2 promoted the restaurant through television in the past and now uses a website for restaurant promotions. Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 4 mentioned previous uses and current limited uses of radio and print

promotions. Participant 2 and Participant 4 plan to use radio for promotional marketing and to lower costs through the trade of services. Participant 4 used a report from a radio partner on the frequency of airtime restaurant promotions to measure their effectiveness. In the past, the radio partner wrote and provided the voice talent for the radio advertisements for Participant 4. The restaurant owner disclosed that radio effectiveness is still difficult to measure even though diners and acquaintances told Participant 4 that they heard radio advertising for the restaurant. All participants reported that they had migrated to primarily online, social media, or word-of-mouth promotions with minimal to no use of television, radio, or print advertising. Participant 3 and Participant 4 reported that word-of-mouth promotion was how they initially promoted their restaurants. Participant 3 exclusively credits word-of-mouth promotion for current sustainability.

Participant 2 explained the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of television, radio, and print advertisement. Participant 2 has used television promotions and mentioned that they are prohibitively expensive. Participant 4 disclosed that a television food channel was used for promotion during 2017. Participant 4 heard comments from mostly out-of-town guests who mentioned having seen the television spot. Participant 4 was approached by community members who told the restaurant owner they saw the television segment. Participant 4 recognized the positive response of the television segment but suggested the promotion was not effective for the local market.

Because the research participants use less television, print, and radio promotions, the actions are consistent with Toor's (2014) suggestion that alternative or non-traditional methods of competition influence the bargaining power of suppliers. All participants have

a website presence, and Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 4 maintain websites. Alford and Page (2015) summarized that small businesses desire to use technology in business strategies to promote market orientation. Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 4 relied on technology more than Participant 3. Participant 2 promoted their website more than the other participants. Participant 3 built a following of diners through referrals and each restaurateur incorporated concepts of market orientation in their operations. Market orientation is defined as actions taken to identify, serve, and satisfy the needs of target markets better than competitors and to increase profits (Gebhardt et al., 2006; Slater & Narver, 1998). Analysts recommended an online business presence as a method to increase performance, (“Assessing the industry using Porter’s five forces,” 2014). While each research participant proved sustainability to qualify for this study, Jayawarna et al. (2014) found that advertising had minimal results on the successes of businesses when first opening.

As part of the document review for this study, I reviewed the Facebook pages for each participant. The participants shared the histories of their restaurants and highlighted their culinary expertise. Diners from the restaurants confirmed multiple themes in this study found on the restaurants’ Facebook websites. Participant 1 used the Facebook skills of a family member for restaurant promotions. Participant 3 relies on diner referrals and the reviews on their Facebook page highlighted diner loyalty. Participant 3 achieved the highest review rating among all participants and with 100 more reviews than the Facebook page reviews of the second-highest participant. Participant 3 operates the restaurant with the least amount of seating capacity among all participants. Participant 3

has a loyal social media following confirming an effective and outlying marketing strategy.

Participant 4 suggested the reasonable cost of a Facebook promotion, as low as \$30 each month. Participant 4 reported that Facebook promotions are not as effective as in the past. Participant 4 plans to use a local radio station with more frequency as the station appeals to listeners with a similar demographic of affluent, elderly clients who willingly pay for organic offerings. Participant 4 disclosed the high cost of advertising with a radio partner as promotional costs were up to \$1,000 weekly. Jin et al. (2015) recommended that restaurateurs promote their brand and services through social media platforms like Facebook to generate impressions, gain new clients, and retain existing diners. Participant 4 reported a current example of success in using Facebook to promote the restaurant. Participant 4 displayed a comment from a diner who wrote that the choice to patronize the location was because of a recent Facebook post. Business leaders encourage customer engagement on social media when asking for product feedback, posting product videos, and frequently communicating with their clients (Balan & Rege, 2017).

Participant 4 developed the social media use of Instagram for restaurant promotions. Participant 4 credits a minimum of one original daily post on Instagram for promotional effectiveness. A business partner of Participant 4 creates Instagram stories that highlight the restaurant's operations, food preparation techniques, philosophies on organic food, and unique menu items, including seasonal or limited-time offerings. I followed and reviewed the Instagram account of Participant 4's restaurant. I confirmed

the use of Instagram promotions and found daily posts and Instagram stories on restaurant offerings and the philosophies of the owner. Balan and Rege (2017) suggested that consumers desire social media interactions with businesses instead of reviewing basic posts or messages.

Participant 2 used a website platform more prominently than the other participants. Participant 2 allocated funds to partner with the media group of a local agency. The media group designed the website for Participant 2 from different angles and business divisions. The media group conducted analytics on keywords and with search engine optimization (SEO) strategies. The partner created the website to measure guest traffic. Participant 2 reported that the money spent on the website with SEO measurements was a strategic investment. I verified the strategy used by Participant 2 and reviewed a recent website report the restaurant owner shared with me and produced by the media partner. I confirmed on the report the recent number of guest visits, page views, and the average duration of each website session. I noted that the majority of website traffic was from mobile users.

