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Role of Outsourcing in Stress and Job Satisfaction of Information Technology Professionals

Janell Renee Robinson
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Janell Robinson

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Review Committee
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Dr. Judith Forbes, Committee Member, Management Faculty
Dr. Abraham Meilich, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

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MS, University of Maryland University College, 2006

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Information technology (IT) outsourcing poses a potential job loss threat to IT professionals, which can decrease job security, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The problem that this study addressed was the perceived role of IT outsourcing in the job stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention of IT professionals. The purpose of this study was to explore how job-related stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention within the IT profession are influenced by outsourcing as perceived by IT workers themselves. Phenomenology was the methodology used, and the person-environment fit theory formed the theoretical framework for this study. The research questions addressed outsourcing and its impact on IT employees, based on the perceptions of the participants. Data were collected from 20 IT professionals at 4 medium-sized firms within Central Florida using open-ended interview questions. Significant themes emerged as the interview data were analyzed and coded using words that best described the data. Synthesis of the data collected indicated that job stress and job dissatisfaction were continuing concerns among the participants, as indicated in current general literature. However, turnover intention had a less consequential impact on the IT workers' reactions to the effects of outsourcing. Contrary to the expectation that IT outsourcing plays a negative role in the job satisfaction of the participants, the study results indicated that the majority of the participants were still satisfied in their positions following IT outsourcing activities. Managers could impact social change by understanding the levels of stress and job satisfaction IT professionals experience during outsourcing. Insights from this study may help improve employees' productivity, commitment, and contributions to their local economies.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Organizations are continuously seeking ways to remain competitive in the global marketplace. This requires them to enhance their abilities to provide high quality goods and services at low costs and increased speeds (Chang & Gurbaxani, 2012). To achieve these goals, companies have tried various methods including reengineering, downsizing, and outsourcing. Reengineering helps organizations restructure their processes and reduce waste of resources. Downsizing allows for a decrease in operating costs and an increase in earnings and stock prices (Elmuti, Grunewald, & Abebe, 2010). Most recently, companies have turned to outsourcing to reach some of their operations objectives. Contracting services through outside providers or vendors can be more economical than using their own facilities (Fung, 2013). Outsourcing Information Technology (IT) is used to acquire specialized technical skills and knowledge. Organizations outsource IT functions such as application development and support, networking, telecommunications, distributed computing, data management, and cloud computing.

Companies have been outsourcing their IT needs for more than 50 years. For instance, Frito-Lay and Blue Cross outsourced their data processing services to Electronic Data Systems (EDS) in 1963. Since then, companies have outsourced additional IT services, products, and staff to external providers on a larger scale. In 1989, Kodak entered into a $500 million, ten-year contract with IBM, while Enron signed a $750 million, ten-year agreement with Electronic Data Systems (Lacity & Willcocks, 2012). Recently, the number of organizations outsourcing their core processes has grown

considerably worldwide. According to Gorla and Somers (2014), IT outsourcing has been growing at a rate of 14%, and the current IT market is valued at $746 billion. IT accounts for nearly 67% of the global outsourcing market. According to Michael and Michael (2012), nearly 3.3 million American jobs will be outsourced by 2015, with 500,000 of them coming from the IT sector.

The high costs of IT functions have increased the importance of outsourcing as an organizational strategy. It allows organizations to obtain specialized technical skills, reduce costs, and gain a more responsive IT organization. Outsourcing provides flexibility as well as the opportunity for businesses to save money and focus on their primary functions. Obtaining resources at lower costs helps organizations decrease their overall costs of operations (Fung, 2013). According to Lacity and Willcocks (2012), outsourcing can reduce overall client costs by 10% to 15%. Utilizing the available resources provided by vendors offers an opportunity for companies to expand their capabilities. Outsourcing support activities allows companies to become more competitive. In addition, external providers can provide a higher level of efficiency in the delivery of IT services, which enables organizations to improve their performances (Chang & Gurbaxani, 2012). Still, organizations continue to struggle with the decision of whether or not to outsource some or all of their internal functions.

IT professionals are found within many modern organizations and consist of technologists, managers, administrators, and directors. They are expected to interact with other technology-related positions brought into their organizations through outsourcing (Khosrowpour, Subramanian, Gunderman, & Aber, 2011). Furthermore, the outsourced IT personnel are required to work with members of the organizations in addition to the IT

departments. Outsourced workers bring their own cultural norms, values, and beliefs that may conflict with those of the organizations. Some additional risks limit outsourcing. Gorla and Somers (2014) argued that managers who have made the decision to outsource have more regrets and anxieties than they care to share. Common complaints include degradations of service, lack of effectiveness and commitment of vendors, and slow implementations and delivery of data. Furthermore, outsourcing can leave workers feeling unappreciated, stressed, and dissatisfied with their jobs. IT outsourcing has a satisfaction rate of 33%, while internal workers have a satisfaction rate of 70-80% for non-IT outsourced activities (Gorla & Somers, 2014). Organizations have to be aware of these challenges and able to implement effective methods of overcoming them.

Outsourcing has been viewed by a number of individuals from various standpoints. Lacity and Willcocks (2012) asserted that many current academic studies examine the positive outcomes of outsourcing based on the perspectives of clients. The research is based on large surveys of outsourcing clients or case studies conducted at client locations. More specifically, the literature measures the clients' perceptions of success or satisfaction with outsourcing in terms of relationships, performance, and profits. Liang, Wang, Xue, and Cui (2015) noted that a rich, diverse body of theoretical and empirical research has been conducted over the last 22 years, with 164 articles being published in 50 journals about the decisions and outcomes of IT outsourcing. IT outsourcing has been studied from more than 20 different theoretical perspectives, including economics, strategy, sociology, and natural sciences. One can find many articles on the myths and realities of outsourcing, as well as literature that aids companies in implementing outsourcing, selecting sourcing options, and managing relationships and

contracts with third parties. Additionally, organizations pay close attention to research that addresses the efficiency, cost-cutting, and business focus benefits of outsourcing (Gorla & Somers, 2014). This study aimed to understand the sources of discontent causing job stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover due to outsourcing.

Prior research studies are based on the practices, foundations, and outcomes of IT outsourcing. More specifically, Blaskovich and Mintchik (2011) noted that early work focused on the reasons firms decide to outsource and the types of IT functions companies outsource, from the perspectives of vendors or company executives. This paper highlighted an underresearched problem area of IT outsourcing (Hans & Mithas, 2013). For many organizations, IT professionals are considered the heart, brain, and muscle of their companies. Ironically, IT workers see a decline in their value during outsourcing activities. Furthermore, outsourcing poses a possible job loss threat to IT professionals, decreasing job security, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention (Khosrowpour et al., 2011). The study was conducted in an effort to understand the role outsourcing plays in the stress and job satisfaction of IT professionals. Additionally, it sought to understand the turnover intention of IT personnel during the outsourcing process. The research is relevant because it provides an additional layer of information, as well as an understanding of outsourcing from a different perspective.

This study adopts a qualitative approach to assess the role of outsourcing in IT professionals' job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. A phenomenological design was chosen due to the insight it can provide into understanding the perceptions of IT workers (Wells, 2013). The study examines the real-life experiences and perceptions of 20 technology professionals who have experienced outsourcing activities within their

organizations. A discussion of the research methodology is provided, and the research questions are introduced. The purpose of the study is presented, followed by the research area's theoretical foundations. Operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are explained, the significance of the research is covered, and a literature review of outsourcing, job stress, and job satisfaction are provided.

Background of the Problem

Companies have experienced drastic growth in the outsourcing of products and services over the last decade. The process may involve the transfer of personnel as well as equipment to the outsourcing organizations. While organizations have hired firms to perform some functions, they are now outsourcing activities on a larger scale. Outsourcing has become increasingly popular among Fortune 500 companies (Khosrowpour et al., 2011). With a rise in offshore outsourcing and the introduction of cloud computing, IT is becoming one of the most commonly outsourced areas. According to Han and Mithas (2013), in 2011, the United States spent nearly $314 billion on IT outsourcing services. Spending was expected to increase by 4.4% annually through 2015. Companies spend an estimated 14% of their IT budgets on IT outsourcing activities.

Outsourcing has been fueled by changes in global competition and the ability to save money. Belcourt's (2006) findings showed that over a two-year period, outsourcing saved organizations from 10-20%, with an average of 15%. Roughly half of the firms met their cost savings objectives and improved labor productivity. In addition, outsourcing offers more flexible contract terms and enables firms to focus on their core activities. Han and Mithas (2013) argued that organizations can free up their IT resources and staff and use them for more strategic activities. These core activities consist of those traditionally

performed in-house that are critical to business success, offer a competitive advantage, and influence improvement or future growth. Outsourcing companies achieve better long-term improvements in business performance over their competitors.

On the other hand, outsourcing presents a number of risks for firms. As organizations move IT jobs to external companies, IT workers become concerned about the future of their positions. According to Tambe and Hitt (2010), IT is the hardest hit industry by the rapid increase in outsourcing. In their study, the researchers examined 6,700 employees working in a variety of occupations. The researchers found that 40% of technology firms were performing some type of outsourcing work compared to just above 15% across other industries. Close to 8% of IT professionals have been displaced as a result of job loss or involuntary transfer to new positions. The number of displaced IT workers is twice the rate of employees in other occupations, with 70% of those IT professionals losing their jobs. The Hackett Group's research confirmed that IT departments experience the largest decline during outsourcing activities (Janssen, Dorr, & Geerling, 2012). Consequently, the researchers estimated a drop in IT jobs of 45% between 2002 and 2016 due to outsourcing. Outsourcing not only poses possible unemployment for IT workers, but presents potential job insecurity, lower wages, and fewer benefits as well. Prater and Smith (2011) suggested that IT organizations lose approximately $118 billion in revenue due to the organizational changes that outsourcing presents, including downsizing, hiring of temporary workers, and decreased employee involvement. Furthermore, organizations reported struggling to retain skilled IT workers during downsizing and regular organizational changes because of work-related stress and job dissatisfaction. Van Dyk, Coetzee, and Takawira (2014) agreed that high turnover can

be costly for firms. IT is a core function for companies. It was chosen for study because it is a significant part of every business plan. The loss and replacement of IT professionals can cost companies nearly one-third of the salary of a new employee. These potential outcomes are costly to organizations and should be taken into consideration when deciding to outsource IT functions.

The potential threat of job loss forces workers to view their organizations differently in terms of organizational commitment. Uncertainty about the organization's commitment can lead to a decrease in attachment to the company, resulting in job stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention. Organizations undergoing significant economic structural changes experience the highest instances of workplace stress. Cooper (2006) noted that 25% of the organizations engaged in cost reduction programs were outsourcing their corporate functions. As a result of the organizational changes, 66% reported an increase in job insecurity, 48% reported a reduction in employee well-being, and 57% noted a decrease in job satisfaction. Nearly one-third of professionals resist outsourcing due to the risk of job loss and fear that outsiders are perceived to be more competent. Furthermore, outsourcing may force an increase in working hours, which can negatively impact the health and well-being of IT professionals. Surviving employees may be required to take on additional work until displaced workers have been replaced (Khosrowpour et al., 2011). According to Cooper (2006), 56% of workers claimed that the long hours affected their health, 54% of the employees reported that the extended work hours impacted the relationships with their children, 60% of the workers reported that the additional hours damaged their marriages, and 46% of the personnel reported that the lengthy work hours weakened their work productivity. In their study, Elmuti et al.

(2010) found that the majority of the participants had a negative opinion of outsourcing. Close to 60% of these respondents were more dissatisfied with their jobs and work environment and reported that they were likely to leave their organizations. Understanding the job satisfaction, work-related stress, and turnover intention of IT workers helps managers ensure that skilled, knowledgeable, and valuable IT employees are retained to achieve the goals of the organizations.

Though the number of studies on IT outsourcing has increased in recent years, prior research typically focused on outsourcing practices and decisions, as well as outsourcing contracts and governance. While the studies provide awareness of the causes and consequences of IT outsourcing, few phenomenological studies discuss the impact of outsourcing on IT workers, as perceived by IT workers themselves. Current literature on the role IT outsourcing plays in the job stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention of IT professionals, as perceived by IT workers is scarce (Han & Mithas, 2013). Prior works offered some general insight into the factors and outcomes of IT outsourcing. Moreover, Han and Mathis (2013) argued that the majority of past studies relied on subjective evidence or the views of researchers. Therefore, it was necessary to examine how outsourcing influences IT professionals.

Current literature reviewed thus far on the topic of IT outsourcing deals with IT workers' feelings of worthlessness and bitterness, which leads to lower levels of morale, commitment, and productivity (Khosrowpour et al., 2011). Similarly, Michael and Michael (2012) found that IT outsourcing can lead to psychosocial processes and behaviors that decrease employee motivation, engagement, and productivity. Some researchers have studied IT professionals' negative perceptions of the work environment

that lead to job stress, job dissatisfaction, turnover intention, and decreased organizational commitment as a result of technology and organizational changes besides outsourcing (Ashill, Rod, & Gibbs, 2015; Calisir, Gumussoy, & Iskin, 2011; Messersmith, 2007). Fugate, Prussia, and Kinicki (2012) and Chaudhuri and Bartlett (2014) found that some workers perceive outsourcing as a positive development and believe that the changes can have a positive impact on their careers. Yang, Wacker, and Sheu's (2012) findings are based on the factors that influence managers to outsource, as well as the perceptions they have regarding the effectiveness of outsourcing. Likewise, the outsourcing studies examined by Blaskovich and Mintchik (2011) were presented from the perspectives of leaders or executives. Previous researchers have measured the effectiveness of IT outsourcing based on the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of users (Gorla & Somers, 2014). Based on the literature review, current studies use quantitative surveys to analyze IT professionals' perceptions of job stress, job dissatisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention (Angrave & Charlwood, 2015; Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013; Calisir et al., 2011; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012; Sulea, Maricuţoiu, Dumitru, & Pitariu, 2015; Wallace, de Chernatony, & Buil, 2013; Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). Elmuti et al. (2010) used an experimental field study, while Khosrowpour et al. (2011) performed a quantitative survey to gather data regarding IT workers' perceptions of outsourcing as it relates to morale and job performance. The perceptions of the IT teams are valuable, as IT outsourcing is critical to the overall success of outsourcing organizations. Hence, a need exists to understand the job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention of IT workers associated with outsourcing.

Problem Statement

IT firms face tough decisions regarding the outsourcing of their business functions. Outsourcing activities allow organizations to save money and maintain quality. However, they present some human considerations that need to be taken into account as well. Outsourcing ultimately can lead to the displacement of IT professionals, which also heightens work-related stress, reduces job satisfaction, and increases employee turnover. As a result, management is faced with the dilemma of using outsourcing as a competitive advantage without knowing how it affects employee turnover. Although IT outsourcing enables companies to save time and money, more jobs are lost, having a rippling effect on local, state, and national economies (Chang & Gurbaxani, 2012). Organizations must decide how to retain valuable IT professionals while pressured with outsourcing opportunities. Wood, Van Veldhoven, Croon, and De Menezes (2012) described job stress as an increasing concern among employees in advanced industrial societies. Work-related stress can ultimately damage individuals physically and psychologically. Increased tension, as well as a reduction in decision-making and work performance may occur. Furthermore, Ganster and Rosen (2013) noted that these employees are more likely to experience unfavorable changes in attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. Individuals spend a great deal of their time at work. Therefore, their feelings regarding their jobs can have a significant effect on their lives, moods, and well-being. Work-related stress continues to influence job satisfaction. Job dissatisfaction leads to low productivity and high employee turnover. As a result, organizations are faced with the high costs of replacing and training employees and resolving issues related to low productivity.

A significant need exists to provide research on the role outsourcing plays in workplace stress, job satisfaction, and intent to leave, particularly in IT professions. The research problem in this study is related to the perceived role of IT outsourcing in the high stress, low job satisfaction, and increasing turnover of IT professionals. IT personnel were examined in this study because they exhibit characteristics that are significantly different from individuals working in other occupations. For instance, Hall, Beecham, Bowes, Gray, and Counsell (2012) claimed that the desire to be challenged, learn new skills, and work independently are the most common traits of software engineers. Additionally, IT workers are expected to handle activities that require continuous updating of skills, meeting strict deadlines, and exhibiting productivity, while maintaining job success (Zhao & Rashid, 2010). Organizations frequently face changes in the business environment and pressure to compete locally and globally, which has led to the outsourcing of many business functions. Due to the rapid growth of technology, the majority of outsourcing to external organizations has been within the IT industry (Han & Mithas, 2013). The increasing growth of IT outsourcing has presented considerable changes and challenges for IT professionals. IT workers disapprove of the use of outsourcing because they face job losses from the overall downturn of the economy. IT professionals enduring organizational downsizing as a result of outsourcing view the changes negatively in comparison to those who anticipated no changes or exhibited a strong sense of job security (Prater & Smith, 2011). An employee's commitment to the organization and satisfaction with his or her job greatly influence the worker's intent to leave (Bogler & Nir, 2014). IT professionals' perceptions of outsourcing may change

their opinions of the IT profession, causing them to focus on other careers or opportunities.

The availability of current research related to the work-related stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention of IT professionals as perceived by IT workers is limited. For instance, Ghapanchi and Aurum (2011) argued that prior studies about retention and turnover focus on non-IT personnel. The researchers sought to gain a better understanding of IT workers' intention to leave. Additional studies such as Narayanan and Savarimuthu's (2015) discuss factors including job demands, deadlines, and substantial workloads as job stressors in the technology field. Organizations have been encouraged to outsource their IT needs without understanding the possible consequences on IT employees such as stress, low job satisfaction, and intention to leave (Blaskovich & Mintchik, 2011). Few phenomenological studies discuss the impact of outsourcing on IT workers from the IT professional's point of view. Evidence on the effects of outsourcing on the behavioral and emotional well-being of IT professionals is scarce (Korrapati & Eedara, 2010). Current literature on IT outsourcing deals with the negative feelings of IT workers that lead to lower levels of morale, motivation, commitment, engagement, and productivity (Khosrowpour et al., 2011; Michael & Michael, 2012). Elmuti et al. (2010) used an experimental field study, and Khosrowpour et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative survey to collect data pertaining to IT workers' opinions of outsourcing as it relates to morale and job performance. Additional studies use quantitative surveys to investigate IT professionals' perceptions of job stress, job dissatisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention (Angrave & Charlwood, 2015; Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013; Calisir et al., 2011; Shin et al., 2012; Sulea et al., 2015; Wallace et al., 2013; Warr & Inceoglu,

2012). Further outsourcing research focuses on the effectiveness of IT outsourcing from the perspectives of users, managers, and executives (Blaskovich & Mintchik, 2011; Gorla & Somers, 2014; Yang et al., 2012). Other recent literature focuses on the business aspects of outsourcing activities (Prater & Smith, 2011), which leaves room for understanding job stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention in the IT workforce. This information can help outsourcing organizations manage IT professionals' work-related behaviors. An understanding of the influence of outsourcing perceptions on the work environment may help managers make informed economic decisions associated with the management of IT professionals in outsourcing environments.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how job-related stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention within the IT profession are influenced by outsourcing. I was interested in seeking to understand how outsourcing can change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs, reduce their work performance, and increase their daily stress. The viewpoints of the participants were examined using open-ended interviews. A qualitative approach was guided by the person-environment fit theory introduced later in this chapter. For this qualitative phenomenological study, 20 IT professionals at four medium-sized Florida-based firms were used to understand the perspectives of the participants. The companies consisted of two IT firms and the IT departments of two non-IT organizations. The IT workers were divided into four different groups, each consisting of five employees from each organization. I chose four firms to focus on the outsourcing phenomenon, which can differ between individuals or settings

(Maxwell, 2013). The primary objective of this study was to fill the gap in the literature related to the phenomenology of perception of outsourcing by IT professionals.

Phenomenological research can be used to gather information about participants' real-life experiences in their daily lives. In this study, I was looking to examine contextual conditions that are believed to be relevant to the outsourcing phenomenon (Yin, 2013). Specifically, this phenomenological study was used for the following:

1. To identify ways outsourcing increases the job stress and job dissatisfaction of IT professionals.
2. To determine how outsourcing has changed IT professionals' opinions of their jobs.
3. To illustrate how outsourcing strengthens IT professionals' intent to leave their positions.
4. To contribute to closing the gap in the literature related to ways in which outsourcing heightens stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention.

The goal of this research was to add to the literature by gathering information and discovering themes that can provide the framework for further studies in other organizations. It can help companies understand the job stress and dissatisfaction of IT professionals as they relate to outsourcing. The study has the potential to provide insight to managers looking to utilize outsourcing for their IT functions.

Research Questions

In order to investigate the role outsourcing plays in the work-related stress and job satisfaction of IT professionals, I aimed to answer the following research questions in this phenomenological study:

RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?

RQ2: How does outsourcing decrease job satisfaction among IT professionals?

RQ3: How does outsourcing change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs?

RQ4: How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the person-environment fit theory. It originates from the thoughts of K. Lewin and H. Murray on the interaction between people and their environments (Yang, Che, Spector, 2008). According to Yu (2012), the theory is commonly used to understand thinking and behavior in the organizational sciences. Prior research used person-fit to study a variety of areas, including (a) fit between the demands of the environment and the individual's ability, (b) fit between a person's needs and the available environmental resources, and (c) fit between an organization's values and the individual's values. Yang et al. (2008) noted that several other stress-related studies and discussions have incorporated concepts of the person-environment fit theory. For instance, Cummings and Cooper's 1979 model presumed that the incompatibility of the actual and preferred states leads to stress. Edwards's 1990 theory is based on the differences between environmental resources and personal needs (Yang et al., 2008). The theory focuses on compatibility between personal needs and job requirements, similarities between an individual and the social environment, and matching individual needs with environmental rewards.

The person-environment fit theory refers to the degree of similarity between individual and environmental characteristics. A person's characteristics consist of abilities, personality, and values. The characteristics of an environment include available

resources, cultural values, and physical conditions. The theory suggests that an individual's behavior and attitude are a direct result of the degree to which the environment is a good fit (Hardin & Donaldson, 2014). The idea is that employees are more satisfied in positions in which the attributes of the individuals and their environments match.

The person-environment fit theory is used to explore the organizational environment, work-related stress, job satisfaction, turnover, and physical and emotional well-being. It is most commonly used in organizational stress research, as it focuses more on the individual's adjustment to the work environment than similar approaches. Research shows that stress increases as what employees receive on the job differs from what they prefer or expect (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). The person-environment fit theory views the misfit between a worker and his or her organization as a significant cause of stress, which can lead to psychological, physiological, and behavioral concerns. Likewise, lack of fit between the demands placed on workers and their abilities to meet the expectations can result in stress.

Current research suggests that work conditions that are less favorable than the preferred indicate job dissatisfaction (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). An individual who is satisfied with his or her position feels it has provided a sufficient level of what is desired. The individual's needs or desires have been or are expected to be fulfilled. The person-environment fit theory is helpful for studying employee well-being and discovering distinct patterns for job satisfaction. Since satisfaction is a reaction to environmental conditions, poor fit between desired and actual levels can lead to job dissatisfaction. The greater the similarity of the characteristics of an individual and his or her environment,

the more likely the worker is to stay in the work environment. On the other hand, workers respond negatively when the actual and preferred levels are low. Employees' motivation decreases, the desire for involvement and advancement diminishes, and turnover intention rises (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012).

Nature of the Study

Qualitative research was chosen for this study to examine the behavior of 20 IT professionals within their work environments. Qualitative research deals with processes (Maxwell, 2013), which provided this study with the opportunity to explain how stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention relate to the process of outsourcing. I studied the individuals, processes, activities, and events related to those factors as well as shared behavior across the four designated firms. Since qualitative research is typically based on people's experiences, I studied individuals and their activities and interactions within their organizations and talked with them in order to better understand the research problem (Merriam, 2014). Although human processes can be studied employing several qualitative research approaches including narrative, ethnography, and case studies, this study used a phenomenological method. The narrative research approach is commonly used in the history, social sciences, and humanities disciplines to obtain information from individuals in order to understand the lives and experiences of different cultures and groups. In ethnographic research, researchers study shared behaviors, beliefs, and languages of cultural groups in various locations. This approach is used when limited literature is available about how a group works, people are not familiar with the group, or readers do not identify with the group. In the case study approach, researchers explore one or more case studies over time using various data sources including observations,

interviews, audio and video recordings, handwritten notes, and reports beyond what might be available in historical studies (Yin, 2013). Phenomenologists seek to understand a specific phenomenon through individuals' experiences and perceptions.

This phenomenological study consisted of a total of 20 IT professionals at four Central Florida-based firms involved in IT outsourcing. The companies included two IT firms and the IT departments of two non-IT organizations. Five employees were chosen from each of the four firms to demonstrate the results of examining selected factors and their roles in job satisfaction, work-related stress, and employee turnover. According to Patton (2002), phenomenology helps provide an understanding of the meaning of individuals' everyday experiences. A phenomenological approach for this study consisted of personal interviews so that I could describe the nature of the lived experiences of IT professionals at different technology firms and non-IT companies about the outsourcing phenomenon. I was interested in seeking to answer the research questions by gathering information regarding the feelings, experiences, and perceptions of the participants. Jacobs (2013) discussed Husserl's belief that phenomenology is based on an individual's personal views of his or her environment. Ultimately, these opinions help shape a person's interpretations of activities or events that take place within the setting. Patton (2002) explained that the phenomenological approach possesses a dynamic perception and interpretive focus. Furthermore, the method can be used to provide information regarding program improvement by offering an understanding of the program processes and their impact on participants. Therefore, the phenomenological approach is the best option to examine important characteristics of this study and analyze and describe IT professionals' perceptions of stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention of IT workers

during outsourcing activities. In similar studies, Dhar (2013) and Hiamey and Amenumey (2013) used the phenomenology approach to examine employees' perspectives of outsourcing. Dhar (2013) analyzed the work experiences and expectations of sixteen IT professionals at two different organizations in Western India. More specifically, the discrepancies between employee expectations and the reality of their organizations were explored. Hiamey and Amenumey (2013) set out to examine the outsourcing phenomenon from the perspectives of managers of outsourcing hotels. Phenomenology was used to gain an understanding of managers' opinions of outsourcing, the activities that were outsourced, and the reasons for outsourcing.

This study used a qualitative interview methodology that focused on the perceptions IT professionals have about outsourcing. For this research study, I performed a pilot study with two participants, an IT employee and an IT manager, to explore the applicability of the interview questions. This pilot study was a smaller version of the proposed study and included two technology workers within the organizations chosen for the final study. According to Maxwell (2013), pilot studies serve the same purpose as prior research. However, they can be developed to focus on the researcher's specific concerns or theories. More specifically, pilot studies can be designed to test certain methods or ideas and examine their implications. In this study, I selected the pilot study participants from the same sites as the subjects of the proposed study. Therefore, the pilot study's participants were comparable to those in the actual study. Maxwell (2013) recommended pilot-testing interview questions with individuals that are as similar to the actual interviewees as possible in order to ensure that the questions work as intended. The pilot study consisted of IT professionals working in their current full-time roles for at

least five years with previous or current experience with outsourcing within their organizations. The results of the pilot study were added to the analysis of this study.

In the actual study, the research data was obtained from 20 employees at four medium-sized firms within Central Florida. Five workers from each firm were selected to participate. One-on-one interviews were conducted by phone and face-to-face. Qualitative interviews are used to ask questions and understand the perspectives of others. It was important to focus on the appropriate questions and select the right individuals to participate in the interviews. The traits of the participants were similar to allow for finding common experiences among them (Maxwell, 2013). The study participants were chosen using an online questionnaire and consisted of individuals employed in the IT field for five years or more. This included individuals working as technology analysts, systems administrators, computer programmers, Web designers, engineers, technology consultants, and IT managers. The selected sample size was chosen based on the purpose of the study, what the researcher wanted to know, what was at stake, what could be accomplished with the available time and resources, and what could be useful and credible (Patton, 2002). Four companies is a fairly small sample of the thousands of organizations in the state of Florida available for study. According to Patton (2002), a small sample size can provide adequate analysis of the problem given the purpose of the study. He argued that a qualitative sample may only seem small when compared to a sample size that is necessary for representativeness when the purpose is generalizing from a sample to a given population. Purposeful sampling helps lessen concerns about small sample size because it is meant to be judged according to the purpose and rationale of the study. The study was flexible and allowed for adding to the

sample when individuals were unable to participate, or the number of participants did not allow for finding adequate data patterns. The human resources departments at each of the organizations were contacted to recruit additional IT workers and managers, as needed. According to Merriam (2014), data saturation should signal the end of the search. Inquiry ceased and additional participants were not necessary once no new information was being revealed. I contacted the other willing participants via e-mail to notify them that their participation was no longer required due to the saturation of the gathered data.

During the interviews, open-ended questions were asked that engaged the participants and encouraged participation. Each participant was asked the same set of questions in the same order. Flexibility allowed the exploration of any questions or concerns that surfaced during the interviews. Follow-up questions were asked to gain a better understanding and ensure that all necessary information was provided. These steps helped minimize bias during the interviews and facilitate the organization and analysis of data. The interviews were conducted in the setting in which the participant felt most comfortable. They were recorded for the subjects who agreed to be audiotaped. The NVivo program was used to code data from the interviews conducted for the study. The focus of the interviews and data analysis is covered in more detail in Chapter 3.

Operational Definitions

Information Technology (IT): the study or use of networks, hardware, software, or other technologies to communicate or process data (Blaskovich & Mintchik, 2011).

Information Technology Outsourcing: the use of third party providers or vendors to provide IT products and services that were formerly handled in-house (Han & Mithas, 2013).

Information Technology Professional: a person involved in the creation, design, development, deployment, training, support, maintenance, and documentation of computer-based information systems (Diedericks & Rothmann, 2014).

Information Technology Service Providers or Vendors: third party organizations that deliver IT functions, such as products, services, training, and support to the outsourcing company. They are also known as outsourcers or suppliers (Gorla & Somers, 2014).

Job Satisfaction: a person's response to his or her job in terms of the outcomes that are expected, wanted, and needed. It is the feeling that reflects the degree to which the individual's needs are being met by the job (Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, Tucker-Gail, & Baker, 2010). Several factors impact employees' feelings about job satisfaction. Some internal factors include feelings of independence, feedback, success, self-esteem, and control. External factors consist of relationships with bosses and co-workers, as well as the state of the work environment and compensation (Chen, 2008).

Job Stress/workplace stress/work-related stress: negative emotional and cognitive states that occur when the expectations of the workers are greater than their abilities or resources. Role stress is the most common type of job stress. It requires employees to assume various roles and consists of role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload stressors (Griffin et al., 2010). The terms are used interchangeably in this paper.

Outsourced Company or Organization/Client: a company or organization that depends on an external organization to provide products or services in order to meet its organizational business goals (Chang & Gurbaxani, 2012).

Outsourcing: the use of external resources, including personnel and equipment, to perform activities that are typically handled internally. Outsourcing is a business transaction between organizations that is typically governed by a contract. The contract manages the interactions between the internal and external firms, including their obligations and behaviors (Han & Mithas, 2013).

Turnover intention: a worker's decision to stop being part of an organization. The decision to act on an employee's thoughts of quitting depends on the availability of alternative working options, related monetary, social, and psychological costs, and the individual's personal characteristics (Calisir et al., 2011).

Assumptions, Scope and Delimitations, and Limitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are aspects of the study that are believed to be true. These assumptions illustrate the researcher's views, knowledge, ethics, values, and ability to generate knowledge. It is necessary to provide them to readers in order to help them interpret the data within the context of the researcher's assumptions. Several assumptions were made in this study.

In this study, I acknowledged that outsourcing plays a role in the job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention of IT workers. Though, additional factors within the company that may influence the results were not addressed. The study was designed to collect data from current employees at four Central Florida firms. I expected the participants to be honest and open in their responses. Furthermore, it was assumed that the participants would use their experiences with IT outsourcing activities in their efforts to answer the interview questions. It was presumed that the sample from which the data

was collected may be correlated to and otherwise be representative of other IT professionals nationwide with further research of this study problem. Additionally, it was assumed that the IT firms would be representative of other organizations that have outsourced IT activities. Another assumption was that the participants have been impacted in some manner by the outsourcing activities performed by their companies. Additional data obtained from books and peer-reviewed journal articles was expected to be accurate. Finally, it was assumed that the phenomenological approach would provide data that reveal experiences related to the work-related stress and job satisfaction of the participants. Additionally, it would offer useful insights into the link between work-related stress, job satisfaction, and outsourcing.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on examining the part outsourcing plays in the job stress and satisfaction of Information Technology professionals. The study used K. Lewin and H. Murray's person-environment fit theory to explore the organizational environment, job-related stress, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and physical and emotional well-being of IT workers during outsourcing activities. I sought to provide insight to managers regarding the level of influence outsourcing has on employees and organizations, with the aim of reducing its negative impact. The study examined the literature found in business, IT, and other peer-reviewed books and journals. The remainder of the data was obtained through interviews and was based on the perceptions of the participants.

The study was limited to IT professionals in Central Florida firms. Professionals in other industries and locations may have had similar experiences with outsourcing activities. Limiting participants by industry and company size was unreasonable since

other industries utilize outsourcing options as well. Furthermore, the research attempted to answer research questions regarding outsourcing and its impact (or lack thereof) on IT employees, based on the perceptions of the participants. Finally, I interviewed participants by phone, face-to-face, and video conferencing for the study. Combining these methods may introduce delimitations to the study and add to the variability of the data due to the techniques used via these three chosen methods.

Limitations

Several limitations existed for this research study. For instance, the study was limited by geographic location. The research did not take other geographical areas into consideration. Furthermore, I collected, analyzed, and coded the research data. As a result, the quality of the data collected was largely dependent on the researcher (Patton, 2002). Consequently, research bias became a concern to the validity and reliability of the study. Additionally, the study was limited by my skills, capabilities, and knowledge of the research topic and methodology. The results and conclusions of the study were limited by the data and information from the books, journals, and other scholarly resources that are at my disposal.

A major strength of qualitative phenomenological studies is their reliance on real-life settings. Though, this presents the possibility of overreliance on the opinions of individual participants. This research examined the role of outsourcing in the job stress and satisfaction of IT workers. As a result, the study was limited by the experiences, opinions, and biases of the participants with regard to IT outsourcing. This can limit the applicability and generalizability of the study. The researcher expected participants to

partake in interviews that provided data for analysis and interpretation and permit the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

I requested the opinions of the study participants, in terms of how accurate and credible the interpretations and findings were. Additionally, including detailed descriptions of the setting and participants of the study can help readers make decisions regarding transferability. The target audience may use this information in other settings with similar characteristics. I ensured reliability by carefully documenting the steps and procedures of the studies. Additionally, the transcripts were examined for accuracy. During the coding process, I continuously compared data with the codes to discover any issues or changes in the definition of codes.

Significance of the Study

The goal of this dissertation was to examine the increase of job stress and dissatisfaction IT professionals experience as a result of outsourcing. Additionally, it aimed to show that the relationship between employers and employees diminishes as a result of the decision to outsource IT. The employees' level of commitment and the perceptions of their organizations are greatly impacted. This research addressed a significant issue of social change and has great significance to organization managers. The outcomes of this study can provide both short and long-term significance to businesses and society as a whole. The relationships between employers and employees can be strengthened, while organizations effectively manage social change and implement methods for improving employee satisfaction and retention. Furthermore, the study can bring awareness to the loss of work, economic hardships, and loss of

employees caused by outsourcing and the impact of these factors on individuals, communities, and organizations.

Contribution to Business Practice

Outsourcing is an ideal option for organizations seeking ways to reduce operating costs, like pensions and personal and vacation time. Many of these companies are using outsourcing as an alternative method to hiring full-time or permanent employees (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). Some organizations use outsourcing to remove older, higher paid, and less productive workers. Employees perceive this as a broken psychological contract between the employer and employee. As a result, they experience increased stress, decreased job security, lower morale and organizational commitment, and greater turnover intention. Despite organizations' attempts to look out for their employees, it is inevitable that outsourcing will negatively affect some. Outsourcing information technology functions typically results in workforce reductions. IT professionals often exhibit resistance to outsourcing because they are forced to give up control to outside entities, it threatens their security, and it puts their jobs at risk. Khosrowpour et al. (2011) warned that IT workers view outsourcing as an underestimation of their abilities or a lack of confidence. Still, they rarely address these concerns with management because their cooperation is needed for a successful transition. Outsourcing can have a substantial negative effect on employees who survive these changes. They continue to feel insecure about their jobs and unsure of their skills. The threat to the job security and well-being of IT professionals places a great deal of stress on them, impacting their productivities and perceptions of their jobs. These organizational changes raise concerns regarding the future of their careers and livelihoods and result in less-satisfied and committed

employees (Blaskovich & Mintchik, 2011). These feelings ultimately lead employees to seek employment with other organizations.

The IT industry experiences greater turnover challenges than most other professions. Burrell (2014) claimed that technology jobs are being outsourced, decreasing the perceived alternatives within the industry and increasing voluntary turnover among IT employees. He found that increased levels of stress among IT workers cause organizations to experience decreased job satisfaction and high turnover intention. According to Messersmith's (2007) study, fortune 500 firms face a 25-35% turnover rate for IT professionals, with 50% seeking new opportunities due to job dissatisfaction. These high turnover rates can cost companies nearly 120% of yearly salaries. It is critical for managers to be aware of employees' perceptions of outsourcing in order to successfully handle any issues that surface during the transition. Outsourcing companies must consider the treatment of workers by management and vendors. Any negative feelings will need to be minimized, as the vendor may be involved with the organization to perform maintenance and troubleshooting after outsourcing has ended (Khosrowpour et al., 2011). Van Dyk et al. (2014) cautioned that turnover intention can be costly and disruptive for technology firms. Loss of skilled employees forces companies to recruit and re-train new talent. The loss and replacement of IT workers can cost an organization up to one-third of the salary of a new employee. Furthermore, it can disrupt team-based work environments and the completion of projects. In addition to the financial costs, tacit knowledge is lost when organizations lose employees. Loss of knowledge may result in disruptions of operations, reduced service levels, and frustrations and dissatisfaction

among workers, clients, and vendors (van Deventer & Singh, 2012). These potential costs are substantial and should be considered when the decision to outsource is made.

This study is significant because little attention has been given to the influence outsourcing information technology has on IT professionals. This research can help outsourcing organizations find ways to determine the levels of job satisfaction and intent to leave among their IT personnel. This can enable them to proactively prepare for employee retention. Additionally, companies may develop motivational incentives for surviving workers. By showing employees that they are valued, organizations can restore trust and commitment, eventually resulting in better performance and productivity.

Implications for Social Change

The phenomenological study used in this research provided an opportunity to bring awareness to the social impact of outsourcing. The findings of the study may benefit society by uncovering the influence outsourcing has on organizations and employees. This study is useful for individuals who are interested in social change, organizational behavior, and change management issues created by outsourcing. Furthermore, it can have significance to strategic planners, as well as business, IT, and organizational development managers. Based on the increase in available literature on the subject, work-related stress and job dissatisfaction are growing concerns in the technology field. However, the literature falls short of explaining how outsourcing causes stress and changes workers' opinions about their professions. The social impact of outsourcing as it pertains to job loss and loss of earnings is rarely considered.

From a social aspect, a loss or change in IT employment, as a result of outsourcing, creates economic hardships on individuals, families, and communities.

Outsourcing activities force dissatisfied workers to seek lower-paying positions or transition into new fields, challenging their lifestyle standards as well as the overall economy (Elmuti et al., 2010). Job loss occurs as a result of outsourcing, just as often as it does due to business closures, reorganization, or mergers and buyouts. During 2007, 8% of the layoffs experienced in the U.S. were due to the outsourcing of work within the same company or to other organizations. Between 2007 and 2009, one in six employees reported a job loss. Less than half were re-employed by 2010. Workers who found employment after displacement experienced wage decreases in their new positions, making an average of 17.5% less. Nearly 20% of displaced workers are currently working part-time (Michael & Michael, 2012). As IT outsourcing increases, employees may be driven to downgrade their ways of life to match those in competitor countries. Furthermore, the economy suffers as IT workers experience declines in job satisfaction and organizational commitment, leaving some communities in financial deficits.

The results of this study benefit social change by providing insights into the levels of stress and job satisfaction IT professionals experience when outsourcing takes place. Insights from this study assist managers in understanding and diminishing the negative influence of outsourcing on employees in other industries and regions. This helps improve employee productivity, customer satisfaction, interaction among employees and managers, and employee retention, which ultimately leads to organizational success and a sustainable economy.

Summary

Traditionally, Information Technology products and services have been provided and performed internally. However, IT outsourcing has become the desired, alternative

delivery method. Numerous studies have been conducted in an attempt to help organizations find the best sourcing options to fit their needs. Additionally, ample research has been performed in the areas of job stress, job satisfaction, and employee turnover from a business angle. The information presented in Chapter 1 of this study implied research gaps exist in terms of job-related stress and job dissatisfaction during IT outsourcing activities. This phenomenological research study focused on outsourcing from the IT professional's viewpoint as it specifically relates to stress and job satisfaction.

The review of literature in Chapter 2 is directly related to the problem statement, research questions, and chosen methodology identified in Chapter 1. In addition, it substantiates the theoretical framework for the study. Chapter 2 justifies the significance of the problem, links ideas and theories to applications, and provides a basis for associating new and previous research findings. I explain the literature search strategy performed for the study. The library databases, search engines, and search terms used are listed. Finally, the literature review provides the opportunity to add on to research that was performed by other researchers, test their claims, and identify additional problems that may be addressed or researched in the area. Chapter 3 builds on the information introduced in Chapter 1. More specifically, a more detailed discussion of the Nature of the Study, research questions, and research design are provided. I describe the qualitative research design, phenomenological study approach, data collection methods and instruments, and data analysis techniques. The rationale for the chosen research design and approach are provided. The role of the researcher is defined, my relationships with participants are revealed, and management of researcher bias and relationships are stated.

I provide detailed information regarding the study population, including the sampling strategy and participant selection procedures. Additional data collection instruments including the interview protocol and tape recorders are discussed in detail. I explain suitable strategies for establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Finally, ethical concerns related to data collection, the treatment of participants and data, and access to participants are described.

In chapter 4 of the study, I describe the personal and organizational conditions that influenced participants or may influence interpretation of the study. Relevant demographics and characteristics of the participants are presented as well. I discuss the data collection process, including the number of participants, unusual circumstances, the location, frequency, and duration of data collection for each data collection instruments, methods of recording data, and differences between planned and actual data collection. Next, I describe the methods of analyzing data for the study, including the coding and reporting processes. The implementation of adjustment of the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability strategies presented in chapter 3 is also described. I conclude chapter 4 by addressing the research questions, providing data to support the findings, and discussing any discrepant data. Multiple tables and figures are used to illustrate the relevant results associated with the role outsourcing plays in the stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention of IT professionals. Chapter 5 includes the summary and conclusions of this phenomenological study. The impact of the findings on social change, as well as recommendations for additional research are provided. My experience with the research process, including potential biases, ideas, values, and changes in thinking are included.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The research problem addressed in this study was that although issues and challenges of outsourcing have been documented, its association with job satisfaction, stress, and turnover intention in the technology profession is not entirely known. According to Yang et al. (2012), few studies focus on effective management of outsourcing activities. Researchers have discussed the challenges outsourcing companies face such as communication issues, time zone concerns, and the ability to meet organizational and employee needs. However, the availability of current research on the working conditions of IT workers as they perceive them, particularly regarding their job demands, job satisfaction, and work-related stress, is limited (Ghapanchi & Aurum, 2011; Wood et al., 2012). Organizations are faced with the challenge of retaining valuable IT employees while dealing with the negative outcomes of outsourcing. Most current IT outsourcing articles discussed outsourcing decisions. The few studies that focused on perceptions were presented from the perspectives of leaders or executives (Blaskovich & Mintchik, 2011). Still, a small number of researchers found that IT outsourcing can ultimately leave employees feeling insignificant and unhappy with their positions (Khosrowpour et al., 2011). Elmuti et al. (2010) supported this finding, claiming that the majority of the participants studied considered leaving their organizations due to IT outsourcing. Khosrowpour et al. (2011) performed a quantitative survey to gather data concerning the IT workers' opinions about outsourcing as it relates to morale and work performance. On the other hand, Elmuti et al. (2010) conducted an experimental field

study to compare changes in the perceptions of attitudes and work performance for participants and nonparticipants in an outsourcing program. As noted, the literature review has uncovered few scholarly articles based on the perceptions of IT workers about outsourcing in the technology field, which leaves room for understanding the role outsourcing plays in workplace stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention in IT professions.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the role outsourcing plays in the stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention of IT professionals. Additionally, I explored how outsourcing relates to IT professionals' opinions of their positions, diminished work performance, and increased daily stress. A phenomenological study consisting of open-ended interviews was used to understand the viewpoints of participants about outsourcing in the IT profession. The research was guided by Lewin and Murray's person-environment fit theory, as it provides an understanding of how outsourcing leads to work-related stress and influences job satisfaction.