Participant 2 acknowledged the widespread use of cellular phones and mobile devices and capitalized on this trend to connect with diners. Vining (2011) suggested that the threat of new entrants and substitute products were nearly identical. I accessed Participant 4's website and searched Google using keywords relating to the participant's website analytics. The restaurant division targeted for promotion by Participant 4 was the first result displayed in the Google search. Participant 2 demonstrated a competitive advantage with their website marketing and SEO partnership with the local media group.

Participant 2 benefits from their website. With a large e-mail club database of over 5,000 members, Participant 2 targets diners with promotions, events, catering services, and new menu items. Participant 2 pays a vendor to manage their e-mail club list. Alford and Page (2015) found that business owners who lack technical knowledge risk losing the benefits of marketing through technological means. Participant 2 benefits more from website promotions and enrolling diners in their e-mail club than the mediums of television, radio, and print. Participant 2 pays cash incentives to the top two servers monthly with the highest new enrollments in the restaurant's e-mail club.

Participant 3 reported that a local publication promoted their restaurant at no cost during their opening. Participant 4 reported that a feature published by print media generated public interest. Participant 4 disclosed that a feature story created more interest than using the same publication to purchase print advertising. I conducted website searches for the participants and found that each had from one to six stories published with either local print media or television news stations. I reviewed the articles and videos to confirm the marketing strategies of the participants.

A former business partner of Participant 1 resorted to printing up flyers between 2009 and 2011 and delivered those flyers to the managers of recently built apartments. The apartment managers inserted those flyers in new resident or student welcome packets. Participant 1 mentioned the cost-effectiveness of this flyer promotion, especially during difficult economic times for the restaurant. Mihailovic (2017) discovered that enticing and retaining clients are objectives of restaurant managers. Participant 1 occasionally publishes an advertisement in a local newspaper. Participant 1 and

Participant 2 published coupons in local savings books. Only Participant 2 reported using Yellow Pages for restaurant promotions.

Some participants used online partners for restaurant promotions. Some participants reacted to Porter's (1980) competitive force of the bargaining power of suppliers by choosing or discontinuing online partner relations. Participant 1 used a restaurant website to increase guest traffic. Participant 1 reported difficulties with this partnership and disliked the services promised. Participant 1 discontinued using the online partner because results were difficult to measure. Participant 4 migrated their reservation website from Open Table to Yelp. Participant 4 laughed when referring to Yelp as a "nightmare," but noted that the number of reservations on Yelp remained consistent with Open Table reservations. Restaurateurs provide innovation in marketing through social networking and smartphone applications while complimenting these resources with staff training, staff compensation, and career planning for staff (Lee et al., 2016).

Theme 3: Innovation and Flexibility in Marketing

A theme among the participants was that each owner was flexible in their marketing strategies for sustainability. Managers modify their marketing strategies based on market conditions (Arnett & Wittmann, 2014). Participant 1 said that marketing was "flying by the seat of your pants," and adjusted strategies accordingly. Participant 2 followed restaurant trends and changed marketing based on industry trends. Participant 3 reported that promotional advertising was not necessary to support the business and focused on food and service quality, referrals, and atmosphere to attract and retain diners.

Participant 4 relied on social media and reputation for marketing and disclosed mistakes and adjustments to strategies based on results. The flexibility that the participants demonstrated in the restaurants is consistent with what Lam and Harker (2015) found as business leaders exhibited differing strategies and priorities when implementing marketing initiatives in their businesses. Business owners entering the marketplace relied on intuition and informal strategies rather than traditional marketing practices (Jayawarna et al., 2014). All participants promoted brand orientation with customized and flexible marketing initiatives. Business owners use brand orientation to protect their brands with customer relationships and their mission, vision, and values (Gromark & Melin, 2013; Urde et al., 2013).

Sorina-Diana et al. (2013) found that small businesses experienced different and unique challenges more than the challenges faced by larger businesses when evaluating marketing results. Walsh and Lipinski (2009) explained that small business leaders struggled with structures for decision making and relied on individual efforts. Participant 1 reported the lack of marketing experience in restaurant ownership. Participant 1 credited the years of experience in restaurant ownership and collaborated with partners to create plans for success and employee satisfaction. Researchers found that managers relied on entrepreneurial skills, not necessarily tested marketing strategies, to succeed as a new business (Jayawarna et al., 2014).

Participant 2 created revenue from other business divisions to support their restaurant operations. Participant 3 reported the success of the initial and current marketing plans with referrals, quality, and culinary experience contributing to

sustainability. Participant 4 quoted David Lee Roth and said, “you roll with the punches,” and continually measured the realities of marketing strategies that succeeded or failed. The participants adhered to known and personalized strategies for success and demonstrated their skills in competitive strategy as defined by Tarasova et al. (2016) as the long-term, systematic steps required in a competitive industry which enables a firm to maneuver against similar businesses.

Participant 1 incorporated a point-of-sale system after years of paperwork, handwritten time cards, and manual accounting. Payroll and food inventory were the biggest marketing expenses incurred by Participant 1. Participant 1 installed the point-of-sale system because a previous partner managed the administrative side of the restaurant and Participant 1 disliked administrative duties at the time. Participant 1 installed the point-of-sale system when their business partner left the restaurant. Other than website use, social media platforms, online website partnerships, and the point-of-sale system mentioned by Participant 1, the participants did not disclose other uses of technology. Bedard and Kuhn (2015) addressed the shift in information technology platforms where business leaders can better track consumer-purchasing behaviors. Lim (2015) posited that organizations maximize sustainability marketing when focused on economic, social, ethical, and technological initiatives.

Three of the four participants disclosed the difficulties of measuring the traditional promotional channels of television, radio, and print. All participants disclosed cost as a barrier to marketing strategies. The participants responded to cost barriers and the challenges of measuring marketing success with personalized marketing strategies.

Leaders of small businesses increased success opportunities with reasonable, thoughtful, and individualized marketing programs (Sorina-Diana et al., 2013). Noone and Maier (2015) recommended that strategic and varied menus and pricing strategies sustained growth and profitability. Participant 1, Participant 3, and Participant 4 reported that the focus on quality products and excellent service were effective marketing strategies.

Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 4 varied their marketing approaches in response to economic trends. This strategy is consistent with Porter's forces of assessing current industry rivals and the bargaining power of suppliers and customers (Toor, 2014). Participant 3 indicated that following a personalized and proven marketing philosophy was important to sustainability and noted that they were unconcerned with competing restaurants. Cordeiro (2013) recommended strategic planning actions ranging from recognizing the need for it to researching strategies and then assessing strategies and monitoring the results achieved. Entrepreneurs make business decisions based on individual styles and personalities (Sadler-Smith et al., 2003).

All participants disclosed that dedication to their businesses and adhering to proven marketing strategies created sustainability. Katona (2014) found that even basic marketing strategies were sufficient for operating and managing small businesses. Participant 2 realized how the shift from traditional to online marketing promotions necessitated a budget allocation for website marketing. The shift Participant 2 made from traditional to online marketing confirms the findings of Jakada and Gambo (2014) that hospitality managers engage in proactive and efficient responses to market needs and demands. Restaurateurs can create sustainability by focusing on short-term strategies

(Demirer & Yuan, 2013). Participant 3 suggested that if the restaurant fails at any point, the cause of failure will be attributed more to a lack of quality than to a lack of marketing. The participants proved flexibility and consistency in restaurant sustainability, and the evolution of their strategies are consistent with the professional literature.

The participants explained flexible approaches toward competition and the approaches varied from indifference to dominance, the reality of competition through acceptance, or reactive measures in response to existing and new competitors. Participant 1 reported that marketing is not a conscious effort. Participant 2 maximizes the use of SEO analytics and credits their local media partner for generating Google listings featuring the owner's restaurant and services when Internet shoppers search for dining or catering options. Participant 3 reported the minimal use of marketing in the restaurant. Participant 4 adjusted marketing strategies as needed and differentiated the restaurant with organic menu offerings.

Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 4 reported restaurant location as a marketing challenge. Participant 3 displays the name of their restaurant inconspicuously on their front entrance and has high diner occupancy with fluctuations seasonally. The majority of Participant 3's clients book reservations, sometimes weeks in advance. Researchers discovered that the location of a restaurant contributed to sustainability (Self et al., 2015).

Participant 1 worked for the original restaurant owner in a previous location. When the original owner retired, Participant 1 reported the challenges of moving to their present location in a downtown pedestrian area. The local municipal council moved to

open the walkway to traffic and Participant 1 attended council meetings to oppose the addition of the street. The municipal council approved the addition of the street and Participant 1 met the challenges of the action by advocating for the restaurant. There was a reduction in business during and temporarily following the construction of the street which Participant 1 attributed to the city's redevelopment. Participant 1 demonstrated flexibility in responding to the street installation and focused on core restaurant principles for sustainability during the downtown changes made by the city.

Participant 1 reported that flexibility in marketing was critical when responding to new regulations imposed by the local health department along with the city's decision to remove the pedestrian mall. Participant 1 opposed the street addition which disrupted access to their restaurant. Along with responding to health department regulations, Participant 1 illustrated an understanding of competitive forces consistent with the Porterian model as Sutherland (2014) discovered that private-sector leaders worldwide sought favorable business environments in many regulatory matters.

Participant 2 relocated their restaurant in 2002 and mentioned that their current location presents challenges and opportunities in strategic marketing. Participant 2 shares a brick and mortar location with other businesses. Participant 2 benefits from this arrangement but has had to overcome challenges to visitor perceptions that the building is not open to the public. Participant 2 promoted restaurant events that supported local musicians and discussed plans to promote their destination in upcoming years for both quality food and a venue supporting veterans and musicians. Participant 2 plans on messaging this support for veterans and musicians in all future community marketing.