This chapter reviews the literature on stress, job satisfaction, and outsourcing. Each is examined independently to establish the foundation for the study. Job stress and job satisfaction are described as they relate to turnover intention. Furthermore, varied views, benefits, and risks of outsourcing are discussed. The outsourcing phenomenon was examined to produce a description of what is known, what is controversial, and what remains to be studied. The literature search strategy is presented, including the databases, search engines, and search terms used for the study. The scope of the literature review in terms of the period of time and types of sources searched is also provided. Peer reviewed journals and articles from 2008 to 2014 were examined. The research literature included a

review of organizational behavior, outsourcing, job satisfaction, job stress, turnover intention, outsourcing of IT, and the impact of outsourcing on organizations. A detailed description of the person-environment fit theory is presented, as well as an analysis of how it was applied previously, a rationale for choosing the theory, and a description of its relation to the research questions and overall study. Finally, studies related to the chosen populations that are consistent with the scope of the study are presented. This chapter concludes with a summary, conclusions, and a transition into Chapter 3.

Research Strategy

For this study, peer reviewed and academic journals and articles were examined. They were obtained through the Google Scholar website and electronic databases. Multiple interfaces in the Walden University Library were utilized, including EBSCO, ProQuest, and SAGE. The specific databases include Academic Search Complete, ACM Digital Library, Computers and Applied Sciences Complete, Business Source Complete, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, ProQuest Central, and ABI/INFORM Complete. The subject areas used from the Walden University Library included, behavioral studies and psychology, computer science and engineering, management and business, and dissertations. Only English language literature was examined, with most being published between 2008 and 2014. Due to lack of available sources, the time frame for the search was expanded to locate additional available articles. The following search terms were used alone and in combination: *outsource, outsourcing, outsourcing information technology, outsourcing information systems, job stress, work-related stress, workplace stress, job satisfaction, turnover intention, person-environment fit, and person-fit*.

Theoretical Foundation

The person-environment fit theory formed the theoretical foundation of this study. The source for this theory was Lewin and Murray's research on the interaction between people and their environments (Yang et al., 2008). The theory focuses on the similarities between individual and environmental characteristics. It refers to the degree to which a worker's skills, abilities, and needs compare to the demands, requirements, and environment of the job. Prior studies on job satisfaction, work-related stress, career choice, and organizational environment have examined the relationship between these variables (Chen, 2008). Hardin and Donaldson (2014) argued that fit can be viewed in two ways: the degree to which the individual matches the environment or the extent to which the environment matches the individual. A match between the individual and the work environment results in positive work-related behavior and attitudes. A person's compatibility with the work environment can influence organizational commitment, career success, intent to stay with the company, and job satisfaction (Rehfuss, Gambrell, & Meyer, 2012). This study explored the person-environment fit theory further by examining whether or not the relationship between the work environment and the worker's perceived stress and satisfaction changed as a result of the employee's views of outsourcing. Person-environment fit is critical to all industries, particularly those impacted by tough economic times. These companies are reducing costs and increasing employee demands, which can ultimately lead to occupational burnout and employee dissatisfaction.

Additional concepts of the person-environment theory exist as well. The positive supplies-values fit, person-organization fit, demands-abilities fit, person-team fit, and

needs-supplies fit theories have been applied to previous studies (Yang et al., 2008). Positive supplies-values fit promotes satisfaction. Individuals respond favorably when the environmental conditions match those that are desired. For instance, person-organization fit focuses on individuals' perceptions of connectedness to the missions of their organizations. The potential for conflict rises and results in a stressful working environment when the worker's values, goals, and expectations differ from those of the organization (Khosrowpour et al., 2011). Demands-abilities fit refers to the fit between an employee's skills and the job demands (Sun, Peng, & Pandey, 2014). The individual may become disinterested if his or her skill level exceeds the demands of the job. On the other hand, production and employee development can diminish if the employee's abilities fail to meet the job demands. The risk of failure can lead to elevated stress and low performance. According to Sun et al. (2014), person-team fit is used to help workers fit better with the work environment. The more comfortable the employee feels working with a particular team, the greater the fit with that team and the work environment. A poor team fit could subsequently result in reduced interaction with the work environment and potentially lead to job stress. Needs-supplies fit focuses on the match between an individual's needs and environmental rewards, such as pay, benefits, or training (Yu, 2012). The theory serves as a useful way to evaluate job stress in employees. The employee's needs may differ based on age, family marital status, and amount of time with the company. Considerations of greater professional conditions, better relationships with supervisors and coworkers, and enhanced client interactions influence stress and unmet expectations. Stressful working situations develop when the needs are greater than the supplies. A worker's perception of the work environment influences the type of fit

that may occur. The various versions of person-environment fit suggest that when a mismatch between employees and their work environments occurs, the workers would fit better in a different setting.

Researchers have conflicting views regarding the relevance of the person-environment fit theory. For instance, Edwards and Cooper (2013) argued that person-environment fit theory cannot be applied to empirical studies. On the other hand, Boukis and Gounaris (2014) believed that fit is worthy of study because the work environment significantly influences employees. Person-environment fit is common in organizational behavior research, particularly in the study of organizational stress. It contributes to employee well-being by helping foresee and discover distinct patterns for job satisfaction and engagement. Unlike other approaches, person-environment fit focuses on issues of individual adjustment to the work environment. Additionally, it focuses on the environmental conditions, personal preferences, and their interaction in explaining well-being (Yang et al., 2008). Person-fit theories have viewed misfit between individuals and their environments as a major source of psychological, physiological, and behavioral strains such as stress, anxiety, and job dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction occurs when stressors or overload are reduced (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). A worker is more likely to remain in the work environment when a number of similar characteristics between the individual and his or her work environment are present. In contrast, an individual will have a negative response when the level of what is wanted or expected is not acceptable. Excessive work stress is conceptualized as a mismatch in the employee-job relationship. Employees who consider themselves stressed may lose interest in going to work and no longer enjoy their jobs. One can conclude that organizational changes such as

outsourcing are part of the interaction between the employee and the work environment. The easier the change, the better the match with the work environment and the less stress experienced. In the context of job stress and satisfaction, understanding the person-environment approach could provide a clear view of employees' perceptions of work. It is critical for leaders to ensure that the expectations of employees are practical and attainable.

A number of other theories have been developed to help researchers understand the ways individuals find fulfillment with their jobs. Some common theories that were considered for this study include the expectancy theory, the two-factor theory, the range of affect theory, and the dispositional theory. Ultimately, the person-environment fit theory is the best approach given the topic of this study because it deals with individuals' perceptions of their organizations, it is used to evaluate work-related stress, and it focuses on issues related to individuals' adjustment to work environments. Vroom's 1964 expectancy theory was derived from Herzberg's 1959 two-factor theory (Lunenburg, 2011). In the two-factor theory, the employee's level of satisfaction is based on specific intrinsic and extrinsic factors. For example, a worker is more likely to be satisfied when factors such as recognition, advancement, and achievement are present. On the other hand, employee satisfaction decreases as a result of factors such as supervision, salary, working conditions, and job security. The expectancy theory focuses on an individual's perceived expectations, and the employee's actions are based on those expectations. As a result, the individual will be motivated to put forth additional effort with the hopes of achieving a favorable outcome. These theories differ from the person-environment fit theory because they are based on the motivational factors that encourage employees to

improve their work performance and attain satisfaction (Lunenburg, 2011). Hence, they were not appropriate for this study.

The range of affect theory is similar to the person-fit theory, as the level of satisfaction depends on an individual's job expectations and the actual outcomes of the position. The smaller the gap between the two, the more likely the employee will be satisfied. However, according to Locke (1969), the employee tends to prioritize certain aspects of the job over others, which contributes significantly to the level of satisfaction. Furthermore, when an employee values a particular job facet, too much of the facet can result in stronger feelings of dissatisfaction (Dugguh & Ayaga, 2014). The person-fit environment approach is not used to examine one specific job facet but to understand how organizational changes, such as outsourcing, are part of the interaction between the employee and the work environment. The dispositional theory considers an employee's personality as the main determinant of the level of satisfaction an individual gets from the job (Vakola, 2014). Staw, Bell, and Clausen (1986) began the research by examining the connection between individual behavior and job satisfaction. The behaviors studied ranged from distrustful and irritable to warm and cheerful. The researchers found that the behaviors were significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Individuals who exhibited positive behavior were more satisfied with their jobs. Unlike the person-environment fit theory, the employee's personality is the basis of job satisfaction in the dispositional theory.

Review of Related Literature

Work-Related Stress

Stress occurs as an individual's response to unpleasant situations. While Adaramola (2012) noted that some stress is considered acceptable, large amounts of stress can cause mental and physical changes. Job stress is a negative form of stress that is based on a mismatch between employees and their work environments (DeTienne, Agle, Phillips, & Ingerson, 2012). Kung and Chan (2014) described two types of job stress: eustress and distress. Eustress is viewed as a positive form of stress that allows workers to meet job demands and improve their well-being. Ashill et al. (2015) further noted that eustress is dependent upon the traits of the worker, as well as the characteristics of the work environment. Distress, on the other hand, is defined as a negative form of stress in which the work demands are harmful to the well-being of employees (Kung & Chan, 2014). According to Ashill et al. (2015), the negative stress response is based on a mismatch between the employees' abilities and job demands. Because financial security and career success are dependent on work performance, the workplace can be a major source of stress for workers. Work-related stress can impact an individual's ability to handle the requirements of his or her job, as well as the employee's well-being and organizational success (Ashill et al., 2015). Edwards and Cooper (2013) reported that job-related stress is associated with psychological, physiological, and behavioral strains. During organizational changes, workers experience physiological stress due to variances in workloads, working conditions, and work hours, leading to physical pains, exhaustion, and changes in eating and sleeping habits. Mark and Smith (2012) stated other physical health issues including headaches, stomach issues, and heart

attacks. Psychological stress can result in job dissatisfaction, anxiety, depression, and frustration (Ferguson, Frost, & Hall, 2012). Work-related stress has undesirable consequences on job outcomes for workers and organizations, usually leading to greater intention to leave and higher employee turnover.

Employees can experience different types of job stress as a result of both personal and organizational attributes. As noted by Sulea et al. (2015), personal characteristics, like anxiety, ego needs, and interpersonal conflicts can contribute to job stress. Likewise, the length of work projects and career growth are organizational traits that influence work-related stress. The researchers identified and analyzed prior studies and found that employee perceptions regarding unfavorable situations and processes encountered in the workplace can lead to job stress. Person-environment interactions consist of an individual's personal characteristics, skills, and abilities compared to the environment, demands, and requirements the individual's job (Chen, 2008). Interactions between employees and the work environment can lead to stress and negative outcomes. For instance, employee stress and health can be influenced if the job demands exceed employees' capabilities. According to Angrave and Charlwood (2015), overworking is a form of mismatch between employees and their work environments that places high demands on workers. As McKnight (2009) noted, negative work experiences, like greater workloads, may increase work exhaustion. If workers are stressed the majority of the time, they may become dissatisfied with their jobs and less likely to be able to perform their job tasks effectively (Ashill et al., 2015). Additionally, it may be difficult to have a positive work experience and less chance of a good fit with the work environment. This supports Markovits, Boer, and van Dick's (2014) account of the mismatch between an

employee and the work environment, which contributes to job stress. Understanding the person-environment fit may provide managers with insight into the view of employees' perceptions of work.

One-third of American employees consider job stress to be the main source of stress in their lives. Nearly one-third of workers predict that they will eventually burn out, while almost three-fourths blame stress for their decreased productivity and health issues (Padyab, Richter, Nygren, & Ghazinour, 2013). The literature review uncovered ample research on the influences of work stressors on the work perceptions of IT professionals (Adaramola, 2012; Calisir et al., 2011; Messersmith, 2007; Narayanan & Savarimuthu, 2015; Shih, Jiang, Klein, & Wang, 2013; Zhao & Rashid, 2010). According to Sidhu and Gupta (2015), IT can be a stressful field because IT workers handle large projects and aggressive timelines. Information technology professionals contribute to the development of new products and services and to maintaining the competitive advantage of their organizations. Furthermore, they are often expected to provide continuous support and manage multiple projects simultaneously. Work exhaustion, overworking, and placing high demands on professionals contribute to job dissatisfaction, reduced productivity, and job stress. Close to 71% of IT managers surveyed feel that burnout is a significant challenge organizations are facing. IT workers reported an 18% burnout rate, being mainly attributed to job-related stress (Messersmith, 2007). Adaramola (2012) further argued that 60 to 80% of accidents that occur on the job are stress-related because it causes workers to become inattentive to their surroundings. Most individuals are unaware of their stress levels and how it impacts their work safety. Calisir et al. (2011) used the survey method and found associations between work-stress, negative job perceptions, and

job dissatisfaction. Additionally, the authors noted that job stress had a significant influence on turnover intention of IT workers.

Role stress is common in professions, like IT, that require workers to take on multiple roles. In their study, Zhao and Rashid (2010) investigated role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload and found that they have a significant association to job stress. As noted by Griffin et al. (2010), role conflict refers to the expectations associated with a particular role, while role ambiguity refers to the worker's uncertainty about role expectations due to lack of information. Role overload occurs as a result of an employee being asked to do many tasks without the necessary resources to perform them. Shih et al. (2013) discovered associations between role ambiguity and job satisfaction in their study of IT professionals. The findings support the claims of Calisir et al. (2011) that experiences of job stress can result in negative perceptions of the work environment and eventually lead to job dissatisfaction and turnover intention. IT workers regularly experience work conflicts due to technology and organizational changes, often resulting in intent to leave their jobs if the role stress is not effectively resolved. An investigation of job stress can provide insight to managers to assist them in retaining the specialized skills that IT professionals offer and help them avoid the significant costs associated with employee turnover. Person-environment fit supports the connection between the employee and work environment as a source of work-related stress. When employees experience stress, they are unable to successfully perform their jobs. While many authors claim that work environments can cause stress (Ashill et al., 2015; Calisir et al., 2011; DeTienne et al., 2012; Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane, & Ferreira, 2011; McKnight, 2009; Messersmith, 2007; Narayanan & Savarimuthu, 2015), others disagree that the work

environment has an effect on job stress (Jacobs, 2013; King, Finlay, Ashworth, Smith, Langdride, & Butt, 2008). These conflicting views suggest that a need to explore whether or not the correlation between employee and the work environment leads to job stress exists.

Job Satisfaction

Over the last 70 years, a number of studies about job satisfaction have been performed and published. According to Locke (1969), over 3,300 studies exist relating to the factors that contribute to employee job satisfaction. As a result, the literature review uncovered several definitions of job satisfaction. Ahmed, Ahmad, Nawaz, and Ahmad (2011) argued that job satisfaction defines employees' feelings, behaviors, and beliefs about their jobs and work environments. It is an individual's emotional reactions to his or her job. Similarly, Ghazzawi (2011) described job satisfaction as the extent to which a person likes his or her job. Furthermore, it relates to the degree to which performance and achievement differ from an individual's values. Job satisfaction is based on workers' opinions of their work environments, influenced by performing job duties, involvement in decision-making processes, and feelings of organizational management. Locke (1969, p. 316) defined job satisfaction as "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values". Ultimately, job satisfaction is considered an employee's effective response to his or her job based on the worker's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are expected. For the purpose of this study, job satisfaction is defined as the impact job-specific factors have on the positive attitudes that employees have toward their employers.

Job satisfaction theories focus on employees' experiences of enjoyment or displeasure in the workplace. Lewin and Murray's person-environment model indicated that the better the fit between the employee and the work environment, the greater the job satisfaction for the employee. Research shows that better job performance, higher job commitment, and lower turnover intention are associated with higher person-environment congruence (Chen, 2008). Hardin and Donaldson (2014) noted that job satisfaction is expected when a greater similarity between the worker and the work environment is present. Based on a quantitative survey of three hundred full-time employees, Biswas and Bhatnagar (2013) discovered that an individual's perceived fit indicates that the employee is satisfied with the work environment. Conversely, Lee and Antonakis (2014) stated that a lack of fit results when the job is unable to satisfy an employee's needs and preferences. Negative attitudes are expressed when a job mismatch exists, resulting in noncompliance to organizational norms and expectations. When the level of job satisfaction is low, employees are likely to change the work situation or leave the position in hopes of finding a job match (Griffin et al., 2010; Lee & Antonakis, 2014). Personal achievement, job characteristics, and employee traits are major influences of job satisfaction. When employees are assigned to jobs that match their individual personality characteristics, workers may be more encouraged and experience greater job satisfaction.

Achievement and job stability are influential factors in job satisfaction. Ahmed et al. (2011) indicated that expected outcomes, like promotions, professional effectiveness, and professional development influence job satisfaction. Individuals seeking growth and development possibilities experience better satisfaction when presented with opportunities for advancement and promotion. Additional considerations like, pay,

benefits, status, and work relationships help minimize job dissatisfaction. Warr & Inceoglu (2012) administered an online questionnaire to 840 employees and investigated thirty-three job features. The authors found when comparing actual to expected outcomes, workers who compare positively are more satisfied than those with low pay, less job flexibility, or strained relationships with managers and co-workers. Workers who prefer job stability may exhibit reduced satisfaction during organizational changes that can be seen as possible job threats. Moreover, Zhao and Rashid (2010) asserted that IT workers feel accepted when they are recognized for their accomplishments and receive performance feedback. Professional achievement and performance measurement are important to their need for personal and professional growth. Chen (2008) purported that when IT professionals are aware of their performance, they are able to improve their effectiveness and overall job satisfaction. However, Menguc, Auh, Fisher, and Haddad (2013) argued that feedback leads to positive results only if the worker has independence to make decisions. A feeling that the job is not meeting an employee's needs often leads to the worker withdrawing from the position and moving on. Leaders need to discover ways to reassess the skillsets of their employees in order to become more aware of job fit. A higher level of job satisfaction can be achieved when the job role matches the employee's preference. This supports Lewin and Murray's person-environment fit theory as an indicator of job satisfaction.

The individual factors that an employee brings to the work environment have been studied in order to fully understand job satisfaction. Markovits et al., (2014) noted that job satisfaction could be based on the attitudes of individual employees. They noted a direct association between personality variables and job satisfaction. Behaviors and

attitudes indicate the degree to which a worker is satisfied with a job. The level of satisfaction is identifiable by the overall productivity and performance exhibited by the employee (Ahmed et al., 2011). The wants and expectations of employees impact their behaviors and attitudes toward work (Kim, 2012). Therefore, a complete analysis of job satisfaction must include the meanings employees bring to their jobs in order to provide insight into their quality of work experience. According to Diedericks and Rothmann (2013), IT professionals thrive off of independence, professionalism, and nurturing relationships. Barrick, Mount, and Li (2013) performed a supporting study that found higher autonomy and increased feedback led to better performance and satisfaction. The investigation performed by Calisir et al. (2011) uncovered a positive relationship between the work drive and job satisfaction of IT professionals. IT professionals are driven to meet deadlines, complete projects, exhibit productivity, and attain job success. Additionally, consequences of organizational changes and participation in demanding and complex activities can affect their level of job satisfaction (Zhao & Rashid, 2010). IT employees are often involved in activities that require a high application of various skills, giving workers the feeling of greater significance and higher job satisfaction. Ultimately, an understanding of workers' personalities can offer insight into employee behaviors and reactions to their work environments, which allows management to improve job satisfaction and predict organization performance while managing organizational change.

An employee's work environment and the nature of the work are additional considerations in job satisfaction research. Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane, and Ferreira's (2011) study revealed a substantial association between the work environment, job characteristics, and job satisfaction of IT professionals. This supports Katz and Kahn's

(1966) perspective of the association between job satisfaction and the job structure. Potential limitations, like technology, rules, and requirements, were identified, and their relationship to a worker's level of participation, performance, and attitudes were demonstrated. The authors implied that employees were more satisfied working in environments with less structured tasks than those participating in structured activities. Blake, Leach, Robbins, Pike, and Needleman (2013) claimed that work environments that encourage open communication, provide accurate information, and foster collaboration experience higher levels of job satisfaction. More specifically, the authors found that work environments that offered organizational support, clarity of job roles, and career advancement accounted for 20-40% of the differences in health, well-being, and job satisfaction. Ahmed et al. (2011) noted that job satisfaction is critical to organizational effectiveness. A review of the literature revealed other factors like, autonomy and job complexity that impact the job satisfaction of IT professionals. Chen (2008) argued that IT professionals feel personally accountable for their work when they are allowed to make decisions. The author suggested that IT workers be given the freedom to decide how to perform their jobs, make improvements, and consequently strengthen their job satisfaction. According to Zhao and Rashid (2010), the desire for achievement and challenging tasks is frequent motivation for technology workers. On the other hand, due to the complex nature of their jobs, IT workers may feel dissatisfied with their positions if the job demands are overwhelming. Pressure to meet deadlines with minimal resources can influence job satisfaction. As a result, employees may exhibit decreased levels of organizational commitment and lose interest in the well-being and future of their organizations. Furthermore, Lumley et al. (2011) insisted that these employees may begin

searching for new opportunities and pursuing other interests. Less satisfied workers exhibit decreased performance and productivity, negatively impacting the overall goals and objectives of their organizations (Ahmed et al., 2011). Consequently, companies run the risk of ruining their reputations with consumers, suppliers, and stakeholders. Warr and Inceoglu (2012) contended that job satisfaction is strongly connected to turnover intention. Therefore, it is reasonable to investigate job satisfaction to address the potential consequences of job stress and turnover among IT professionals.

Turnover Intention

Turnover refers to an employee's desire to leave his or her job and may be initiated either by an employee or the organization. The vacant job is turned over to a new employee, and the replacement employee receives job training and assumes the responsibilities of the former employee (Mohsin, Lengler, & Kumar, 2013). Lumley et al. (2011) found that job satisfaction and organizational commitment directly influence turnover among IT employees. Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, and Bliese (2011) concluded that job dissatisfaction was predictive of turnover. Employees are likely to remain with their organizations when their expectations are met. Workers will tolerate physical and mental challenges in the workplace when they are interested in their jobs. Cho and Lewis (2012) noted that turnover was predicted by employee behavior. While some workers remain positive and professional prior to leaving their positions, others with high turnover intention exhibit negative work behavior, like absenteeism, detachment, and lack of interest. According to Kim (2012), they may purposely reduce their performance efforts and lose interest in receiving positive feedback and evaluations from supervisors. As a result, the effectiveness of the organization may be compromised

and the products and services provided are negatively impacted. Federici and Skaalvik's (2012) study found the link between job satisfaction and employee turnover by observing employees' feelings. According to the researchers, lower instances of job satisfaction resulted in stronger thoughts and feelings of quitting, which led employees to seek alternative employment. Workers begin to evaluate potential alternatives to their work environments to decide whether they will remain in their current positions. The connection between the job satisfaction and employee turnover variables has led to turnover models that pay special attention to individual, organizational, and economic factors.

Mobley's 1982 model concentrated on gaining a clear understanding of how satisfaction results in turnover. He hypothesized that the dissatisfaction of employees leads to thoughts of quitting, intention to seek other employment, intention to leave, and turnover action. Mobley focused on factors like age, tenure, satisfaction, contentment, intent to stay, and organizational commitment and stressed the importance of the job satisfaction, work roles, and values determinants (Chen et al., 2011). Steers and Mowday developed a similar model that focused on the processes that lead up to the intention to leave, more specifically thoughts of quitting and other potential job choices (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). The model contained job expectations and attitudes, intent to leave, available alternatives, and turnover. The researchers found that employees experiencing job dissatisfaction may remain in their positions if no alternative employment options are available. This finding is particularly important to this study, as outsourcing may decrease the number of employment opportunities for IT professionals. The person-fit environment theory is incorporated into Steers and Mowday's model, as it

examines the employee's wants, needs, and job values and expectations. According to Mowday et al. (1979), employees are more likely to be satisfied and remain with their organizations when their expectations are met. Furthermore, an increase in intention to leave is a direct result of decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Individual and organizational factors are highly associated with turnover intention. Individual factors include primary household earner, household size, amount of time with an organization, length of time in a geographical location, level of education, and number of job opportunities provided by the company. Sallaz (2016) argued that older, settled breadwinners and tenured employees are less likely to leave their positions. The longer an employee has been with a company, the greater the incentives and benefits. Organizations that provide better pay and greater room for advancement experience lower turnover rates. Workers who are the primary wage earners are likely to avoid the possibility of loss of income and the risks associated with seeking new employment. Employees may feel locked into their positions if the exit costs are too high or no other desirable work choices are available (Fugate et al., 2012). Furthermore, workers are more likely to remain in their positions if they have lived in the state for a significant length of time. On the other hand, educated workers are more likely to leave their organizations. Ng and Feldman (2015) found that college-educated employees were more likely to leave their positions than their nondegreed counterparts. Education provides ease of movement for employees because they have access to more job opportunities.

Organizational factors include job characteristics and the work environment. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have a strong, negative influence on turnover intention. Mitchell, Gagné, Beaudry, and Dyer (2012) identified the association between

employee and supervisor as having importance to perceptions of the work environment. The authors further explained the substantial influence supervisors have on employees' perceptions and satisfaction of their jobs because of the close working relationship they possess. More specifically, DeTienne et al. (2012) discovered that supportive communication and feelings of connection with supervisors significantly influence turnover intent among employees. Based on Angrave and Charlwood's (2015) research, unreasonable workloads and job roles that fail to meet the expectations of employees also negatively influence turnover. The authors administered a quantitative survey to a random sample of employees to find that long work hours negatively impact job satisfaction, increasing absenteeism and turnover. Loyalty and the amount of control workers have in the workplace are reflections of how individuals interact with their work environments. Calisir et al. (2011) discovered a higher degree of organizational commitment when an organization meets the needs and expectations of its employees. Mowday, Steers, and Porter's (1979) model supported this idea, as it demonstrated a link between employees' job expectations and their experiences with the organizations. The authors noted that employees are able to develop realistic expectations when they are provided with comprehensive and accurate information about the jobs. The employees are then able to exhibit positive work behavior, establish strong relationships with their colleagues, and possess willingness to remain with their organizations.

Organizational commitment. The opposite of turnover is organizational commitment, also referred to as intent to remain. Mowday et al. (1979) summarized organizational commitment as an individual's desire to accept an organization's goals and values and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization. Shin et al. (2012)

argued that an employee's perceptions of organizational commitment are directly associated with the characteristics of the work environment. The researchers conducted a two-wave survey in a sample of 234 employees and forty-five managers and discovered that when the perceptions are positive, the relationship is satisfying and productive. On the other hand, negative perceptions cause poor relationships between employees and their organizations (Shin et al., 2012). Based on the data gathered from the authors' large-scale survey, Wallace et al. (2013) agreed that employees who possess a strong commitment to their organizations are less likely to leave their companies, and reduced turnover intention leads to greater organizational commitment. Ultimately, organizational commitment is the connection between the employee and the organization. While job satisfaction is specific to an employee's perceptions, Cho and Lewis (2012) argued that organizational commitment takes the employee's bond with an organization into account. In some circumstances, individuals continue to participate in meeting the goals of their organizations despite any dissatisfaction they have with their jobs. In other instances, satisfaction with various facets of the job take precedence over organizational commitment. Rothrauff, Abraham, Bride, and Roman (2011) described organizational commitment as having behavioral and attitudinal components to the organization. Individuals bring unique sets of expectations to their jobs that are based on factors like, pay, requirements, relationships, and advancement opportunities. Ultimately, attitudes toward the organization are more important to the intent to stay than the attitudes toward the individual's job.

An increase in voluntary turnover among IT professionals has become an issue for managers. Technology professionals are more susceptible to work stress and exhaustion.

According to von Hagel and Miller (2011), the voluntary turnover rate for IT professionals rose more than 7% between 2005 and 2006, compared to 0.7% for other professions. Turnover costs can be significantly high for organizations. They consist of vacancy, separation, recruiting, and new-hire orientation. Costs can range from $80,000 to $800,000 per employee (von Hagel & Miller, 2011). Along with the cost of training new employees, turnover can create disruption among the remaining workers. The remaining employees may be required to take on more work until new workers are hired and trained. Jiang, Baker and Frazier (2009) noted that the stress and low morale of surviving employees can lead to poor service quality, low productivity, and damaged reputations. Ultimately, these negative feelings and behaviors lead to additional turnover intention. When the outsourcing phenomenon is present, IT professionals may search for alternative employment outside of their chosen fields. Hence, turnover is relevant, as it offers insight into whether or not the presence of outsourcing activities leads to turnover intention. Although some employees have thoughts of quitting, they do not actually leave their organizations. According to Mobley's 1982 theory, turnover intention relates to the employee's feelings about leaving the organization (Chen et al., 2011). Though, Yücel (2012) confirmed that research demonstrated that turnover intention is a strong predictor of actual turnover. Therefore, it is appropriate to use turnover intention in this dissertation to address the possible role outsourcing has on turnover among IT professionals.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing has been defined as an organization's decision to contract out its assets, personnel, and activities to a third party. In exchange, the service provider provides and manages the assets and services for a fee over a specified period of time

(Cox, Roberts, & Walton, 2012). Bjørn-Andersen and Raymond (2014) described outsourcing as transferring work to an external organization that was previously performed in-house. For the purpose of this study, outsourcing is defined as a company's decision to subcontract functions to another company, locally or foreign, that are typically handled internally. When companies choose international outsourcing, they transfer goods or services to foreign countries. On the other hand, with local outsourcing, the goods and services are managed within the country (Backmann & Braun, 2011). Smite and Wohlin (2011) further explained that outsourcing companies are tasked with deciding the scope of the outsourced projects as well. According to Gunasekaran, Irani, Filippi, and Papadopoulos (2015), outsourcing grew as more organizations began looking for ways to reduce costs, improve performance, and gain new skills and knowledge. The model gained popularity with the publication of several research studies on outsourcing. Osadchyy and Webber (2016) purported that major advances in communication and technology sparked growth in outsourcing. Subsequently, organizations are able to perform business and technology operations in areas and regions that were not previously possible or suitable. Dollatabady and Forghani's (2011) survey resulted in 52 companies, within the United States and Europe, outsourcing 79% of their helpdesk jobs to international vendors. By 2015, the researchers expect 3.3 million American IT jobs to be moved overseas.

The common benefits of outsourcing IT functions have been widely researched. Furthermore, considerable research literature about the financial and strategic reasons for outsourcing IT has been written (Blair, O'Connor, & Kirchhoefer, 2011; Chang & Gurbaxani, 2012; Fung, 2013; Han & Mithas, 2013; Henderson, 2011; Lacity &

Willcocks, 2012; Maku & Iravo, 2013; Rose-Anderssen, Baldwin, & Ridgway, 2011; Tajdini & Nazari, 2012; Yang et al., 2012). IT outsourcing has become a critical part of organizational strategy. For instance, IT outsourcing offers organizations improved performance, quality, and productivity, competitive advantage, and specialized technical skills and knowledge. Duhamel, Gutierrez-Martinez, Picazo-Vela, and Luna-Reyes (2014) indicated that IT services have been one of the most outsourced sectors over the last ten years. Pouder, Cantrell, and Daly's (2011) study supported this statement, revealing that more than 41% of the outsourced activities studied were in IT. IT development and maintenance, Web site design and maintenance, telecommunication management, system planning, operation, and management, and end-user support are commonly outsourced IT activities. Lacity and Willcocks (2012) found that organizations participate in outsourcing activities when management feels the internal IT function is ineffective. Outsourcing helps organizations focus on their core activities and outsource the activities they are less knowledgeable about (Fung, 2013; Henderson, 2011). Companies are able to maintain quality and compete globally by focusing on their core businesses. According to Rose-Anderssen et al. (2011), an additional benefit of outsourcing is the access it provides to technical expertise that was not previously available. Vendors are capable of creating and applying knowledge that organizations lack due to limited resources and expertise. The IT-related knowledge provided by external vendors can help improve productivity for client organizations. Maku and Iravo (2013) described outsourcing as a way for organizations to meet the demands of consumers in terms of flexibility, cost, and responsiveness. Ultimately, the outsourcing model becomes more attractive to organizations as the gap begins to grow between what

the companies want to do and what they are actually able to accomplish internally. As an example, Han and Mithas (2013) discussed Campbell Soup Company's decision to outsource their computer operations to IBM in 2001, which allowed the company's in-house IT team to focus on the activities directly linked to its business strategies. Additionally, they were able to develop and support new technology initiatives and innovations. In the end, this decision allowed Campbell to save significantly and improve its long-term business performance.

Outsourcing has been shown to provide a number of cost benefits as well. For example, outsourcing allows companies to track and minimize costs (Blair et al., 2011), with cost savings of up to 40% (Chang & Gurbaxani, 2012). The most common attraction of outsourcing is that it allows companies to allocate its noncore functions to outside professionals at a much lower cost. In return, these costs can be distributed among customers. Yang et al. (2012) indicated that in addition to an organization's perception of IT productivity, the perceived value of IT to the organization is considered as well when deciding whether or not to outsource. More specifically, organizations consider whether transferring their jobs and services adds value for paid work and establishes competitiveness (Osadchyy & Webber, 2016). IT vendors are capable of combining and completing the work of various clients to offer additional savings. Tajdini and Nazari (2012) insisted that organizations are able to experience additional cost savings by not having to hire, train, and maintain qualified IT professionals. When comparing the cost of outsourcing to the cost of recruiting new talent, organizations are able to negotiate better deals. For instance, Unilever negotiated a 7-year contract to outsource its data to IBM Business Consulting Services in order to improve the company's efficiency and product

development. Unilever was able to cut overhead costs and save approximately $840 million a year (Pouder et al., 2011). Similarly, in 2003, Deloitte Consulting moved its services overseas and was able to experience savings of $138 billion annually in five years (Yao, Jiang, Young, & Talluri, 2010). In these cases, cost savings was the organizations' main goal for outsourcing their services.

Although outsourcing of IT services can have an overall positive impact on the firm's performance, it presents a number of risks and concerns. For instance, numerous hidden costs are associated with outsourcing, including vendor selection and management and modification of outsourcing contracts (Gorla & Somers, 2014). Furthermore, Cox et al. (2012) noted that organizations run the risk of over-dependence and loss of control if the in-house IT department is not fully involved in the outsourcing process, developing new ideas, and obtaining new knowledge and skills. Mosher and Mainquist (2011) explained that the reputations of outsourcing companies may be negatively impacted when these problems occur. Loss of data, malicious activity on the vendor's part, legal concerns, and non-compliance with vendor standards can result in negative reputations as well. A good reputation allows organizations to improve competitive advantage, increase value, and preserve the brand (Harrison-Walker, 2011). Personnel and employee morale issues arise when companies decide to commit to outsourcing. Outsourcing changes may demand more work time, require additional duties and responsibilities, and force employees to choose work obligations over personal commitments. According to Ganster and Rosen (2013), the added strains placed on employees may lead to decreased health, productivity, and similar work-related concerns. Elmuti et al. (2010) asserted that outsourcing is the cause of many job losses as well. Companies including, Harley-

Davidson, Dell, and Avago Technologies have downsized their personnel due to outsourcing. Outsourcing can also have long-term effects on the health of displaced workers. They experience greater instances of abuse, alcoholism, divorce, and financial issues (Gorla & Somers, 2014). Furthermore, displaced employees are typically forced to work in contract or part-time positions with less pay and no benefits. According to Michael and Michael (2012), IT outsourcing can have a negative impact on workplace health and safety and the quality of products and services. Employees that survive downsizing exhibit several complex psychosocial processes and behaviors that decrease motivation, engagement, and productivity. The outsourcing process can cause workers to feel unimportant and unappreciated and begin to withdraw from their peers and job responsibilities. Additionally, they are expected to take on extra work due to loss of personnel, causing elevated stress and anxiety. For many employees, outsourcing is viewed as an undesirable change that results in increased levels of dissatisfaction and intent to quit (Elmuti et al., 2010). Gorla and Somers (2014) revealed other potential issues that arise with outsourcing including, interruptions in the delivery of services, delayed implementations, lack of vendor commitment, and the service provider's inability to keep up with the client's changing needs. As a result, product quality and service performance becomes lower than the expectations of the client's users or customers.

While literature demonstrates employees' negative feelings about outsourcing and other organizational changes, some workers feel that changes can have a positive impact on their careers. Fugate et al. (2012) argued that employees with the ability to manage change feel less threatened and are more likely to have a sense of continuity and

contribute to the organization's ventures. Some outsourced workers maintain adequate levels of commitment to both their organizations and the service providers. Chaudhuri and Bartlett's (2014) study found that employees perceive outsourcing as a positive development. They had favorable opinions of their job security due to the success of IT outsourcing and the effective communication between the outsourcing companies and their vendors. Going to work for the vendor can significantly broaden an IT worker's career path. It can provide opportunities to obtain new skills, learn about new technologies, and advance within a company that focuses solely on technology (Bjørn-Andersen & Raymond, 2014). Many outsourced employees feel more stimulated and fulfilled working in the new environment. They are pleased with the ability to discover new technologies, gain new responsibilities, and work in different industries without having to change employers. According to Khosrowpour et al. (2011), outsourcing can also provide a change for workers wanting to move on but lack the necessary resources or motivation. Likewise, older employees may see outsourcing as an opening for early retirement. Outsourcing has been shown to have a negative impact on job satisfaction in several different industries (Ngo, Loi, Foley, Zheng, & Zhang, 2013). Moreover, threats to employees' job security as a result of outsourcing can be detrimental to the perceptions workers have of the organizations and commitment levels. However, the literature review revealed a small number of scholarly articles about the perceptions IT professionals have of outsourcing.

Summary

IT outsourcing has become an important component of business strategy and a major source of competitive advantage for numerous organizations. Therefore, it is

necessary for managers to understand the risks and challenges, as well as the benefits of outsourcing (Osadchyy & Webber, 2016; Yang et al., 2012). The literature review revealed a direct connection between outsourcing and the job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover of employees in various industries. Loss of trust and control during outsourcing activities can result in elevated stress and diminish employees' positive views of their jobs. The actual outcomes differ from the expectations of employees, leading to decreased work performance and organizational commitment (Griffin et al., 2010; Rehfuss et al., 2012). An employee's commitment to the organization and satisfaction with his or her job greatly influence the worker's intent to leave (Bogler & Nir, 2014). The literature review revealed gaps in the research in terms of job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among IT professionals during the outsourcing of technology services. This study sought to fill a knowledge gap in the literature using the person-environment fit theory to understand the factors that influence the job stress and job satisfaction of IT professionals.

Chapter 2 contained an analysis of existing literature that is consistent with the scope of the study. A literature-based description of work-related stress and job satisfaction of IT professionals, turnover intention, and outsourcing were provided. Lewin and Murray's person-environment fit theory was discussed. This theory provides insights into how outsourcing results in work-related stress and changes to job satisfaction. The literature review used prior research to identify a knowledge gap in the literature. Chapter 3 provides a more detailed explanation of the research design chosen to answer the research questions for the study. The research consisted of a qualitative study to examine the influence outsourcing has on the job dissatisfaction, stress, and

turnover intention of IT professionals. Interviews were used to study the perceptions IT professionals have about outsourcing. Chapter 4 presents the data collection and analysis methods. Additionally, data is provided to support the findings and address the research questions. Chapter 5 concludes with an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, implications for social change, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore whether, and to what extent, outsourcing plays a role in job-related stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention within the IT profession. I sought to understand how outsourcing can change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs, reduce their work performance, and increase their daily stress. The viewpoints of the participants were examined using a semistructured set of interview questions aligned to the research questions. A qualitative approach was guided by the person-environment fit theory. A phenomenological study, consisting of IT professionals at four Florida-based firms, was used to understand the perspectives of the participants.

This chapter covers the research design of the study and rationale for the chosen approach. The purpose of the study is briefly included as well as the role of the researcher. The setting and study sample are described, including the sampling strategy, sample size, and criteria and characteristics of the selected participants. The research questions are provided, and the interview questions are introduced. The data collection and analysis procedures are identified, including the data collection instruments, frequency and location of data collection, coding method, and data analysis plan. Issues of trustworthiness, consisting of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are also addressed. The chapter concludes by identifying the ethical procedures that were used to protect the rights of the study participants.

Research Design and Rationale

This study utilized the qualitative approach and the phenomenological study tradition. The data was collected from 20 purposefully selected participants using face-to-face and phone interviews along with a journal account. The collected data was interpreted and analyzed using the NVivo computer program. The phenomenological design is used when the researcher wants to understand the meaning of the lived experience of a phenomenon for an individual or group of people. The researcher is able to study the phenomenon within its real-life context by examining how the participants perceive the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Phenomenology research allows researchers to explore the views of participants and contexts that are not possible with quantitative research. More specifically, the phenomenological interviews are reflective, unlike the observational interviews used in quantitative research (Wells, 2013). The phenomenological interviews were the main source of data collection to explore participants' descriptions, establish the context of participants' experiences, request examples, and reflect on the meaning of individuals' experiences. This phenomenological study relied on qualitative data to obtain the necessary information regarding the participants' perceptions of outsourcing. Qualitative research may be used to identify characteristics that can lead to future qualitative studies.

The phenomenological design was used in this study in an attempt to better understand IT employees' perceptions of work-related stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention during outsourcing activities. This approach was selected because it offers a more accurate description of the phenomenon as it exists in the context of the setting. The other qualitative approaches discussed earlier did not meet the criteria.

Quantitative methods are extremely limited in their ability to investigate the context. Some research studies examine and compare variables and the potential change one causes in another (Yin, 2013). The goal of this study was to identify common themes and trends and effectively generalize to other individuals who have experienced a similar phenomenon. The overall intent of the study was to interpret the participants' perceptions regarding IT outsourcing. Finlay (2012) purported that phenomenological research can be used to understand the impact that individuals' experiences have on the manner in which the participants' perform their work. A qualitative framework was most appropriate for the study because it involved an in-depth exploration of the perceptions of various individuals using multiple data collection methods, including interviews and my journal. Furthermore, the qualitative paradigm is flexible and focuses on the process (Merriam, 2014). A phenomenological design was used to reach more participants, with the hope of calling attention to the views of IT professionals during outsourcing activities. In order to investigate the role outsourcing plays in the work-related stress and job satisfaction of IT professionals, I sought to answer the following research questions in this phenomenological study:

RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?

RQ2: How does outsourcing decrease job satisfaction among IT professionals?

RQ3: How does outsourcing change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs?

RQ4: How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals?