Participant 2 sponsored seasonal music events to promote the location and offerings of the restaurant and budgeted to host those events.

Participant 4 suggested that the current restaurant location requires extra efforts in marketing because of its off-street entrance in a Eugene, Oregon neighborhood that Participant 4 described as undesirable. Participant 4 credited the effectiveness of an online reservation website and social media to attract diners. Participant 3 exhibited flexibility in overcoming location disadvantages with proactive and personally proven word-of-mouth marketing strategies. Hua et al. (2013) discovered that location, growth, differentiation, and management skills influenced restaurant sustainability. All participants either embraced the challenges of location or adjusted their marketing to minimize the negative outcomes.

Theme 4: Diner Loyalty, Reputation, and Relationship Marketing

Restaurateurs maximized customer loyalty by promoting positive dining emotions through atmosphere, pricing, value, loyalty programs, image, and branding (Tanford, 2016). Participant 1 distributed a punch card for a free menu item after 10 purchases. Participant 2 offered rewards through their e-mail club and diners received benefits upon club enrollment, birthdays, and the anniversaries of enrollment. The participants use these promotional channels to measure the frequency of use among diners. Tanford (2016) discovered that loyal hospitality customers contribute to sustainability.

Restaurateurs globally face obstacles from heightened competition, rising food and labor costs, and demanding clientele (Noone & Maier, 2015). While all participants stressed that the service and quality factors generated a positive image, Participant 1 and

Participant 3 minimized the role of marketing from a promotional standpoint. The participants suggested that diners initially selected their locations and continued to return in part because of name recognition. Participant 2 and Participant 4 engaged more in promotional marketing than the other participants, even though Participant 1 and Participant 3 mentioned reputation as a marketing advantage. Participant 1, Participant 3, and Participant 4 developed a following of diners from their early years in business or previous culinary work. Jin et al. (2015) recommended brand promotion along with quality service to increase favorable client perceptions. Small business owners compete by differentiating their strategies and offering high-quality products and services (Armstrong, 2013).

Participant 3 reported that referrals, a dedicated customer base, and quality were their primary marketing strategies. Participant 3 indirectly engaged in brand identity consistent with the definition from Williams and Omar (2014) by adhering to internal values of quality and service excellence, promoting the restaurant brand through referrals, and maximizing brand image with predictable product delivery. Diners expressed greater guest satisfaction in restaurants with professionally appearing staff, and restaurant employees with polite demeanors, cordial interactions, and positive attitudes (Alhelalat, Habiballah, & Twaissi, 2017). Participant 3 realized the effectiveness of word-of-mouth promotion as a proven strategy for sustainability. Participant 3 provided special attention to referred diners to encourage repeat business. Participant 3 generated a loyal following of diners over 20 years working in different restaurants and before opening their current restaurant. Participant 3 attributed this loyalty to the mastery of quality food preparation

as a marketing strategy developed from previous years in the industry. Participant 3 chose high-quality menu choices over what similar restaurants offered as menu items and suggested that the focus on quality differentiated them from competitors. Delighted customers expressed loyalty to a business with return visits (Barnes et al., 2016).

Participant 4 specifically mentioned referrals as a reliable method of promoting the restaurant. Participant 4 credited a favorable reputation in the years leading up to their brick and mortar location as a reason for sustainability. Researchers posited that loyalty might provide a competitive advantage but restaurant operators still required sufficient business strategies and operational skills (Rosalin et al., 2016). The participants maximized customer loyalty with operational effectiveness and evolving strategies for restaurant sustainability.

All participants maximized long-term connections with diners whether in their current or previous culinary work. Ghosh et al. (2014) defined identity marketing as a customer's relationship with a business brand. The participants recognized the influence of other restaurants and marketed their products and services in unique and customized manners. Identity marketing is less genuine when customers feel that their freedom of expression is lessened (Bhattacharjee et al., 2014). Diners may vary their dining choices because of affordability, type of restaurant desired, location, or convenience and the participants in this study customized identity marketing and value by presenting preferred products and services.

Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 4 indirectly promoted brand identity in the restaurants in different manners. Participant 1 credited name recognition and quality

offerings consistent with brand identity concepts. Participant 2 promoted quality and service excellence within the restaurant that also welcomes local musicians and veterans. Participant 4 maximized brand identity and differentiated their restaurant from similar ones with organic offerings from sustainable vendors. Wood and Omar (2014) discovered that business values, consistent actions, and brand name recognition maximize positive brand identity. Fiore, Niehm, Hurst, Jihyeong, and Sadachar, (2013) posited that small business owners implemented individualized marketing programs and required innovation in marketing. Business owners in retail, restaurants, bars, and lodging promote brand identity through the channels of products, product presentation, promotions, and stakeholder relations (Fiore, Niehm, Hurst, Jihyeong, & Sadachar, 2013).