The theoretical framework used for the analysis was the person-environment fit theory. The theory was proposed by Lewin and Murray to understand the interaction between people and their environments (Yang et al., 2008). I examined additional

approaches for studying individuals' relationships with their work environments. Though, they did not meet the needs of this study. Vroom's 1964 expectancy theory originated from Herzberg's 1959 two-factor theory. Both of these approaches focus on specific motivational factors that drive workers to enhance their work performance and achieve job satisfaction. The individuals are motivated to work harder in order to attain positive outcomes (Lunenburg, 2011). Locke's 1976 range of affect theory, on the other hand, is based on an employee's value of certain job facets over others, which significantly impacts the level of satisfaction. The individual experiences better satisfaction in favorable settings and greater dissatisfaction in unfavorable environments (Dugguh & Ayaga, 2014). Finally, the employee's personality is the basis of job satisfaction in Staw et al.'s (1986) dispositional theory. According to the researchers, individuals' behaviors are directly linked to job satisfaction. Employees who display positive behavior are more satisfied with their jobs (Vakola, 2014). Ultimately, the person-environment fit theory was the best option given the topic of this study. This theory can be used to examine individuals' perceptions of their environments and provide insights into how outsourcing leads to work-related stress and changes to job satisfaction.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to be fully present during the interviews and address any concerns between the researcher and participants. In addition, the researcher should focus on the phenomenon, study the setting of the participants, collaborate with participants, make interpretations of the data, and validate the accuracy of the findings. According to Yin (2013), researchers should be able to ask good questions, listen without being swayed by biases, adapt to unexpected events, understand

what is being said, and be sensitive and responsive to contradictory preconceptions. Interviews were conducted to discover information that cannot be directly observed, including the participants' feelings, thoughts, or intentions, as well as prior events and behaviors. Standardized open-ended interviews were used in the study to ask questions and understand the perspectives of others. A research journal of notes, participant reactions, and other raw data were kept and used throughout the study and served as the chief method of eliminating my personal biases, prejudices, values, and opinions. As the primary instrument of data collection, I needed to isolate any impressions, feelings, and premature interpretations from descriptions (Janesick, 2011). The transcripts were reviewed multiple times for accuracy and the data were combined using the actual words used by participants. Categories and subcategories were developed and used to discover themes. The categories were compared to other data sources to identify supportive evidence and consistent patterns.

I am currently part of the industry being studied. Unfortunately, anything the participant says may be influenced by the interviewer and the interview setting (Maxwell, 2013). My biases for this study include a significant interest in outsourcing and the role it has in the IT industry. This interest stems from having worked for more than ten years in the technology field as an IT specialist, network technician, and IT instructor. Various individuals, both male and female at different levels of each organization, were interviewed. As a female IT professional, it was highly likely that I would relate to and understand the experiences of females at the firms more than their male counterparts. Because it is a career field with few females, I could side with them or possibly be more

interested in their actions or what they have to say. This type of gender bias needed to be avoided. I also needed to avoid making predictions and attempting to control the setting.

Methodology

Participant Selection

In qualitative study, no specific rules are required for sample size. Still, it can be difficult to determine if a sample size will be large enough to achieve maximum variation (Patton, 2002). The selected sample size depends on the purpose of the study, what the researcher wants to know, what is at stake, what can be accomplished with the available time and resources, and what will be useful and credible. In purposeful sampling, the researcher selects specific types and number of samples based on the available resources and purpose of the study (Patton, 2002). Particular activities, individuals, or environments are purposely chosen to obtain information that is relevant to the research questions and study goals (Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative researchers use small samples when only a portion of the sample population is necessary for representativeness. Additionally, a small sample size is used to reduce suspicion regarding the reasons specific participants are chosen for study. Still, the sample size does not permit statistical generalizations. The usefulness and credibility of small purposeful samples are often in question (Patton, 2002). However, they should be judged based on whether or not they support the purpose of the study. The goal of this study was to have an equal amount of IT professionals from each firm. Diversity in the nature of participants selected can result in an increased variety of situations by the research audience. This suggests greater potential for generalizing results.

A distinguishing factor of the technology profession within the United States is the growing use of outsourcing companies. As a result, IT professionals are impacted in terms of job satisfaction, job stress, and turnover intention. IT professionals consist of a highly educated group of individuals with a skillset that is in high demand, particularly throughout the United States (Diedericks & Rothmann, 2014). For this study, I contacted specific organizations that met the profile needed for the research study. I had no prior personal or professional relationship with the firms or their employees. A purposeful sample of 20 participants was chosen from four different medium-sized firms within Central Florida to achieve sufficient saturation (Merriam, 2014). This particular sample size was chosen to increase the chances of finding similar themes among the participants. Additionally, the sample reflected diversity among other job industries, as all experiences are based on individual perceptions. IT professionals at each of the four companies were invited to complete a ten-question, online questionnaire via SurveyMonkey. The survey was used to choose participants and convey the interview questions. I used SurveyMonkey to automatically produce a profile for each participant and determine which workers met the research requirements. The participants were eligible for the study if they were full-time employees with at least five years of service with their organizations. I chose these requirements under the assumption that more time and experience working within the field would result in a more meaningful discussion of real-life experiences during the interviews. The sample consisted of individuals working as technology analysts, systems administrators, computer programmers, web designers, engineers, technology consultants, and IT managers. The participants needed to have previously participated or currently be participating in outsourcing activities. The activity

needed to occur within the IT department. The study participants were expected to be capable of and willing to answer the interview questions.

In the sampling approach, the researcher asks a question about a certain group and selects an individual sample from the population to answer the question. Miles and Huberman (1994) noted that if the sampling strategy is successful, it allows the researcher to obtain representativeness of the collected data for the sampled population. Purposeful sampling was used for this research, which according to Patton (2002) focuses on selecting groups that are information-rich. Information-rich cases provide in-depth learning and understanding of the purpose of the examination. Maxwell (2013) added that specific individuals, situations, and events are purposely selected to provide information that is relevant to the research questions and goals of the study. Study participants were used from more than one organization. Therefore, permission was obtained from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (08-24-15-0140465). Furthermore, permission was obtained from the four organizations to request access to their employees and solicit volunteers. IT professionals at the four firms were personally contacted and invited to participate in the study. I sent an e-mail to members of the IT departments that introduced and explained the purpose of the research and requested participation in the study. Based on the research requirements and participation in the online questionnaire, five professionals from each firm were selected. By this method, a total of 20 participants were selected for further study. Once replies were received, requests for interviews and consent forms were e-mailed to potential interviewees. At that point, the time, location, and interview method were determined. The study was flexible and allowed for adding to the sample if any individuals were unable to participate, or the number of participants

was inadequate for finding sufficient data patterns. Human resource managers in each of the organizations identified in the study population were contacted to recruit additional technology workers and managers. Participants were recruited and interviewed until theme saturation became evident. I e-mailed the other willing participants to inform them that their participation was no longer needed due to the saturation of the gathered data.

Instrumentation and Materials

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument. The researcher collects the data instead of relying strictly on using questionnaires or other instruments. The research relationships are the means by which the research is completed. These relationships impact the researcher, the participants, participant selection, and data collection. In this study, I reflected on the decisions made regarding relationships, any relationship issues that arose during the study, and the outcomes the relationships had on the research (Janesick, 2011). The strength of the instrument is critical to the validity and reliability of the study. For this reason, I needed to separate personal feelings, biases, and interpretations during data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2014). My journal was used to provide a means for keeping this information, such as impressions or feelings confidential for identification and bracketing purposes. Furthermore, participant beliefs and perceptions can be difficult to infer with certainty through interview data (Maxwell, 2013). I sought to understand how the participants make sense of outsourcing and the ways their perspectives inform their actions.

Qualitative researchers rely on various types of interview questions when conducting studies. The interview instrument for this study contained a combination of descriptive, follow-up, structural, and contrast questions (Janesick, 2011). Twelve

questions were created to guide the interviews (Appendix B). Structured questions were included in order to enhance the depth of data collection during the interviews. Participant responses provided relevant information through their interactions with the environment and the topic being studied. I investigated more deeply to obtain additional information using follow-up, clarification questions. Descriptive questions were used to describe the research environment and research topic from participants. Information related to comparisons and differences were obtained through contrast questions. The feedback provided from the pilot interviews assisted in preparing for the actual interviews (Janesick, 2011). The participants were contacted to inquire about misinterpreted information, obtain clarifications, and follow up on implied concepts and themes. This process helped to gain a better understanding of the participants' perceptions of how outsourcing relates to work-related stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intent.

Permission to perform the qualitative interviews was obtained in writing from Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB). In addition to the consent forms, copies of the interview protocol were e-mailed to the participants at least two weeks before the scheduled interviews. During this initial interaction, my contact information was provided, interviewees' willingness to participate was confirmed, and the interview method and time were determined. I began each interview by greeting participants with a smile, and an open and relaxed atmosphere was provided for the interviewees. I explained the purpose of conducting the interviews and a genuine interest in the interviewees was displayed (Janesick, 2011). I covered previously e-mailed information, informed participants about the interview and publishing procedures, and the participant questions and concerns were addressed. Face-to-face interviews were recorded using an

individual recording device. Video and phone interviews were performed via Skype and recorded using recorder software. The application was used to make online video and voice calls from my computer to the participants' computers, home phones, smartphones, or similar mobile devices. The interview data was compressed and saved for future use. In addition to the recordings, a research journal was used throughout the interviews to log notes, participant responses, and other basic data. The journal consisted of an interview worksheet that was used to easily and efficiently record the data. I followed each interview question with a table that contained specific categories and used it to document my comments. An additional column was created to log additional comments and explanations provided by the participants during the interviews. Descriptions of behaviors, discussions, and the setting were recorded using as much detail as possible in order to preserve the initial interpretations and my feelings. The data was transcribed following the interviews using the NVivo program.

Data Collection Procedures

For this study, multiple methods, including a survey, a pilot study, interviews, and my journal were used to collect data over a six-week period. The use of various sources enables researchers to enhance the validity of the study through triangulation (Yin, 2013). Initially, information regarding each participant's age, sex, marital status, educational level, job title, number of years with the organization, and exposure to outsourcing was collected using a ten-question demographic questionnaire (Appendix A). Interviews were used to help understand the perceptions of job stress and dissatisfaction of IT professionals when outsourcing is employed at their firms. The central idea was to provide insight to managers in overcoming these challenges when looking to use

outsourcing for their IT functions. Interviews were used because they provide the opportunity to discover information that cannot be directly observed. For example, they allow researchers to examine the participants' feelings, thoughts, and intentions. Patton (2002) identified three types of open-ended interviews: the informal conversational interview, general interview guide, and standardized open-ended interview approaches. The informal conversational interview is part of continuous participant observation fieldwork and relies on the spontaneous creation of questions. In the general interview guide approach, the researcher explores a set of issues with each participant prior to the interviews. The guide is used as a checklist during the interview process. Standardized open-ended interviews contain a specific set of questions. Each participant in the study is asked the same questions in the same order. In this study, I used standardized open-ended interviews, where participants answered a similar set of questions. Participants were interviewed by phone, face-to-face, or video conferencing for the study. It was important to select the right individuals to participate, and it was critical to focus on the right questions. The traits of the participants should be similar to allow for finding common experiences among them (Patton, 2002). As noted, the interviewees worked in the technology field, with at least five years of service with their organizations. Furthermore, the participants had current or previous experience with outsourcing.

Once the interviewees were identified, permission was obtained from study participants for the interviews. The interview protocol was e-mailed to the study participants for their signatures two weeks before the scheduled interviews, along with the consent forms. The research began once I received IRB approval and signed consent forms from respondents. Crawford (2010c) discussed the importance of estimating the

amount of time required for an interview. This includes making contact, scheduling the interview, travel time, and transcribing to ensure that researchers are prepared and remain on track to reach their research goals. The interviews occurred in two phases. Each phase of the interviews lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. A follow-up phase included phone or e-mail communication, as needed. The session began by explaining the purpose of the interview and study. The information that was previously emailed was covered to ensure that each participant had a good understanding of what would take place. Each participant was given the option to stop the interview or refuse to answer questions at any time. Additionally, the participants were reminded that the interviews would be audiotaped and notes would be recorded in my journal throughout the meetings. I explained that a transcript would be provided to each participant and that the study would be published. Before starting the interview, each participant was asked if he or she had any questions, and the length of the interview was repeated and verified. Additionally, interviewees were asked not to reveal any names.

Prior to performing the final research interviews, a pilot study was conducted. Two individuals meeting the same selection criteria as the participants in the actual study were interviewed using the interview questions outlined in Appendix B. The same confidentiality standards and informed consent used in the final study were utilized in the pilot study as well. The pilot study included both the pre-interview questionnaire and interview questions. The purpose of the pilot interviews was to validate the questions used in the actual interviews. The pilot study was used for the following: to get accustomed to the setting, to become familiar with the participants, and to test my skills as an interviewer (Janesick, 2011). Furthermore, pilot studies help train researchers in the

areas of confidence, clarity of thinking, and conducting qualitative research. The pilot tests reveal revisions that need to be made prior to the actual interviews (Maxwell, 2013). Responses to the pilot study were recorded, transcribed, and evaluated. The actual study began once the pilot study was completed, and the questions were assessed for validity and reliability. The results of the pilot study are included in the data analysis portion of this study.

During the face-to-face interviews, positive body language was used to encourage participation. Each participant in the study was asked the same set of specific questions in the same order (Patton, 2002). The interview questions were phrased in general language, and I remained open to participants' opinions. Flexibility allowed the exploration of any questions or concerns that surfaced during the interviews. Clarifying questions asked by the participants were answered, and only personal experiences related to the research topic were discussed with the participants to avoid biasing the participants' answers. The purpose of this study was to examine the role outsourcing has on the job stress, satisfaction, and turnover of employees, as perceived by IT professionals. Therefore, the interview questions consisted of questions regarding the presence of IT outsourcing activities within the firms. The interviews also included counter questions related to the use and role of outsourcing to gain a better understanding and ensure that all necessary information was provided. This helped to minimize the potential for biases and facilitated the organization and analysis of data. According to Janesick (2011), the interviewer should use language that lets the participant know that enough information has been obtained. The interviews ended by asking if the participants would like to add anything to the discussion. Finally, the interviewees were thanked for participating and reminded that

they would receive transcripts of the interviews. If clarification or additional information was required, interviewees were contacted via phone or e-mail. Table 1 shows how the research questions were addressed by the interview questions.

Table 1. *Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions*

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?	1. Tell me about your experiences with IT outsourcing. 2. What is your perception of IT outsourcing? 4. How do you feel about your company's position or activity in the area of IT outsourcing? 5. What is your perception of how well your company communicated the plan for the IT outsourcing activities that occurred? 8. How do you believe IT outsourcing impacted your stress level?
RQ2: How does outsourcing decrease job satisfaction among IT professionals?	1. Tell me about your experiences with IT outsourcing. 2. What is your perception of IT outsourcing? 4. How do you feel about your company's position or activity in the area of IT outsourcing? 5. What is your perception of how well your company communicated the plan for the IT outsourcing activities that occurred? 10. How satisfied were you with your job prior to IT outsourcing? How did that change after IT outsourcing?
RQ3: How does outsourcing change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs?	1. Tell me about your experiences with IT outsourcing. 2. What is your perception of IT outsourcing? 3. How does your organization conduct its IT outsourcing activities? 4. How do you feel about your company's position or activity in the area of IT outsourcing? 5. What is your perception of how well your company communicated the plan for the IT outsourcing activities that occurred? 6. What do you believe your role is in the outsourcing activities performed by your company? 9. Describe what, if anything, about IT outsourcing damaged your opinion of your job? 10. How satisfied were you with your job prior to IT outsourcing? How did that change after IT outsourcing?
RQ4: How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals?	1. Tell me about your experiences with IT outsourcing. 2. What is your perception of IT outsourcing? 4. How do you feel about your company's position or activity in the area of IT outsourcing? 5. What is your perception of how well your company communicated the plan for the IT outsourcing activities that occurred? 11. What motivated you to stay with the company after learning about the plan to outsource? What was your motivation to seek another position after learning about the plan to outsource? 12. What do you think your company could do to improve employee commitment levels during IT outsourcing?

In addition to taking notes, face-to-face interviews were recorded using a standalone recording device that records into flash memory. Video and phone interviews were conducted via Skype with the MP3 Skype Recorder. The recorder software integrates into Skype and records in video and audio modes. Skype provides a low-cost method for qualitative research that allowed for accommodating participants' schedules. Skype offers a computer to phone service for participants who preferred to be interviewed by phone instead of through their computers. The Skype software is compatible with Mac computers, which was used to perform the calls. Recorded calls were saved in the Skype program and listed by phone number or name. The interviews were recorded in an uncompressed format and later used to make copies and compress for saving or sharing.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the interview responses were transcribed for each participant, the data were prepared and organized for analysis. Then, they were coded, themes were developed, and visual diagrams were created to represent the data. An inventory of the data obtained was taken to ensure that the field notes and transcripts were complete, any missing data were identified, and data were properly labeled (Patton, 2002). An initial analysis of the data began by taking notes during the interviews. Once the information was reviewed for clarity, similarities between topics were identified and merged together. General thoughts regarding the data were written and a more detailed analysis began by coding the data and organizing them into similar sentences, phrases, or terms. The themes were labeled for future identification and placed into an Excel spreadsheet.

Ultimately, the chosen analysis software is dependent upon the researcher's level of computer use, the research project, and the type of analysis the researcher intends to perform (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As an experienced computer user, the level of difficulty of the software was not a concern. Though, it can certainly be helpful if the program does not take a great deal of time to learn. The research data for this study was obtained through a variety of sources, including interviews, audiotapes, and videotapes. Therefore, a program that can easily handle diverse types of data was needed. The program needed to be flexible and allow the researcher to see the organized, compressed data in one place. It is also useful to assign multiple codes to the same segments of text. The program needed to allow for this (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The NVivo program was used to transcribe and code data from the notes and audio and video files obtained during the interviews conducted for the study. The video and audio files can be played and transcribed in the program's "transcribe" mode. I used NVivo to collect, organize, and analyze this data into a Microsoft Word document (NVivo, 2012). In order to analyze the data and identify any patterns and themes, the interview responses were coded using words that best describe the data. The interview questions were formatted as headings and the *AutoCode* option was used to set them as nodes. A descriptive technique can be used for creating labels. Descriptions may be added to the current nodes using the drag and drop option or the coding bar. Each node can be selected to view which text is associated with it. Additionally, it is possible to easily see the relationships between nodes, as well as the sources and references for each node. Within the program, a Node Classification called "Person" was created and specific characteristics were assigned to each participant. Subsequently, I was able to run queries to see if links between these

characteristics existed and how a person answered the questions. It was also possible to add colors to nodes, in addition to descriptions to make them easier to locate. Using the NVivo computer program to assist in data analysis provided the ability to keep information organized, easily find text and images associated with codes (or themes), compare code labels, and create a visual diagram of the themes, as well as their relationships to one another.

This process provided the opportunity to discover themes and subthemes across the data. The final report shared what was learned and how it was learned. It was critical to provide sufficient detail and evidence, while being careful not to include too much information that can make the final reports unimportant and uninteresting to readers (Patton, 2002). In order to analyze the data and identify any patterns and themes, the interview responses were coded using words or phrases that best described the data. Instead of explicitly identifying a specific portion of text under review, numbered coding labels were inserted in a similar manner. The corresponding coding categories were placed at the end of each of the interviewee's responses. I reviewed the relationships between the sources and references for each category to find categories that were common to all participants. At this point, the themes and subthemes emerged. These themes were used as headings in the findings section and phrases from the interviews were used to form the themes for use in phenomenological research. While some IT professionals did not respond favorably to the technology changes that result from outsourcing, others adapted better to these changes than their co-workers. Finding patterns and themes allows researchers to pull separate pieces of information together

(Miles & Huberman, 1994). Ultimately, this was achieved by identifying similarities and differences in the gathered data. Finally, an interpretation of the data was presented.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Researchers should be prepared to show that their study findings are valid and reliable. It is important to demonstrate what the study results can do for participants, consumers, and other researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Reliability refers to the degree to which a measure produces the same result repeatedly. While reliability is based on the accuracy of the procedure, validity focuses on what the researcher is attempting to measure. It basically refers to whether the researcher is actually measuring what he had hoped to measure. With qualitative validity, the researcher uses specific procedures to check for accuracy of the results. Though reliability and validity are different, they are related to one another. For instance, a measure can have high validity and reliability. The results are repeatedly consistent, and it reflects what the researcher had hoped to measure. It is also possible to obtain a measure that is inconsistent and does not reflect the desired measurement. In addition, it is likely that a desired measurement can be obtained with inconsistent results. Finally, it is possible to receive the same results, but not the preferred measurement (Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora, 2015). Confirmability is the notion that reality exists outside of investigation or observation. In qualitative studies, the researchers should remain impartial, acknowledge their own biases, and complete the research with as little bias as possible (Janesick, 2011). Potential credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability threats were identified and minimized in the study.

Credibility. Consent forms were used to request basic demographic information (age, sex, marital status, highest educational level, current job title, number of years employed with the firm, and exposure to outsourcing) from potential participants. Once the recorded interviews were transcribed and provided to the participants for review, the member checking technique was used in the study to enhance the validity of data. It was important to verify the participants' responses to ensure that they were interpreted correctly. Member checking was used to capture the participants' intended meaning instead of the meaning interpreted through my view. The notes, transcribed data, and study results were sent to participants for member checking. The opinions of the participants were requested, in terms of how accurate and credible the interpretations and findings are. Not only was I be able to understand the participants' thoughts on the preliminary analyses, but it helped me identify misinterpretations of participants' responses and perspectives (Maxwell, 2013). Miscommunication can cause the reporting of erroneous data, which may lead to ethical issues. Ultimately, unethical practices can impact a researcher's reputation, career, the reputations of their fields, and the benefits of their research. It was important to engage with participants to build trust, learn the culture, and identify invalid information. Repeated contact with participants helped alleviate premature theories and provided a better understanding of the processes by which the participants' views were expressed.