Participant 2 paid incentives to restaurant staff to promote the e-mail marketing club. Lin et al. (2014) found that staff incentives beyond basic compensation contributed to growth. Arnett and Wittmann (2014) discovered that managers sharing marketing strategies within the organization produced positive results. Guerci et al. (2015) recommended that managers maximize business ethics by improving employee selection and training initiatives. Participant 2 exemplified continuous improvement by training and compensating employees to promote the restaurant.

Participant 4 stressed the importance of guest relationships by being present at the restaurant during dining hours. Participant 4 suggested that diner's who expect the owner's presence was unreasonable because the restaurant staff adopted their overarching philosophies on organic food offerings from sustainable, local providers. Participant 4

reported that a business plan for an upcoming expansion included continual ownership presence to promote diner confidence.

McDonagh and Prothero (2014) referred to customers making sustainable consumer decisions as downshiffters, voluntary simplifiers, and sustainable or ethical buyers. Participant 4 capitalized on this market demographic and adhered to a philosophy of only purchasing organic products and “animals that are grown properly.” Participant 4 emphasized that the restaurant employees likewise adhered to the philosophy of organic offerings. Participant 4 developed a competitive advantage through organic inventory provided by local farmers. Pivoda (2016) posited that employees partnering with managers for sustainability efforts produce positive outcomes. Participant 4 prepared organic menu offerings provided by local farmers. Ryu and Lee (2013) found that restaurateurs with similar distribution and pricing customized their strategies to differentiate offerings from competitors (Ryu & Lee, 2013).

Participant 4 leveraged the bargaining power of suppliers and buyers effectively by promoting a relationship with local providers of organic products. I reviewed the names of food providers listed inside Participant 4’s restaurant against the vendors listed on their website. Many of the vendors listed were the same providers featured on the website. Participant 4 leveraged their use of organic and sustainably raised products and addressed the threat of substitute products effectively. Rajaseker and Raee (2013) posited Porter’s five forces as a basic model and easily applied to different industries and geographical locations. Participant 4 aligned with Porter’s competitive forces as Indiatsy

et al. (2014) found that diversified product offerings and understanding the bargaining power of consumers contributed to the retention of affordable and quality providers.

Theme 5: Marketing Evolution from Hospitality Experience

The participants shared how industry experience and personalized marketing strategies influenced the sustainability of their small business restaurants. All participants credited dedication and hard work in restaurant ownership. Participant 1 and Participant 3 acknowledged not just personal dedication as a restaurant success factor but committed and hard-working restaurant staff as well. Participant 4 discussed the commitment involved in restaurant ownership and added that while it may not be a defined marketing technique that being “hard-headed” contributed to their sustainability. Participant 1 maintained openness to different suggestions for marketing but ultimately returned to personal knowledge gained over decades of restaurant ownership. Participant 1 and Participant 2 each had 30 years of experience in both restaurant management and experience and proved sustainability in their current businesses.

Participant 2 partnered with industry associations and followed restaurant trends for marketing ideas. Participant 2 previously served in industry association leadership positions. Participant 2 benefited from membership in this collaborative environment and addressed competitive forces consistent with Porter’s five forces. Indiaty et al. (2014) found that Porter’s model of competitive forces received praise for its effectiveness. Participant 2 evaluated processes through continual updates available from restaurant industry group membership.

Agarwal and Dahm (2015) found that most restaurant operators obtained college degrees or owned previous businesses but had not completed hospitality training. The only restaurateur that disclosed a college education was Participant 1 who earned a degree in a field unrelated to hospitality or restaurant management. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) discovered that formal hospitality education achieved by restaurateurs factored unimportantly in success indicators. The participants developed hospitality skills through experience and customized marketing strategies. Participant 2 gained hospitality experience by collaborating with restaurant industry groups. The participants confirmed the findings of Walsh and Lipinski (2009) that, as opposed to large business operators who benefited from structured decision-making hierarchies, small business owners relied more on individual efforts.

The participants gained their management experience from years of ownership or previous restaurant employment. The participants either did not have business plans to share for the document review of this study or had never developed business plans. I did not intend to explore in this study how restaurateurs developed their business plans. Only Participant 4 disclosed their intention to create a business plan for an upcoming venture. Agarwal and Dahm (2015) concluded that restaurateurs experience success by developing business plans. Many small business leaders failed to create business plans (Fox, 2013). All participants demonstrated sustainability from experience and individualized marketing strategies even though none offered a business plan for the document collection portion of this study.

Each participant demonstrated sustainability in their endeavors and varied their approaches to marketing strategies based on experience. Each participant generated sustainability with personalized strategies. Business managers compete effectively in new ventures through service and product innovations and market research (Jayawarna et al., 2014). Indiatsy et al. (2014) suggested that using Porter's five forces is comparable to a SWOT analysis. Business leaders familiar with Porter's forces experienced unsatisfactory results with the minimal use of the model (Indiatsy et al., 2014). Porter's five forces and SWOT assessments may provide rudimentary outlines for effective business plans. Researchers recommended the development of business plans to understand business objectives ("Assessing the industry using Porter's five forces," 2014).