Transferability. Transferability, or external validity, refers to the extent to which the study results can be applied to other situations. In order to establish validity and applicability to similar studies, the data collection, coding, and reporting methods used were consistent and based on the qualitative methods established in literature and

research. Choosing participants with specific characteristics can cause them to have certain outcomes. This study was based on the experiences and opinions of individuals working in the technology field. Therefore, the results can be generalized to individuals who possess the same characteristics as those of the study participants. Though, interviews with additional groups, organizations, or environments may be performed to see if the findings differ (Patton, 2002). It was useful to include detailed descriptions of the setting and participants of each study that help "readers make decisions regarding transferability" (Maxwell, 2013). The target audience can use this information in other settings with similar characteristics. Seeking a range of diverse participants can promote validity in the study and may increase the probability of having an equal distribution of characteristics. The variation strategy was applied when selecting participants to include technology professionals at different levels of employment and education, with various jobs within the field. Validity was also established through the use of multiple sources of evidence. Triangulation is the motivation for using multiple sources to reduce the chance of biases due to the use of a specific method. Additionally, it allows for a better understanding of the issues being investigated. Therefore, multiple sources, methods, and investigators were used to support the study findings. For instance, data was collected from participants through a pilot study, interviews, and my journal. A comparison of the consistency of data derived through various means at different times was performed. Patton (2002) suggested comparing the perspectives of people with different views and checking interviews against documentation and other written evidence. Using more than one interviewer may be useful for reducing potential bias that occurs when the data

collection is performed by one person. It can also allow a more direct assessment of the consistency of the collected data.

Dependability. Dependability, or qualitative reliability, refers to the degree to which the researcher's approach is consistent across various researchers and methods. According to Maxwell (2013), the reliability of qualitative research has been criticized by researchers in the education community because it does not adhere to the traditional approaches of reliability in quantitative research. Although the findings of qualitative studies are not generalized from the study sample to the entire population, they provide in-depth information and understanding of a smaller number of people and situations. In quantitative research, the instrument must be administered in a particular, standardized way that is consistent with specific procedures. The focus is on the survey responses, test items, and other measuring instruments (Patton, 2002). In this qualitative research study, the researcher was the instrument. Therefore, the reliability of qualitative methods was largely dependent on my education level, skillset, and the lack of control (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Merriam (2014) suggested considering the "dependability" or "consistency" of the study results instead of reliability. Still, recommended techniques exist for checking the accuracy and credibility of qualitative findings. Qualitative studies can be reliable if the researcher follows methods and procedures that are dependable and consistent. For instance, the various interpretations and viewpoints of participants were sought and included in the study. The reliability of this phenomenological study was established by demonstrating that the numerous viewpoints and interpretations are supported by multiple data collection and analysis methods. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) argued that data saturation is reached when no new information is

being gathered. To achieve saturation in this study, the selection of participants and interviewing continued until the reoccurrence of themes becomes apparent. The reliability of the qualitative study was improved by obtaining detailed field notes, using a high-quality recorder, and effectively transcribing the recording. I carefully documented the steps and procedures of the study to ensure reliability as well. Additionally, the documentation was reviewed for accuracy. During the coding process, I continuously compared the data and codes to discover any issues or changes in the definition of codes (Merriam, 2014). A chain of evidence includes meaningful connections between the research questions and the study findings. In this study, a chain of evidence was stated through documentation of the research process, which serves as an audit trail.

Confirmability. In reflexivity, the researcher is part of the social world he or she studies. Influencing or being influenced by the topic cannot be avoided (Maxwell, 2013). I needed to identify personal biases, prejudices, values, and opinions in order to enhance the credibility of the study. As a result, I was more open to and understanding of the phenomenon being studied, particularly when studying feelings and emotions. Furthermore, it helped to separate personal biases and document the potential influence of personal values (Janesick, 2011). A reflective journal was kept throughout the study to help minimize my personal biases and feelings. Bracketing was also used in the phenomenological study to separate descriptive data from other notes by marking the text, writing in extended margins, or bracketing specific passages. The technique was useful for discovering commonalities between the participants' behaviors and experiences as well (Patton, 2002). It was also important to avoid leading questions during the interviews that could potentially influence the participants' responses

(Maxwell, 2013). Ultimately, this can impact the validity of the inferences that can be drawn from the interviews.

Ethical Procedures

In order to prevent any ethical concerns, it was important to obtain permission from the study participants for the interviews. A consent form was presented and signed by the respondents. The consent form provided participants with information regarding the times and dates of the interviews and observations, as well as the purpose of the study, the research questions to be answered, how the research data would be used, and my contact information. Potential risks and benefits of the study and confidentiality were addressed in the form as well. The participants received informed consent forms via e-mail two weeks prior to the scheduled interviews. The forms were used to notify participants that participation was voluntary, and they were given the opportunity to opt out of the study without penalty (Patton, 2002). I did not expect any foreseen physical risks to the participants. However, the participants were informed that they were not required to complete any part of the study that made them uncomfortable.

Privacy issues are frequently subtle or misunderstood and only become a concern when they surface. Confidentiality and anonymity are additional ethical considerations in research. I was the only person to access and view the data from the study. In addition, code names were assigned to the respondents and organizations used in the study to ensure anonymity. Member checks were used to verify interpretations and conclusions as well (Maxwell, 2013). In some cases, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. In this study, the participants were informed of the potential risks of nonconfidentiality. The risks can include unexpected information in the final report or data that violates the rights of

others. Access to the organizations was granted by the appropriate parties and approval from review boards was required (Patton, 2002). In exchange for participating in the research study, the participating firms were provided with a synopsis of the data obtained, in terms of work-related stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention levels of their employees. I downloaded the data into separate files for each organization for use in the development of their retention strategies. Finally, the files were combined and saved on my personal computer, which was password protected. Data was saved to a CD and will be kept in a secured cabinet for five years in compliance with Walden's IRB policy. The CD and any notes or paper transcription copies will be shredded five years after the study. The data will also be removed from SurveyMonkey's server and my computer hard drive. The video and audio recordings will remain within the NVivo program and will be deleted after five years as well.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the research methodology, including the target population, sampling strategy, study setting, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis methods. The phenomenological approach was chosen to answer the research questions because it provides the opportunity to explain the outsourcing phenomenon as it exists in the context of the setting, and the ability to analyze and describe IT professionals' perceptions of outsourcing as it relates to job stress, job satisfaction, and employee turnover. The chosen participants consisted of full-time IT professionals, with a minimum of five years' work experience with their firms, and current or prior involvement with IT outsourcing. Prospective participants at the four firms were personally contacted and invited to participate in the study. A pilot study was used to help

further refine the study. Qualitative interviews were chosen to collect the study data because they provide an effective way to capture behaviors and opinions of IT workers and their job settings that are not available through observations. Data were analyzed using the NVivo software in order to keep data organized, discover themes and their relationships to one another, and present the findings using tables and graphs. I was directly involved in performing the interviews. Follow-up questions were asked, clarifying questions were answered, and predictions and attempts to control the setting were avoided in order to minimize the potential for biases. Furthermore, strategies for establishing the reliability of the study include obtaining comprehensive notes, using a quality recorder, and successfully transcribing the recordings, and effectively documenting the steps and procedures. Validity was established by checking for the accuracy of the data and results. The chapter concluded with explaining how ethical considerations were addressed, including accessing participants and data, protecting confidential data, and obtaining institutional permissions, IRB approvals, and informed consent.

Chapter 4 provides a more detailed explanation of the setting, demographics, and data collection and analysis procedures outlined in Chapter 3. The themes and patterns are supported by the data collected from the interviews performed. Evidence of trustworthiness and the study results are presented as well. Chapter 5 contains an interpretation of the findings in the context of the theoretical framework of the study. Limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, and implications for social change are also included.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how job-related stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention within the IT profession are influenced by outsourcing. I was interested in seeking to understand how outsourcing can change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs, reduce their work performances, and increase their daily stresses. The viewpoints of the participants were examined using open-ended interviews. A qualitative approach was guided by the person-environment fit theory. The following research questions were addressed in this qualitative study:

RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?

RQ2: How does outsourcing decrease job satisfaction among IT professionals?

RQ3: How does outsourcing change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs?

RQ4: How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals?

This chapter covers the results of the research study. The setting is described to note any personal or organizational conditions that may have influenced the study results. Relevant demographics and characteristics of the 20 chosen participants are presented. The data collection procedures are identified, including the frequency, duration, and location for each data collection instrument. Furthermore, any variations or unexpected occurrences that took place during the process are presented. The data analysis methods are discussed, including specific coding categories and emerging themes. Evidence of trustworthiness is presented, consisting of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The chapter concludes by presenting the results of the data analysis.

Pilot Study

Prior to performing the final research interviews, I conducted a pilot study with two participants. The pilot study participants included an IT manager and a desktop support specialist. Both were males with bachelor's degrees in their forties. One participant was married while the other was single. A ten-question demographic questionnaire (Appendix A) was used to select the pilot study participants from the same sites as the subjects of the actual study. The two participants worked full-time, were employed for at least five years, and possessed some degree of outsourcing experience. The participants were interviewed using the interview questions outlined in Appendix B. The same confidentiality standards and informed consent used in the final study were utilized in the pilot study as well. Each pilot study participant was assigned a code (PS1, PS2) to reflect the sequential order of his interview.

The pilot study allowed me to become familiar with the participants and improve my interview skills. The information obtained from the pilot study participants determined if the intent of each interview question was understood. The responses received for each interview question are listed below:

Interview Question 1

Tell me about your experiences with IT outsourcing. According to PS1, "The question asks me to discuss outsourcing, based on my knowledge and experience. Furthermore, it asks me to note how I have experienced outsourcing, either as an employee of the vendor or the organization that hired the outsourcing company." The response from PS2 was similar, which indicated a sufficient level of understanding of interview question 1.

Interview Question 2

What is your perception of IT outsourcing? PS2 noted, "The question refers to my opinions about the transfer of technical jobs or projects to an outside company. Have I experienced outsourcing? What do I think of it in terms of advantages and disadvantages personally, for my department, and for my organization" The response from PS1 was similar, indicating sufficient understanding. Both respondents noted mixed opinions about IT outsourcing, providing an equal number of pros and cons. Therefore, interview question 2 was left as originally written.

Interview Question 3

How does your organization conduct its IT outsourcing activities? PS2 interpreted the question as the following: "I believe the question is asking me to describe the ways in which my company uses outsourcing. For instance, does the company use an external company to handle its technical functions? And, if so, what functions are outsourced? PS1 noted a similar interpretation of interview question 3.

Interview Question 4

How do you feel about your company's position or activity in the area of IT outsourcing? PS1 stated, "The question is asking how I feel about my company using external companies to handle its IT projects, based on my experience with outsourcing. I do think my response to the decision was better since I had an idea of what to expect. Employees with no outsourcing experience had a more difficult time with the change." PS2 responded in a similar manner to PS1.

Interview Question 5

What is your perception of how well your company communicated the plan for the IT outsourcing activities that occurred? PS1 interpreted the question as, "How well did my organization's management team communicate the outsourcing of my group's work, how it would be handled, and how it might impact our jobs. I would personally want my company to discuss these changes face-to-face. Any method other than this would be considered poor handling of the plan to outsource." The response from PS2 was similar for interview question 5.

Interview Question 6

What do you believe your role is in the outsourcing activities performed by your company? According to PS1, "This particular question is presented to find out if I knew how I would contribute to outsourcing. And, if so, what part did I play in ensuring that the changes occurred successfully." PS2 noted a similar response, but added, "In my case, the roles were clearly defined in advance, so this was an easy question for me to answer."

Interview Question 7

What kinds of changes occurred within your organization as a result of IT outsourcing? PS1 stated, "I assume the question is asking about the good and bad consequences of outsourcing. For instance, while transferring technical projects to an outside company freed up some time for the IT department to work on other tasks, some employees had their work hours reduced because they were not needed as much." Similar to PS1, PS2 noted, "I think the question refers to the modifications that outsourcing

caused to our daily work responsibilities." The responses were similar enough that the interview question did not need to be changed.

Interview Question 8

How do you believe IT outsourcing impacted your stress level? According to PS2, "Interview question 8 is asking how the changes that outsourcing brought to the company have affected my daily stress, personally and professionally. Did it affect my ability to focus and handle day-to-day responsibilities?" PS1 provided a similar interpretation. Furthermore, both participants agreed that IT outsourcing negatively impacted their stress levels in the workplace.

Interview Question 9

Describe what, if anything, about IT outsourcing damaged your opinion of your job. PS1 said, "I assume the question is asking if I no longer enjoy my job after having some of our IT work transferred outside of the company. Does my job still interest me? Do I feel that my job is threatened, therefore affecting my desire to remain in the position?" PS2 responded similarly. Both respondents still liked their jobs despite their experiences with IT outsourcing.

Interview Question 10

How satisfied were you with your job prior to IT outsourcing? How did that change after IT outsourcing? PS2 stated, "Interview question 10 asks if I felt fulfilled from my job and my company before and after our IT work was transferred out. Were there any changes to this initial feeling once the changes were made?" PS1 provided the same interpretation. Both participants were happy with their jobs in the IT field because it is what they chose to do for a living. Though, they differed in the level of job satisfaction after the IT outsourcing activities took place. Due to the similarities in responses, the interview question remained as originally written.

Interview Question 11

What motivated you to stay with the company after learning about the plan to outsource? What was your motivation to seek another position after learning about the plan to outsource? According to PS2, "I think the questions are asking if I still would like to remain with the company after realizing the strategy of outsourcing. What about the job interests me enough to keep me there? Or, what about the outsourcing strategy has caused me to consider seeing another position with another company?" Question 11 remained as originally written because the interpretation provided by PS1 was similar.

Interview Question 12

What do you think your company could do to improve employee commitment levels during IT outsourcing? PS2 stated, "I think the question is referring to ways in which the company could have made us feel more secure about our jobs. Having complete details about the plan early on and making us feel like we were involved in the decision could have made a world of difference in how we responded to the change. Otherwise, employees tend to feel like things are being done behind our backs." PS1's response was similar. He also noted, "because clear communication of the plan was not provided, we felt like our jobs weren't valued."

I concluded that the participants answered the research questions and carried out the purpose of this study. Yin (2013) stated that conducting a pilot study allows the researcher to test the information obtained from the participants to see if it is based on the research questions and fulfills the purpose of the study. The answers provided by the participants demonstrated a sufficient level of understanding and offered information regarding their experiences with IT outsourcing. The participants also gave examples to

exhibit the role IT outsourcing plays in the stress of IT professionals. According to PS1, "I am very stressed, mainly because of the number of jobs that have been lost each time outsourcing occurs within our organization." Although both participants experienced some level of stress, they both decided to remain with their organizations. Job satisfaction differed between the two participants. PS1 stated, "I am still satisfied with my job." On the other hand, PS2 noted, "I am less satisfied with my position due to the additional tasks that I am now responsible for." Responses to the pilot study were recorded, transcribed, and evaluated for accuracy. Based on the results of the pilot study, I did not need to make any revisions to the interview questions prior to the actual interviews. The actual study took place once the pilot study was completed and the questions were assessed for validity and reliability.

Research Setting

I conducted this study using demographic surveys and personal interviews. Once I received Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, a total of 25 study participants were selected from four firms using an online questionnaire, consisting of individuals employed in the IT field for five years or more. Once replies were received, requests for interviews and consent forms were e-mailed to potential interviewees. I received consent from 22 participants to participate in the interviews. Copies of the interview protocol were e-mailed to the participants two weeks prior to the scheduled interviews. During this initial interaction, my contact information was provided, interviewees' willingness to participate was confirmed, and the interview methods and times were determined. I performed open-ended interviews by phone, video, and face-to-face. The participants were reminded of the previously e-mailed information

and informed about the interview and publishing procedures. The face-to-face interviews were recorded using an individual recording device. The video and phone interviews were conducted via Skype and recorded using the MP3 Skype Recorder. Each study participant was asked the same set of questions in the same order. I kept a research journal to take notes regarding the participants' responses and reactions during the interviews. At the end of each interview, the participant was asked for additional questions or comments, thanked for his or her participation, and informed about the next steps in the process. The notes and transcribed data were e-mailed to each participant for review in order to capture the participants' intended meaning of each interview response. I maintained repeated contact with the participants via e-mail to lessen the likelihood of premature theories and provide me with a better understanding of the processes by which the participants' views were expressed.

Demographics

The study included 20 total participants. Each respondent was identified based on the demographic information obtained from the ten-question demographic questionnaire (Appendix A) in terms of his or her age, sex, marital status, educational level, job title, number of years with the organization, and exposure to outsourcing. The study included 17 males (85%) and three females (15%).

The ages of the study participants were captured through the age ranges: 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, and 51-60. Four (20%) respondents were in the 20-30 age range, eight (40%) respondents were in the 31-40 age range, six (30%) respondents were in the 41-50 age range, and two (10%) respondents were in the 51-60 age range (see Figure 1).

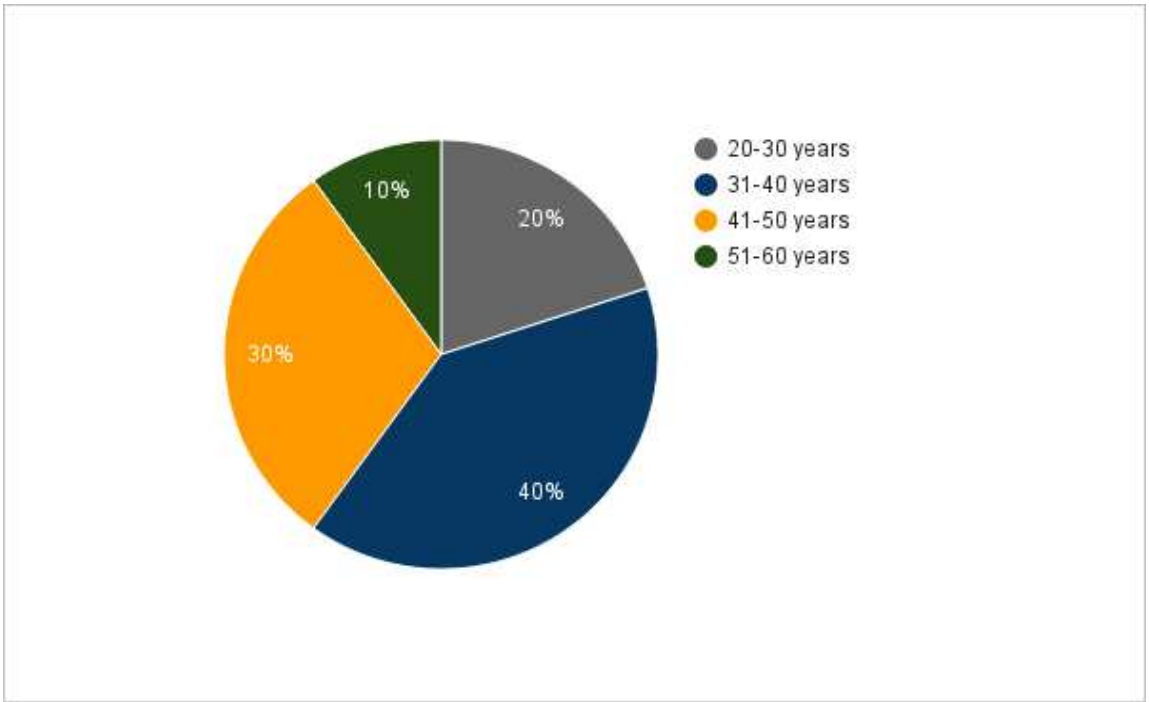

Figure 1. Age ranges of study participants.

The level of education of the study participants ranged from high school to Doctorate. One (5.56%) participant possessed a high school education, eight (33.33%) participants had an Associate's degree, three (16.67%) participants had a Bachelor's degree, seven (38.89%) participants possessed a Master's degree, and one (5.56%) participant had a Doctorate degree (see Figure 2).

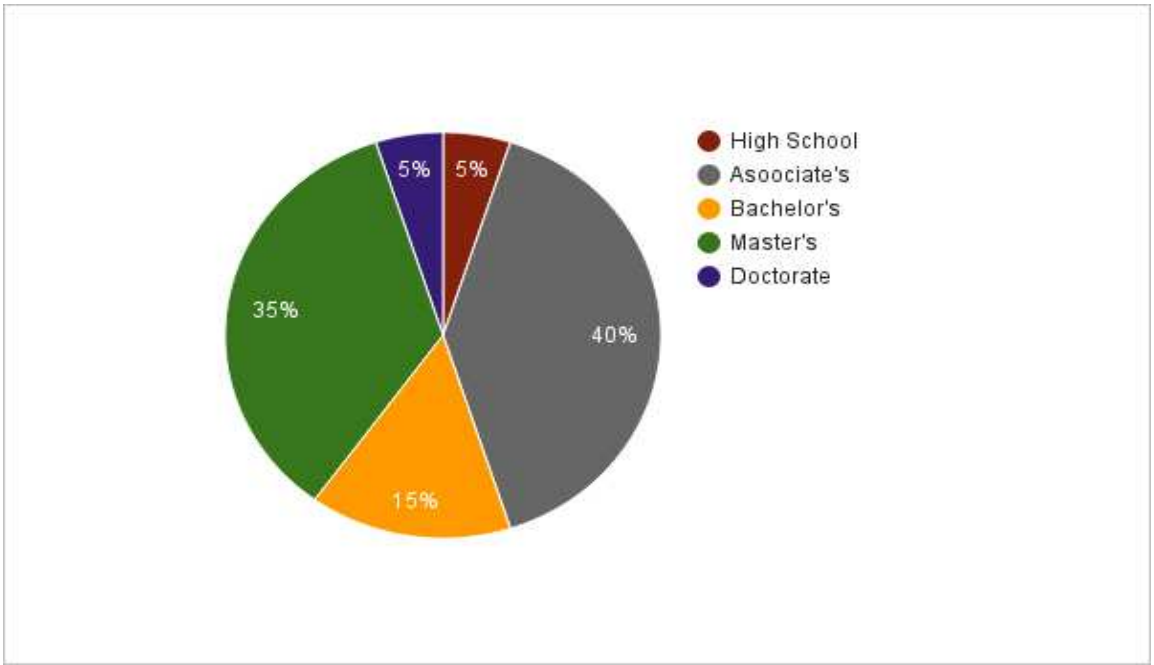

Figure 2. Level of education of study participants.