The participants implemented marketing actions from experiences gained of up to three decades of restaurant industry employment or ownership. Participant 1 adhered to basic restaurant success principles, promoted employee teamwork, provided a relaxing dining atmosphere, and relied on personal experience. Participant 2 maximized the marketing strategies of quality, service, website promotion, some social media use, and community involvement and offered a venue to support local musicians and veterans. Fitzgerald et al. (2010) found that small businesses engage less in philanthropy for strategy but that family-owned businesses gained benefit from community involvement. Participant 3 dismissed the competitive nature of other restaurants as "pretty much the least of my concerns" and sustained the restaurant through diner referrals. Participant 4 adhered only to organic vendor partnerships and refused to purchase products from crate-raised animals. Participant 4 differentiated the restaurant by promoting local pasture

products, ethically raised animals, and inventory that is free of genetic modifications. The participants demonstrated the ability to adjust marketing strategies based on many years of experience in restaurant ownership and customized to individual needs.

Applications to Professional Practice

Restaurateurs, restaurant industry professionals, educators, and small business owners benefit from the results of this study by furthering their knowledge of small business marketing strategies for sustainability. The participants demonstrated sustainability in restaurant ownership of more than 5 years, and Wang, Lin, Kuo, and Weng (2017) posited that business leaders strive to increase revenue as a primary objective. As nearly 50% of food and accommodation businesses fail within 5 years of opening (BLS, 2016), each participant demonstrated sustainability of at least 5 years by earning sufficient revenues. McFarlane and Ogazon (2011) defined business sustainability as achieving economic success with responsibilities toward the environment and society.

New and experienced restaurant owners incorporating customized solutions based on the results of this study may entice and retain diners with proven marketing techniques. Mihailovic (2017) emphasized that hotel and restaurant managers must attract and retain clients as a business goal. Kukanja et al. (2017) found that some restaurateurs failed to create opportunities for an intriguing and competitive restaurant experience. Restaurateurs and small business owners implementing proven marketing strategies maximize their chances for sustainability. I presented the marketing strategies of sustainable restaurateurs, and new or struggling restaurant owners could implement the

strategies for financial success, to maneuver effectively against competitors, and contribute to local economic growth.

The research participants discussed marketing strategies for restaurant sustainability. I discovered that quality and service, customized and affordable promotional marketing, flexibility in making marketing decisions, effective guest relations, and industry experience contributed to restaurant sustainability. Each participant disclosed that the relationship with diners contributed to sustainability. Hospitality managers should focus on customer retention through customer relationship marketing (Mihailovic, 2017).

The specific business problem was that some small business restaurant owners lack marketing strategies to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years. Restaurant owners applying the marketing strategies explored in this study increase the years in business and generate sufficient operational revenues. Restaurant owners developing initial and annual business plans should customize the marketing strategies from this study to challenge competitors, gain market share, and minimize risk. New and struggling restaurateurs may maximize competition with initial business planning and continual improvement. Tarasova et al. (2016) found that long-term, competitive actions enable business leaders to perform against other organizations. Researchers found that new business owners who developed business plans maximized growth and created employment opportunities (Blackburn et al., 2013). Restaurateurs embracing the overarching marketing strategies in this study may incorporate the 4Ps of marketing, Porter's five forces, and SWOT analysis as possible business planning tools. Business leaders analyzed competitive forces with

Porter's model to create strategies and maximize profitability (Azadi & Rahimzadeh, 2012). Salavou (2015) suggested that current and future scholars develop hybrid strategies for competition as business owners only using Porter's 1980 model fail to address all components of a competitive strategy. Industry leaders, hospitality professionals, and independent restaurateurs collaborating with each other for industry progress should consider the results of this study for individual and collective improvement. Mathooko and Ogutu (2015) found that industry allies benefited from sharing resources to improve cost efficiencies and minimize rivalries.

Implications for Social Change

Small business restaurant owners, as well as general small business owners, may implement recommendations from this study to increase individual and duplicable sustainability. As small business restaurant owners incorporate the recommendations, they may create positive social change by generating additional revenues for financial security and philanthropy, creating a need for additional employment, and strengthening community partnerships. Seilov (2015) suggested that governments could fund collaborative programs between universities and small hospitality businesses to improve the skills of laborers. Business leaders may increase their chances for success by partnering with external innovators for sustainability strategies. Small business restaurant owners may contribute to positive social change by implementing recommendations from this study to increase revenues for environmental initiatives and social programs like nutritional awareness and to promote healthy food choices.

Managers in large businesses benefit from structures for the implementation of strategies (Walsh & Lipinski, 2009) and the managers of chain restaurants may discover useful recommendations from this study to promote sustainability. Food service managers operating campus, senior housing, healthcare, or similar dining facilities may find the results beneficial if customized to situations requiring improvement. Positive social change in sustainability for numerous food organizations may be possible by studying recommendations of product, place, promotion, and price. From an educational, vocational, or technical perspective, positive social change may occur by sharing the results of this study with culinary arts students with minimal management experience. If culinary arts students understand the business requirements of a restaurant, they may increase their opportunities for success not just in the kitchen, but in the marketplace. Successful restaurateurs providing internships, apprenticeships, or serving as mentors to culinary students may contribute to positive social change.