The categories for marital status included single, married, separated, and divorced. Out of the 20 respondents, six (33.33%) were single, eight (38.89%) were married, one (5.56%) was separated, and five (22.22%) were divorced (see Figure 3).

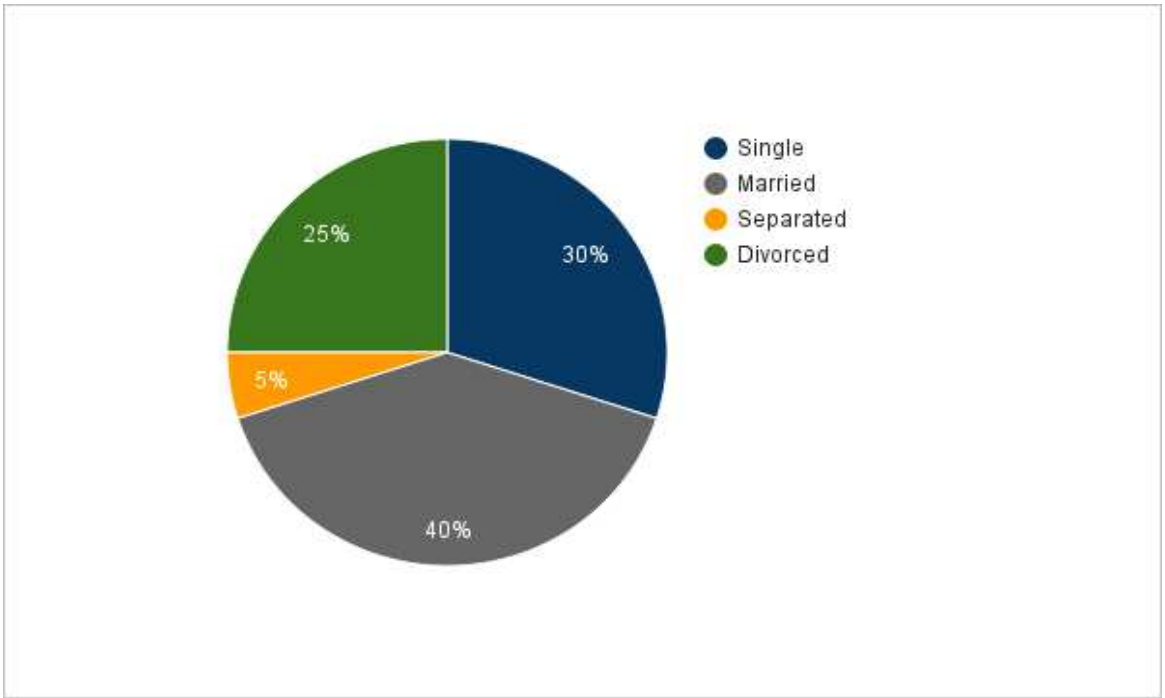

Figure 3. Marital status of study participants.

The following table (Table 2) identifies the participants in terms of their job titles, number of years of experience, and whether or not they have participated in their organizations' outsourcing activities. The study participants consisted of: Security, Design Distribution, and Cloud Engineers, IT Professors, a Network Technician and Administrator, a Security Analyst, an IT Specialist, a Tech Support Technician, a Tech Coordinator, Application and Technology Support Specialists, a Web Designer, a Systems Technician, a Senior Systems Analyst, an IT Director, and an IT Manager. The number of years of work experience ranged from five to 20 years. In compliance with honoring the confidentiality of study participants, each respondent is identified as Interview Participant/IP 1, 2, 3 and so on.

Table 2. *Demographic Data of Study Participants*

Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Education	Job Title	Years of Experience	Participated in Outsourcing
IP 1	42	Male	Married	Master's	Security Engineer	8	Yes
IP 2	39	Male	Single	Master's	Professor	5	Yes
IP 3	36	Male	Single	Associate's	Cloud Engineer	6	Yes
IP 4	46	Male	Single	Bachelor's	Network Administrator	13	Yes
IP 5	28	Male	Married	Master's	Security Analyst	9	Yes
IP 6	28	Male	Divorced	Associate's	Professor	15.5	Yes
IP 7	39	Male	Single	Associate's	IT Specialist	11	Yes
IP 8	45	Male	Divorced	Associate's	Tech Support Technician	5	Yes
IP 9	38	Female	Divorced	Associate's	Tech Coordinator	7	Yes
IP 10	50	Male	Married	Bachelor's	Design Distribution Engineer	20	Yes
IP 11	39	Male	Married	Doctorate	IT Director	5	Yes
IP 12	43	Male	Separated	Master's	Professor	5	Yes
IP 13	23	Male	Single	High School	Systems Technician	5	Yes
IP 14	35	Female	Divorced	Master's	Network Technician	15	Yes
IP 15	52	Male	Married	Associate's	Application Support Specialist	20	Yes
IP 16	50	Male	Married	Associate's	Senior Systems Analyst	6	Yes

(table continues)

Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Education	Job Title	Years of Experience	Participated in Outsourcing
IP 17	39	Male	Married	Associate's	Technology Support Specialist III	9	Yes
IP 18	51	Male	Divorced	Master's	Associate IT Instructor	10	Yes
IP 19	27	Female	Single	Bachelor's	Web Designer	5	Yes
IP 20	40	Male	Married	Master's	IT Manager	6	Yes

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected over a six-week period using a demographic survey, a pilot study, interviews, and my research journal. I used SurveyMonkey to automatically produce profiles for each respondent. The demographic survey questions are provided in Appendix A. Based on the information obtained from the SurveyMonkey questionnaire, 25 individuals were invited to participate in the interviews. Upon receiving their responses, consent forms were sent via e-mail. The interview protocol was e-mailed to the 22 individuals who consented to participate. The participants were informed that the interview protocol included 12 open-ended questions, which would be used to allow them to share their responses based upon the phenomenon at study. The instrument for the interview for this study is found in Appendix B. Twenty of the 22 potential participants were interviewed via phone, video, and face-to-face. Two of the potential participants decided that they did not feel comfortable participating in the interviews. As a result, the study had 20 participants as the final sample. I recorded the face-to-face interviews with an individual recording device. I performed the video and phone interviews via Skype and recorded them using the MP3 Skype Recorder. My research

journal was used to take notes during the interviews. The average time for each interview was 17 minutes. The longest interview lasted 25 minutes, while the shortest interview lasted only 10 minutes.

Member checking was performed after the interviews were transcribed to ensure the accuracy of the participants' interview responses. The interview responses were recorded in approximately 10.5 hours and transcribed for a total of 20 hours. In order to provide anonymity when reviewing participant responses, I assigned a number alias (IP 1, IP 2, and so on) to all potential study participants. I am the only person with access to the identifiable data from the study. The data was coded and analyzed based on patterns, themes, and categories in the NVivo software. The files were merged and securely stored on my computer. The data was saved to a CD, which is being kept in a secured cabinet. In compliance with Walden's IRB policy, it will remain there for five years following the data collection. The CD and any notes or paper transcription copies will be shredded five years after the study. The data will also be removed from SurveyMonkey's server and my computer hard drive. The video and audio recordings will remain within the NVivo program and will be deleted after five years as well.

Data Analysis

Each of the audio and video recordings was transcribed immediately following the interview. The data were transcribed as text in Microsoft Office Word 2013. I read the transcripts while listening to the recordings to ensure that the data were captured accurately. The transcripts were sent via e-mail to the participants for member checking. Data analysis was performed once member checking was complete, and the digital files were entered into NVivo 11. I merged each individual participant interview file into one

interview file for each interview question. I used a descriptive technique for creating nodes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I identified 18 total coding categories. The analysis was performed through a number of continuous and thorough reviews of the interview data to identify key words and phrases. I did not identify the exact words used by participants when analyzing the data. Instead, I used words that I felt best described the data. The descriptions were added to nodes using the drag and drop option. Then, I was able to select each node to see which text was associated with it. Furthermore, I could easily see the relationships between nodes, as well as the sources and references for each node (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Through comparing the data, the most significant themes across the categories were satisfaction, no stress, stressful, no communication, limit outsourcing, job loss, good benefits, and time in service.

A number of techniques were used to enhance the quality of the study. These techniques included bias-management, triangulation, and member checking. The use of the techniques collectively supported the overall quality of the study.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Researchers are obligated to show that their study findings are valid and reliable. Reliability refers to the degree to which a measure produces the same result repeatedly. It is based on the accuracy of the procedure. On the other hand, validity focuses on what the researcher is attempting to measure (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Confirmability is the idea that reality exists outside of investigation or observation (Janesick, 2011). Potential credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability threats need to be identified and minimized in research studies in order to gain truthful knowledge to assist with societal issues.

Credibility

Credibility was achieved through member checking. Once the recorded interviews were transcribed and provided to the participants for review, the member checking technique was used to enhance the validity of data. I verified the participants' responses to ensure that they were interpreted correctly. I wanted to capture the participants' intended meaning instead of the meaning interpreted through my view. The notes, transcribed data, and study results were sent to participants for member checking. According to Maxwell (2013), the opinions of the participants should be requested in order to determine the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations and findings. I solicited feedback about my data and conclusions from the study participants. Member checks allowed me to identify misinterpretations of participants' perspectives and responses. Furthermore, I wanted to engage with participants to build trust, learn the culture, and identify invalid information. I was consistently involved with participants to determine which information was most relevant to the study.

Transferability

A range of diverse participants were chosen to promote validity in the study to increase the likelihood of having an equal distribution of characteristics. The study participants included technology professionals at different levels of employment and education, with various jobs within the field (Patton, 2002). Validity was also established through the use of multiple sources of evidence. Triangulation was accomplished by using a variety of data collection methods to reduce the chance of biases due to the use of a specific method. I collected data from participants via a pilot study, interviews, and my journal. Consent forms were used to collect basic demographic information from

potential participants. Collecting data from a diverse group of individuals and settings allowed a better assessment of the generalizability of the explanations and minimized the risk of chance associations (Maxwell, 2013). Finally, my research journal was used to eliminate my personal biases, prejudices, values, and opinions.

Dependability

In this qualitative research study, the researcher was the instrument. Therefore, the reliability of qualitative methods was largely dependent on my education level and skillset (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Still, I sought to find the interpretations and viewpoints of the study participants. To achieve saturation in this study, the selection of participants and interviewing continued until the reoccurrence of themes became apparent. The reliability of the study was improved by obtaining detailed field notes, using a high-quality recorder, and effectively transcribing the recording. Additionally, I reviewed the documentation for accuracy. During the coding process, data were compared using codes and memos. I cross checked and queried codes for consistency using NVivo11 (Merriam, 2014). In this study, a chain of evidence was stated through documentation of the research process, which serves as an audit trail.

Confirmability

I was able to identify personal biases, prejudices, and opinions in order to enhance the credibility of the study. As a result, I was more open to and understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Janesick, 2011). A journal was used throughout the study to help minimize my personal biases and feelings. Bracketing was used in the study to separate descriptive data from other notes by marking the text, writing in the margins, or bracketing specific passages. The technique enabled me to discover commonalities

between the participants' behaviors and experiences. Leading questions during interviews that could potentially influence the participants' responses were avoided (Maxwell, 2013). Participants were identified by a number alias, such as Interview Participant 1 (IP 1). The analysis and interpretation of data were performed without acknowledging the personal identities of the study participants.

Results

The themes were based on the patterns and relationships found in the transcribed data and appeared in at least eight out of the 20 participants' responses. Using the NVivo software, eight of the significant themes were identified based on the research questions. Table 3 summarizes the emergent themes related to each research question. The research questions were aligned with the coded themes and the responses of the participants' whom were identified as IP 1, IP 2, IP 3…IP 20.

Table 3. *Emerging Themes Forming the Research Questions*

Theme	Research Question
Limit Outsourcing	RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?
Good Benefits	RQ4: How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals?
Job Loss	RQ3: How does outsourcing change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs?
No Communication	RQ3: How does outsourcing change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs?
No Stress	RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?
Satisfaction	RQ2: How does outsourcing decrease job satisfaction among IT professionals?
Stressful	RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?
Time In service	RQ4: How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals?

Research Question 1

How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals? The most significant responses to Research Question 1 are provided below along with the designated themes. The responses and themes are a result of the in-depth interviews based on the participants' lived experiences. Questions four, eight, and 12 from the interview protocol (Appendix B) were answered in response to this research question. Three significant themes emerged that uncovered issues relating to the stress of IT professionals as a result of IT outsourcing.

Limit outsourcing. The study participants were asked to provide ways that organizations can help improve employee commitment during IT outsourcing. Fifty-five percent of the participants argued that limiting outsourcing can help minimize the overall stress of employees. The respondents reported that limiting or eliminating outsourcing can help them feel appreciated, less stressed, and satisfied with their jobs. The responses to interview question four were the following:

> IP2: "To improve employee commitment my organization can limit outsourcing, communicate more, and accept employee feedback."
>
> IP3: "I understand the concept in some situations where it may be ideal for some companies, but I also understand that the company whose IT infrastructure is being outsourced ends up losing a lot of control over what's happening on that network. For this reason, it is best to only use outsourcing when it is absolutely necessary."
>
> IP4: "I believe that the organization should scale back some of its outsourcing and only outsource level 1 and 2 support functions. I also think that more

supervisory/management responsibilities should be given to the employees so that he/she would have more of an ability to suggest improvement and to influence change."

IP5: Only simple jobs should be outsourced. The technically challenging work should stay with employees.

IP9: "Organizations are better off when they let their people perform the work."

IP11: "Other than not outsource, not much. They did a lot to help out a lot. They assisted a lot. The company was really good about what they did with the employees and assisted with the changes."

IP14: "If possible, I would limit the amount of outsourcing activities. When outsourcing occurs, employees will always be afraid that job losses will happen at some point."

IP15: "I think the IT projects should be kept in-house. Our team is capable of handling them."

IP18: "Companies can increase commitment levels by keeping jobs in-house."

IP19: "Companies like mine can improve commitment levels by reducing the amount of outsourcing."

IP20: "Avoid outsourcing if possible because it makes workers nervous. People become unsure if they will be able to keep their jobs."

No stress. Still, roughly 45% of the respondents reported that the IT outsourcing activities that occurred within their organizations did not increase their stress levels. The participants reported a match between their needs and environmental rewards, such as pay, benefits, and training that positively impacted their stress levels. The following were

in response to the interview question, how do you believe IT outsourcing impacted your stress level?

IP5: “No impact.”

IP7: “IT outsourcing has not affected my stress level.”

IP9: “Not so much. Earlier conference calls for my overseas outsourcing partners and no actual face time with any of them but no more stress than usual.”

IP10: “I’m not one to get heavily stressed; my stress level is always on an even keel. I think most likely it improved it.”

IP12: “It [stress] was minor. Mostly, I had to deal with the personal skills and personalities of the outsourced workers. I dealt with people of various backgrounds.”

IP13: “It [IT outsourcing] has not impacted my stress level.”

IP16: “None, the company brought in handles the issues surrounding the outsourced project.”

IP17: “Unchanged from my perspective.”

IP19: “Outsourcing did not change my level of stress.”

Stressful. The results of the interview responses revealed a significant number of participants affirming the role IT outsourcing plays in job stress. Fifty-five percent of the respondents experienced high levels of stress immediately prior to and during IT outsourcing. The respondents reported that their stress increased because the changes that outsourcing presented on the job differed from their expectations. The participants’ responses to interview question 12 are listed below:

IP1: “When you remove all administrative control from the local level, problems take longer to resolve. Since we have plenty of work to do and these problems often hinder or impede the process of getting work done, stress levels rise.”

IP2: “I think it makes it more stressful taking away familiar relationships.”

IP3: Oh it went through the roof, especially on big jobs, like having to refresh all of the hardware.

IP4: “IT outsourcing has greatly impacted my stress level in a negative way.”

IP6: “Initially it did but once we established the areas our IT outsourcing arm plays a role, the stress level has improved.”

IP11: “The stress has gone down, but at the time of all of these changes I think I got a few extra gray hairs. Like I said, I think it made us all a bit nervous at the time. Having to train them and everything else, it was a bit stressful, yes.”

IP14: “Personally, I was a bit uneasy at first. However, now my stress level is down because I don’t have to worry about the support aspect of my job at this time.”

IP15: “I am somewhat stressed. In addition to performing my regular duties, I have been tasked with assisting the third party vendors for these projects.”

IP18: “High due to not knowing if my position will be outsourced.”

IP20: “I am stressed every time a job is outsourced because I am uncertain if I will be one of the ones to lose my job. Also, I am afraid that we will experience more resignations. That results in more work for remaining employees.”

Research Question 2

How does outsourcing decrease job satisfaction among IT professionals? Question ten from the interview protocol (Appendix B) was answered in response to Research Question 2. Only one significant theme emerged, demonstrating a high level of job satisfaction among the study participants despite their negative perceptions of IT outsourcing. The theme is summarized below:

Satisfied. Seventy percent of the respondents still felt satisfied with their jobs after the IT outsourcing activities took place within their organizations. Some of the participants reported that outsourcing had no bearing on their perceptions because they truly enjoy their jobs. For the others, outsourcing was already in place, making it commonplace to those participants. The participants' responses are listed below:

IP 1: Prior to the arrival of the NMCI network, we had a great network administration team that was directly responsible for the daily operations of our command network. We had resources, and we had less red tape to go through to get things done. Decisions about equipment, infrastructure devices and software were made at the local level and end users as well as managerial personnel had input into the decision making process. I felt that my contributions and efforts made our network run better.

IP4: "I was very satisfied with my job prior to outsourcing. Though, outsourcing has forced me to have to deal with a lot of politics and red tape when trying to get simple resolutions to issues that occur within the organization."

IP5: "Outsourcing was already in place when I started with the company, so my level of job satisfaction was not affected by it."

IP6: “I continue to be satisfied with my job, and that has not changed as a result of outsourcing.’

IP 7: “IT outsourcing was already in place prior to me working at the company. Additional staff was brought in since then, and it has not changed my opinion.”

IP8: “Very satisfied; No change.”

IP9: “No difference.”

IP10: “Satisfied with my job. That did not change.”

IP11: “I still love my job. I did before. I am kind of glad I don’t have to do on-call anymore. But like I said it just made my job security feeling go down a bit. I still love what I do.”

IP13: “IT outsourcing has never impacted my job satisfaction.”

IP15: “I was satisfied with my job. I would be even more satisfied if the work is kept in-house.”

IP16: “Satisfied; has not changed job satisfaction.”

IP17: “Very satisfied; No change.”

IP20: “I will always enjoy the work I do. That won’t change.”

Research Question 3

How does outsourcing change IT professionals’ opinions of their jobs? Question 9 of the interview protocol (Appendix B) was answered in response to Research Question 3. Two significant themes were discovered that identify job loss and lack of communication as challenges the participants saw that can contribute to having negative opinions about their jobs. The issues are provided as responses based on the participants’ lived experiences as IT professionals.

Job loss. Fifty-five percent of the participants were concerned with the number of jobs lost during IT outsourcing in terms of early retirements and layoffs. Outsourcing poses a possible job loss threat, which is a major concern for the IT professionals studied. According to Interview Participant 12, "My previous company used outsourcing to get large-scale tasks done quickly. For instance, we used outsourcing to perform an overhaul of computers and software upgrades. It is good for reduction of time due to lack of available IT employees. After projects, we let them go. For many, this is their livelihood." The remaining participant responses are detailed below:

> IP1: "Having worked with an outsourced IT system for the last 12 years, I can tell you that I have a very negative perception of outsourcing as a whole. I have seen jobs lost, costs rise, input and control at the local level removed, and constant abuse of the terms of the contract."
>
> IP2: "The workforce reduction of staff is a major issue."
>
> IP4: "I think that more responsibilities should be given to the employees to prevent the loss of jobs."
>
> IP6: "There was a significant reduction in the US-based workforce."
>
> IP11: "There was some shifting of personnel to different areas, some layoffs and retirements, and a bunch of nervous people."
>
> IP13: "No major changes were a result of IT outsourcing. Two large scale projects were terminated recently, and the results of that left a lot of consultants not doing project work."

IP14: “IT outsourcing can be beneficial to organizations trying to focus on their core business and save money. It can be detrimental for employees who lose their jobs as a result.”

IP15: “I was laid off as a result of outsourcing jobs to India.”

IP19: “Many people have lost their jobs as a result of outsourcing.”

IP20: “Some people have lost their jobs. Others were uneasy and afraid of losing their jobs so they resigned. On the other hand, a lot of work was completed in short periods of time.”

No communication. The lack of communication exhibited by their organizations negatively impacted 55% of the participants’ opinions of their employers and their roles in the IT outsourcing process. According to Interview Participant 19, “In general, in my experience there is a lack of communication in IT outsourcing as some departments outsourced without consulting other business units. In turn, there were overlaps and misunderstandings among those involved.” The remaining participants’ responses are provided below:

IP1: “My perception is that the company, as a whole, did not have a handle on their IT infrastructure and that led them to look for an “off the shelf” outsourcing solution that would remove the responsibility for shortcomings in their operational systems from the government side of the house. The plan to do so was not communicated with employees.”

IP2: “Poorly; there was no communication until after the decision to outsource was made.”

IP3: “When the original contract ran out, they were unprepared to renew a new contract, which is interesting because everyone knew it was coming. I felt they were unprepared, and had to explain more of why then should have been necessary.”

IP4: “The contract deliverables have not been met and the organization has changed its objectives so frequently there is no way to understand as to why the organization chose to outsource critical functions.”

IP5: “There was not really any communication about outsourcing; it was just accepted and expected.”

IP7: “While my company does not always communicate a “plan” to outsource certain IT roles, it is evident that their position is to turn to outsourcing if a qualified candidate does not exist internally and cannot be recruited through the existing HR department.”