Recommendations for Action

I researched the successful marketing strategies small business restaurant owners used in Eugene, Oregon for sustainability of more than 5 years. There are many recommendations on marketing strategies for small business restaurant owners based on the results of this study. Fledgling small business restaurateurs increase sustainability by creating and following a business plan. A restaurant owner opening their establishment with a strategic business plan based on scholarly research should anticipate competitive challenges and maneuver effectively against them. Established restaurant owners who update their business plans annually demonstrate flexibility in response to market forces.

Small business restaurateurs entering the marketplace may promote sustainability with strategic business plans. Restaurateurs may minimize the cost of business plan development by committing personal time and resources to understand the techniques of strategic planning. Established and new restaurant owners could study affordable business plan development techniques through available and affordable continuing education. Restaurant owners should investigate continuing education opportunities through industry groups, local, state, and government small business administrations, colleges and universities, culinary schools, and fellow entrepreneurs willing to collaborate. Restaurant owners should review business plans annually. Small business restaurant owners could use Porter's five forces, the 4Ps of marketing, and SWOT analyses as foundations to revise annual marketing business and marketing plans.

Each participant mentioned the costs associated with restaurant ownership. New and tenured small business restaurant owners should incorporate cost management plans and budget projections for short and long-term considerations within initial business plan development or annual reviews of strategic management. A segment of the cost management and budgeting section of a business plan should include the projection of revenues to determine the cost of purchasing quality food products and reviewing vendor performance. Restaurateurs may generate higher profit margins with the purchase of lower quality food yet discerning clients may choose higher-priced menu items to identify with the restaurant brand. Restaurant owners analyzing the costs and quality of the supply chain in a business plan mitigate influences from market forces.

The small business restaurant owner should develop specific operational plans for continuous service excellence and food quality. Restaurant owners should incorporate employee training and guest relation strategies in business plans and consistent with the philosophies of service and quality excellence. Restaurant owners promoting their reputation, adjusting marketing strategies, and achieving sustainability from word-of-mouth achieved economic success. Restaurateurs minimize competitive risks by including business plans for referrals and performance measurements for success. Restaurant owners should assess the costs and effectiveness of television, radio, and print promotions while leveraging their use of websites and social media. Restaurant owners should assess financial and budgeting strategies to address annual expense and revenue projections, promotional costs, technological platforms, inventory, payroll, and fluctuations in sales from market competition, seasonal fluctuations, and shifts in national and local economies.

Restaurateurs partnering with industry groups, local chambers of commerce, culinary arts professionals, colleges and universities and even other restaurant owners could benefit from learning opportunities for sustainability. Small business restaurant owners should cultivate community partnerships for reputational strategy. Restaurant owners should utilize their experience and flexibility in business planning and execution and analyze market forces for influence in business efforts.

Chambers of Commerce in Lane County, Oregon, The Oregon Restaurant Association, Lane Leaders Association, Lane Community College Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management, and Eugene Cascades and Coast Travel Association are

agencies that may benefit from this study. The results could be distributed to the appropriate agency leaders or presented to agency members during regular meetings. The Oregon Small Business Association and the Lane County Small Business Association are agencies that could distribute the findings of this study to members. The Linn-Benton Community College Small Business Development Center and the Small Business Center at Umpqua Community College in counties adjoining Lane County are also agencies that could distribute the results of this study to their members.

Recommendations for Further Research

I chose a qualitative multiple-case study to identify the marketing strategies that four small business restaurant owners implemented in Eugene, Oregon to sustain their operations for more than 5 years. The participants provided strategies that future researchers could study further. Researchers analyzing the results of this study may identify additional small business restaurant sustainability topics requiring future research. Researchers could explore the perceptions restaurateurs have toward marketing concepts. In some instances, business operators confused marketing with advertising (Katona, 2014). Some research participants and potential participants in this study either claimed they did not engage in marketing or expressed minimal experience in marketing. Some participants and potential participants mentioned that participating in the study would not add value to this research. Researchers expanding on the importance small business owners place on marketing strategies could provide insight and recommendations for restaurateurs and industry professionals on the subject.

Future researchers might add to the findings of this study by conducting similar research outside of Eugene, Oregon. A quantitative study examining the correlation of restaurant success metrics in relation to business plans could add to the literature for restaurant and non-hospitality small business owners. Researchers could explore or examine the evolution, cost-effectiveness, or measurement tools of small business promotional marketing strategies. Researchers could study the evolution of small business owners from the use of traditional television, radio, and print promotions to websites or social media marketing.

Reflections

I chose to study small business restaurant marketing strategies for sustainability because restaurateurs influence U.S. economic growth and employment (Délano, 2014; National Restaurant Association, 2016). In recognizing the specific business problem that some small business restaurant owners lack marketing strategies for financial growth, I analyzed the results of my study without preconceived ideas about restaurant marketing successes or failures. I explored the results of the data to understand small business restaurant marketing strategies without bias. I desired an understanding of the data in a transparent manner and devoid of opinion. I do not work in a food service business and conducted the research interview with participants with no expectations or bias on how the participants answered the interview questions.

I intend to share the results of this study with beginning and struggling restaurateurs, culinary arts students, established restaurant owners, and other independent or corporate restaurant managers who may incorporate the recommendations from this

study to enhance profitability and sustainability. I expect that sharing the results of this study may benefit other small businesses seeking marketing strategies to maximize sustainability. As I have associations with local business groups, chamber of commerce leaders, and other professional groups, I will present the findings to them for consideration. Friends who operate food carts have expressed interest in the business problem of small business marketing strategies for sustainability. I will share the results of this study with them. I am confident that the results of this study will provide value to other small business leaders outside of the restaurant industry.

I was laid off by an employer in 2009 and again in 2011. I obtained a Masters of Business Administration in 2013 and chose to pursue a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) with Walden University in 2014 to gain advanced management skills for the workplace. I struggled with time management, fitness goals, and focus many times during my DBA studies. After taking the maximum leave of absence from Walden University in 2015, I dedicated myself to moving forward on my research. I have grown professionally and academically through the challenges and rewards of a DBA program. I appreciated the guidance and mentorship from multiple Walden University faculty and was encouraged and inspired by many Walden peers that I now call friends.

While I held no preconceived views on the possible results of this study, completing the last section was exciting as I understood the research process better as a completed product. The initial months and years of my doctoral studies at Walden University were fragmented and compartmentalized. I struggled with research concepts and processes. I was frustrated because of the length of this doctoral study. When I

reviewed my completed study, I felt confident with the logic, themes, and recommendations for actions. I am encouraged by my final study and hope that my second and future studies become easier to complete as my research skills improve.

Conclusion

Some small business restaurant owners lack the marketing strategies required for sustainability. Business leaders positioned their brands with the 4Ps of marketing and provided products for target markets to achieve competitive advantages (Bellin, 2016). Researchers defined marketing as determining and satisfying the consumption needs of targeted markets (Walsh & Lipinski, 2009). Researchers praised Porter's five forces as a useful model for managing competitive forces (Prasad & Warriar, 2016). The findings of this study are significant for restaurant owners striving for sustainability through marketing strategies. While not all small business owners intend to grow (Reijonen et al., 2014), competitive entrepreneurs use Porter's five forces as a conceptual reference to analyze and develop management strategy (Hawker & Edmonds, 2014). Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2015) found that leaders developed business strategies as part of a process and not just a reaction to unique situations.

Hospitality managers should analyze the reasons clients discontinue patronizing their establishment and implement plans for retention based on their analysis (Mihailovic, 2017). Fundamental restaurant management, effective promotional marketing, adjusting strategies effectively, generating business plans, gaining restaurant industry experience, and focusing on reputation and diner loyalty are critical to the success of an independent restaurant. Because nearly half of all food and accommodation businesses fail within 5

years of opening (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2016), small business restaurant owners applying the marketing strategies and recommendations from this study increase the likelihood of sustainability by attracting and retaining the diners. Sweeney, Armstrong, and Johnson (2016) wrote how measuring the loyalty and customer satisfaction of diners achieved market share and profitability. Small business restaurant owners marketing superior products and services with a focus on excellence and quality may increase profits and create economic sustainability.

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Appendix A: Certificate of Protecting Human Subject Research Participant



Appendix B: Interview Protocol

The interview questions asked during the interviews with participants are contained in this section. The findings and results will be included in section 3 of this study.

Primary research question: What marketing strategies do small business restaurant owners use to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years?

Participant Selection: Participants will be contacted personally, by phone call, or e-mail.

Research study explanation: The participants will receive an explanation and purpose of the study, the researcher will obtain consent from the participants, and signed consent forms will be collected from each participant.

Interview locations: A date and time for each participant interview will be agreed upon in either the participant's business office or a neutral location providing privacy and with no distractions.

Primary research question: What marketing strategies do small business restaurant owners use to achieve sustainability beyond 5 years?

Initial interview questions: Notes will be taken during interview sessions.

1. How much emphasis do you place on your marketing strategies?
2. What processes did you develop to create your marketing strategies?
3. How do you analyze the return on investment of your marketing strategies?
4. What barriers did you encounter to implementing the marketing strategies?
5. What barriers did you encounter to implement the marketing strategies?
6. How do you position your brand to maximize competitive advantage?
7. How do financial fluctuations in your business affect your marketing capabilities?
8. How do you revise your marketing strategies to compete with other restaurants?
9. What additional information can you provide regarding marketing strategies you used to achieve sustainability longer than 5 years?