IP8: “Hiccups occur. Sometimes it’s the transition from internal to external and how it is communicated. International outsourcing has a negative connotation for some.”

IP12: “Not good. It was done randomly. Tasks were assigned randomly at the last minute.”

IP16: “The company typically does not communicate its outsourcing activities; it is discovered once the projects start.”

IP18: “Very poorly; no communication.”

Research Question 4

How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals? Question eleven from the interview protocol (Appendix B) was answered in response to this research question. Two themes emerged that demonstrate the reasons IT professionals are motivated to stay with their companies in spite of IT outsourcing.

Good benefits. Eight (40%) of the 20 interview participants chose to remain with their organizations due to the benefits provided. The participants reported that the more time they had been with their companies, the better the incentives and benefits. Interview Participant 13 noted, "The plan to outsource does not impact my plans to stay or leave with the company. My decision to stay or leave the company is driven on career growth and stagnation." Based on the study participants' responses, the IT professionals were more concerned with the medical and retirement benefits and future opportunities that their organizations offer. As a result, they would rather work through any challenges that IT outsourcing presents.

> IP1: "I am a government worker. I have a very good retirement plan that is based on the number of years of service that I put in. I also live very close to the base where I work, and I currently have a job in the private sector."
>
> IP4: "My job is close to home, and the pay is decent."
>
> IP5: "Outsourcing was already in place when I started with the company, so my view of my job was not affected by it. The company provides many benefits that I would like to continue to take advantage of."
>
> IP8: "My reasons for staying were the opportunity to grow in other areas and concentrate on critical internal resource allocations."

IP10: “Outsourcing pretty much helped with the alternatives. The revenue and more clients were better for me because they provided more work and better pay for me.”

IP12: “I have good healthcare benefits and retirement with my current organization.”

IP17: “I like the opportunities for advancement that my company provides.”

Time in service. Eight (40%) of the 20 interview participants chose to remain with their organizations because of the number of years they have been in their positions. The employees felt trapped in their jobs because the exit costs were too great or no other attractive work choices were available. The tenured workers chose to avoid the potential for loss of income and the risks that accompany finding new employment. Interview Participant 19 summarized it as the following, “Despite my negative perception of outsourcing, I had to do what is best for my family. I am the breadwinner, having almost 20 years with the company, so I decided to remain in my position.”

IP1: “I am a government worker. I have a very good retirement plan that is based on the number of years of service that I put in.”

IP3: “I had many years in working with the government at that time. I did not want to leave. Ultimately I’m there to help train the warfighters.”

IP4: “I have worked for the company for a good period of time. It would not make sense to change jobs at this point.”

IP11: “It is still a great company to work for. Like I said, I still enjoy my job. Been here for 15 years and really didn’t want to start over.”

IP12: “I have been with my company for many years. I would prefer not to compete with younger applicants for a new position, with a new company.”

IP14: “I have many years with the organization. I did not want to have to start over. For the most part, it is a great place to work.”

IP20: “I like my job, and I have been there for some time.”

Summary

The demographic survey provided descriptions of the 20 participants, followed by the interview process used for data collection. The procedures used to analyze the collected data, included audio and video recording, transcription, and participant approval of transcribed data. Using NVivo software, significant coded themes within the research questions that guided this research study were revealed from the data collected about the role outsourcing plays in the job dissatisfaction, job stress, and turnover intention of the 20 IS professionals studied. Overall, the perceptions of IT outsourcing were similar among IS professionals. Responses from the interviews and their respective summaries provided the background for the conclusion of the study with recommendations for future study based on the researcher’s experience and possible implications for social change. Once the data were reviewed, a basic description was developed and categories were based on collective participant responses.

Chapter 4 provided a more detailed explanation of the setting, demographics, and data collection and analysis procedures. The procedures used to collect and analyze the data were presented, including audio and video recording, note-taking, transcription, member checking, and the NVivo11 software. Evidence of trustworthiness and the study results were described as well. Major themes and sub themes were presented and grouped

together based on significance, and the chapter concluded with the study results. Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, and an interpretation of the findings in the context of the theoretical framework. Limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, and implications for social change are also included.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This phenomenological study explored how job-related stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention within the IT profession are influenced by outsourcing. My goal was to understand how outsourcing can change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs, reduce their work performance, and increase their daily stress. A phenomenological approach was chosen for this study because it provides an understanding of the phenomenon through interpretive meanings of the lived experiences of the study participants. The following four research questions guided this qualitative study:

RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?

RQ2: How does outsourcing decrease job satisfaction among IT professionals?

RQ3: How does outsourcing change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs?

RQ4: How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals?

This chapter concludes the research with an interpretation of the findings, limitations to trustworthiness that arose during the study, recommendations for further research, and the potential impact for positive social change. A discussion is provided, explaining the ideas and considerations that resulted from the review of the research data, as well as future benefits this study may provide for organizations during outsourcing activities. A discussion of major themes and sub themes further explores the current and future challenges in job satisfaction, job stress, and turnover intention of IT professionals as they relate to IT outsourcing.

Interpretation of the Findings

The goal of this study was to examine the perceptions of IT professionals on IT outsourcing. My interpretations are included in this section. Four research questions guided this study. The data results described in Chapter 4 regarding each research question were interpreted to derive meaning as they relate to the study purpose, literature, and theoretical framework.

Research Question 1

RQ1: How does outsourcing increase the stress of IT professionals?

The stress levels varied among the participants. The interview data indicated that the majority of the participants experienced some degree of stress during outsourcing activities. In many instances the participant experienced stress due to the fear of job loss or reduction of work responsibilities. For others, the potential impact of major organizational changes caused a great deal of stress. The participants reported an increase in working hours, as well as having to take on additional responsibilities as a result of workers being displaced. Overworking placed high demands on the workers, resulting in stress. Another common stressor among the participants was the feeling that the changes were not handled properly.

Overall, I concluded that the participants experienced significant stress during outsourcing activities. The findings of the first research question are supported by the literature presented in Chapter 2 when it comes to IT outsourcing playing a role in work-related stress (DeTienne et al., 2012). Some participants experienced higher levels of stress on a more regular basis than others. I interpreted these variations as being based on the perceptions, expectations, and desires of each participant. As Khosrowpour et al.

(2011) stated, the working environments were more stressful because the workers' views and expectations differed from the actual outcomes. Many of the study participants expressed their desire to keep the IT functions in-house in order to avoid the stress of potential job loss, increased workloads, and loss of responsibility.

The participant responses supported the view of the person-environment fit theory, in which the misfit between a worker and his or her organization is a significant cause of stress (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). Person-environment fit supports the connection between the employee and work environment as a source of work-related stress. When employees experience stress, they are unable to successfully perform their jobs. Research Question 1 focused on examining whether or not IT outsourcing plays a role in work-related stress. The interview data suggests that IT professionals viewed outsourcing as a stressor in the work environment. This information became evident through my analysis of the interview questions. I found that the workers' perceived stress changed as a result of outsourcing. This information is consistent with the literature in which Rehfuss et al. (2012) indicated that a person's compatibility with the work environment can influence work-related stress.

Research Question 2

RQ2: How does outsourcing decrease job satisfaction among IT professionals?

To answer Research Question 2, I examined the influence of IT outsourcing on the job satisfaction of IT professionals. I had a preconceived idea that IT outsourcing played a negative role in the job satisfaction of the participants. Contrary to this thought, the majority of the participants were still satisfied in their positions after the IT outsourcing activities took place. It became evident that the participants were more

concerned with the incentives and benefits provided by their employers, as well as their time in service with the companies.

I reflected on these findings as being a possible phenomenon of professionals in other settings with similar situations. The fact that IT outsourcing can have negative outcomes does not always mean that IT workers will no longer be satisfied in their positions during and after outsourcing activities. The data indicated that most of the participants remained satisfied with their jobs because IT is an industry in which they enjoy working. This supports the theory of Ahmed et al. (2011) that employees are more satisfied in positions in which the expected outcomes of the environments match their wants or needs. The participants experienced better satisfaction when presented with opportunities for advancement and promotion. Additional considerations such as pay, benefits, and status helped reduce job dissatisfaction as well. This supports Warr and Inceoglu's (2012) claims that job satisfaction is based on employees' opinions of their work environments. Job satisfaction helped shape the participants' interpretations of the outsourcing activities that took place within their work environments.

Research Question 2 focused on the influence IT outsourcing has on the job satisfaction of IT professionals. The participant responses supported the theoretical framework for this study that the better the fit between an individual and the work environment, the greater the job satisfaction for the employee (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). The interview data indicated that the participants were more satisfied when there was a greater similarity of employee traits and the work environment. The participants' abilities and values fit the available resources, values, and physical conditions of their environments. I found that the participants responded favorably when the environmental

benefits matched those that were desired. This supports the literature that personal preference and favorable working conditions lead to greater job satisfaction (Yang et al., 2008). In the context of job satisfaction, the person-environment theory can provide leaders with a clear view of employees' perceptions of their work environments.

Research Question 3

RQ3: How does outsourcing change IT professionals' opinions of their jobs?

The purpose of Research Question 3 was to understand the views participants have about outsourcing in the IT profession. The study participants were asked to describe how IT outsourcing damaged their opinions of their jobs. Contrary to my expectations, most participants still had favorable opinions about their jobs following IT outsourcing activities. It was apparent that the participants had positive views about their chosen career fields, including the responsibilities, capabilities, and specialized technical skills and knowledge that go along with being an IT professional. In addition to the incentives and benefits provided by their employers, the participants were driven by the ability to be challenged, learn new skills, and work independently.

The interview responses indicated that the participants were pleased with the ability to have additional time to focus on critical tasks, discover the latest tools, and acquire new responsibilities. This is similar to the employees in Chaudhuri and Bartlett's (2014) study, in which the participants thought favorably of the opportunities to obtain new skills, learn about new technologies, and advance within their companies. The study participants still felt stimulated and fulfilled working in their environments despite the IT outsourcing activities that took place. According to Hall et al. (2012), IT workers enjoy working in positions that require them to handle activities that require continuous

updating of skills, meeting strict deadlines, and exhibiting productivity, while maintaining job success.

Although outsourcing did not change the participants' opinions of their jobs, the interview data supported the theoretical framework for this study. The person-environment fit theory suggests that the employees' behavior and attitudes are a direct result of the degree to which the work environment is a good fit (Hardin & Donaldson, 2014). Although the participants had negative opinions of outsourcing, the favorable opinions of their jobs remained unchanged because the work environments met their needs in other ways. For instance, the companies provided incentives and additional opportunities for learning, advancement, and stimulation. These findings contradict the ideas of Prater and Smith (2011) that IT professionals' perceptions of outsourcing may change the opinions of their jobs and the IT profession. The participants responded positively because the actual and preferred levels of expectations were high.

Research Question 4

RQ4: How does outsourcing increase the turnover intention of IT professionals?

To answer Research Question 4, I examined the influence of outsourcing on the IT workforce's turnover intention. The majority of the participants chose to remain with their organizations and face the challenges caused by IT outsourcing. The participants reported being more concerned about having jobs they enjoy as well as being part of companies that provide exceptional benefits and opportunities for advancement. It became clear that the participants were attracted to the medical and retirement benefits and future opportunities that their organizations offer.

I concluded that the older, more seasoned participants chose to remain with their companies and were found to be more committed and less likely to turnover. This supports the literature that job dissatisfaction is predictive of turnover. Employees are likely to remain with their organizations when their expectations are met. Workers will tolerate physical and mental challenges in the workplace when they are interested in their jobs (Chen et al., 2011). Despite the potential job loss threat, exposure to IT outsourcing had no impact on the turnover intention of the IT professionals in this study. While this contradicts the argument of Khosrowpour et al. (2011) that outsourcing IT functions results in significant turnover in the IT workforce because it puts IT professionals' jobs at risk, the authors performed quantitative research with a smaller sample size. This study adds a new component to a gap of literature in IT workforce studies regarding how environmental factors, like outsourcing, impact employees.

Research Question 4 focused on whether or not IT outsourcing increases turnover intention among IT professionals. The participant responses supported the view of the needs-supplies fit theory, in which an individual's needs match the environmental rewards, such as pay, benefits, or training (Yu, 2012). Through my analysis of the interview data, I found that the IT professionals stayed with their employers despite the potential threats of job loss, increased work demands, variances in workloads, and unclear job roles that occur during the outsourcing process. I found that the participants' negative perceptions of IT outsourcing did not increase the turnover intention of the workers. The age, tenure, wants, and needs of the participants were instrumental in their decisions to stay. This information is consistent with the Mowday et al. (1979) model, in

which employees are more likely to remain with their organizations when their needs and wants are met.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study involved the sample's demographics. Of those who participated in the study, only 15% were female. The predominance of male participants may limit the generalizability of the study results. Furthermore, it is possible that the employees who declined to participate have different experiences from the ones who were interviewed. The participants in this study were IT professionals within Central Florida who were full-time employees with at least five years of service with their organizations. The participants needed to have previously participated or currently be participating in outsourcing activities. The activity needed to occur within the IT department. This study included 20 total participants working for both IT and non-IT firms. The study participants represented the following positions: Security, Design Distribution, and Cloud Engineers, IT Professors, a Network Technician and Administrator, a Security Analyst, an IT Specialist, a Tech Support Technician, a Tech Coordinator, Application and Technology Support Specialists, a Web Designer, a Systems Technician, a Senior Systems Analyst, an IT Director, and an IT Manager. The study was limited to IT professionals working only within Central Florida. Professionals in other career fields and locations may have had similar experiences with outsourcing activities. The study was based on data from four organizations. Therefore, the findings were limited to only the organizations studied. Additionally, any conclusions that were drawn can only be generalized to similar organizations. An additional limitation of the study was the differences in replies based on the method used to interact with the

participants. While it was possible to observe the body language and facial expressions of participants during the video and face-to-face interviews, this was nonexistent in the phone interviews. The gestures and expressions, such as smiling, squirming, and frowning provided an additional understanding of the perceptions and feelings of the interviewees. I was limited to hearing the participants' voices during the phone interviews because I was unable to observe their behavior.

Recommendations

Interviewing IT professionals provided a look into the perceptions of IT outsourcing from the view of those employees directly impacted. Although this study discovered a lack of perceived satisfaction for IT outsourcing, future research and evaluation are recommended. As this study was performed only within Central Florida, the study could be enhanced by extending it to a broader geographical area where outsourcing has been more prevalent. This would allow additional balance in the age and educational groups because some states have younger employees, while others have more educated professionals. More specifically, younger employees tend to have less time in service with their companies, which may negatively impact their feelings about staying with their employers following IT outsourcing. Performing a study that examines IT workers' job satisfaction, job stress, and turnover intention levels prior to and after outsourcing can add validity. These employees should be reevaluated at various periods of time in order to establish causal relationships versus associations. This would provide more time to examine the impact of IT outsourcing on the job satisfaction, job stress, and turnover intention of IT employees.

The participants of the study belonged to four medium-sized firms within Central Florida. Therefore, the results do not represent large organizations. Further research can validate the findings from this study in larger companies because the results might differ. Another recommendation for further study would be to examine the relationships among job satisfaction, job stress, turnover intention, and other independent variables. Other career-related characteristics might uncover different predictors of job satisfaction of IT workers. Finally, this study focused strictly on IT outsourcing. This type of research may be appropriate for other industries that design and manufacture products and where outsourcing is used. Qualitative research may be performed to explore the perceptions of outsourcing vendors to identify why projects fail. In addition, other scholarly research may explore other types of outsourcing organizations in order to enhance the outsourcing knowledge base. Business practitioners could find value in comparing outsourcing within other industries to the results of this study. Further research on outsourcing can enrich the service-outsourcing literature for decision makers. Sharing the results from this study with academic and business professionals can lead to achieving development, elaboration, and strengthening of this research.

Development of improved communication strategies and training programs must be provided for all employees impacted by the outsourcing of IT functions. I recommend communication and training at all levels, from entry and mid-level employees to management. IT professionals should be informed about the outsourcing procedures prior to implementation. Furthermore, I recommend communicating the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of all employees. Finally, employees must be trained on new procedures, projects, or systems brought about as a result of IT outsourcing.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from this study highlight the role of perceptions of IT outsourcing on job satisfaction, work-related stress, and turnover intention among IT professionals. This research study provided an opportunity to bring awareness to the social impact of outsourcing. The findings of the study could benefit society by revealing the influence outsourcing has on organizations and employees. This study could be useful for individuals who are interested in social change, organizational behavior, and change management issues created by outsourcing. Furthermore, it could have significance to strategic planners, as well as business, IT, and organizational development managers. The information technology sector has faced many of the same issues as other industries at a noticeable rate. Though, research studies on organizational behavior in technology environments are scarce. Retention is a common problem among technology professionals amidst outsourcing pressures. The participants of this study gave their lived experiences of the phenomenon of IT outsourcing, which yielded various results. Not only did the participants express the vital importance of the phenomenon to the IT profession, but they also provided insight into its impact on IT workers. This study can be used by organizations as a tool for understanding and reducing the negative influence of outsourcing on employees, leading to the implementation of methods for improving employee satisfaction and retention. When management is aware of employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the influence organizational decisions have on turnover intention, proactive measures can be taken to address these issues.

From a social aspect, a loss or change in IT employment, as a result of outsourcing, creates economic hardships on individuals, families, and communities.

Outsourcing activities force dissatisfied workers to seek lower-paying positions or transition into new fields. Workers who found employment after displacement experienced wage decreases in their new positions, or have been forced to work part-time. As IT outsourcing increases, employees may be driven to downgrade their ways of life to match those in competitor countries. Furthermore, the economy suffers as IT workers experience declines in job satisfaction and organizational commitment, leaving some communities in financial deficits.

The results of this study will benefit social change by providing insights into the levels of stress and job satisfaction IT professionals experience when outsourcing takes place. Insights from this study may assist managers in understanding and diminishing the negative influence of outsourcing on employees in other industries and regions. This will help improve employee productivity, customer satisfaction, interaction among employees and managers, and employee retention, which ultimately leads to organizational success and a sustainable economy. In organizations in which IT outsourcing is commonly used, retraining programs may be created to help those directly impacted by outsourcing activities. Motivation programs can be implemented for surviving employees to improve retention and organization commitment and reduce turnover intention.

Summary

Work-related stress can have a significant negative effect on individuals' daily lives, behaviors, and well-being. This is a concern for organizations because reduced decision-making and work performance may occur as a result of job stress (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Therefore, it is helpful for companies to understand the job stress of IT professionals as it relates to outsourcing. Khosrowpour et al. (2011) argued that

outsourcing poses a potential decrease in job satisfaction and an increase in job stress and turnover intention for IT professionals. The results of this study only supported the view that IT outsourcing plays a role in the stress of IT professionals. The research questions were answered, though not all as expected. It was expected that participants would have low job satisfaction and high turnover intention as a result of IT outsourcing. Person-environment fit was partly validated as the findings demonstrated that interaction between the employee and work environment caused some stress. The theory was partially invalidated because some exchanges between employees and their work environments did not induce perceptions of job dissatisfaction, turnover intention, and a mismatch to the work environments.

Few phenomenological studies discuss the human considerations of outsourcing from the IT professional's point of view. Evidence on the effects of outsourcing on the behavioral and emotional well-being of IT professionals is scarce (Korrapati & Eedara, 2010). Based on the literature review, current studies use quantitative surveys to examine IT professionals' perceptions of job stress, job dissatisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention (Angrave & Charlwood, 2015; Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013; Calisir et al., 2011; Shin et al., 2012; Sulea et al., 2015; Wallace et al., 2013; Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). Elmuti et al. (2010) utilized an experimental field study, while Khosrowpour et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative survey to collect data concerning IT workers' perceptions of outsourcing, as it relates to morale and work performance. IT was chosen for this study because it is a core function for organizations. Consequently, IT professionals have been hit hardest by the rapid growth of outsourcing. Technology departments perform nearly 25% more outsourcing work than employees in other

industries. During outsourcing activities, companies struggle to keep skilled IT workers due to stress and job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the number of displaced workers in the IT industry is twice the rate of employees in other occupations during outsourcing (Janssen et al., 2012). As a result, turnover can be costly for organizations. The replacement of IT professionals can cost firms approximately one-third of the salary of a new employee (Prater & Smith, 2011). This research served its purpose in fulfilling a gap in the literature. The results indicated some level of stress among a small cohort of IT professionals of different demographic backgrounds in both IT and non-IT firms. I hope that similar studies will be performed with different variables to obtain additional results that help reduce work-related stress and improve fit for employees in the work environment. Future research should involve a more representative sample of the general population. Changes, like outsourcing, are inevitable in organizations. Ultimately, this research may help leaders create strategies for establishing favorable working environments for IT professionals during organizational changes. Employees are the most valuable resource of organizations. Work-related stress must be minimized to ensure high job satisfaction and organizational performance, as well as low turnover.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. What is your sex?
3. What is your marital status?
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. Are you currently a member of your organization's IT department?
6. What is your current job title and how long have you been in that position?
7. Are you currently a full-time employee?
8. How long have you been employed with your current organization?
9. Have you previously held another position as a technology professional other than the one you currently hold? If so, what was it?
10. Are you currently or have you previously participated in your IT department's outsourcing activities?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experiences with IT outsourcing.
2. What is your perception of IT outsourcing?
3. How does your organization conduct its IT outsourcing activities?
4. How do you feel about your company's position or activity in the area of IT outsourcing?
5. What is your perception of how well your company communicated the plan for the IT outsourcing activities that occurred?
6. What do you believe your role is in the outsourcing activities performed by your company?
7. What kinds of changes occurred within your organization as a result of IT outsourcing?
8. How do you believe IT outsourcing impacted your stress level?
9. Describe what, if anything, about IT outsourcing damaged your opinion of your job.
10. How satisfied were you with your job prior to IT outsourcing? How did that change after IT outsourcing?
11. What motivated you to stay with the company after learning about the plan to outsource? What was your motivation to seek another position after learning about the plan to outsource?
12. What do you think your company could do to improve employee commitment levels during IT outsourcing?