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Hospitality Sector Employee Turnover

Michael McGuire
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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Michael McGuire

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Hospitality Sector Employee Turnover

by

Michael McGuire

MS, Liberty University, 2016

BS, DeVry University, 2014

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2020

Abstract

Employee turnover in the hospitality sector is problematic, costly, and can affect morale. Hospitality business owners who struggle with employee turnover are at a high risk of failure. Grounded in the job embeddedness theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies hospitality business owners use to reduce employee turnover. The participants comprised 5 small business owners in the hospitality industry, located in the northwest region of Florida, who effectively used strategies to decrease employee turnover. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, organizational documents, and a reflective journal. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Three themes emerged: building employee-employer relationships, maintaining fair compensation, and balancing employee autonomy. A key recommendation is for business owners to build relationships with employees to introduce work-related norms that balance employee autonomy. The implications for positive social change include hospitality business owners' potential to minimize employee turnover and stabilize community employment, thereby improving their communities' socioeconomic outcomes.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my wife: You are the bedrock in my life, my motivation, and the cornerstone of our family. I also dedicate this to my son Isaiah, who continues to amaze us with his determination and independence, and my son Cameron, who consistently showcases his love for life and fun. May God continue to allow us to walk side by side down this blessed path of life.

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I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for providing me the strength, determination, and desire to be the person I am today. An extra special thank you goes out to my wife, Kameko, and my sons, Isaiah and Cameron, because they support me every day with the encouragement that I need to want to continue to better myself and our family situation. This achievement belongs to all of us because when I sacrifice, we all sacrifice, which takes a total family effort.

I would also graciously like to thank my program chair, Dr. Ronald Black. Without your guidance and mentorship, I would not have gained the experience needed to complete this program.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employee turnover remains one of the most significant human resource management challenges confronting business owners, particularly in the hospitality industry (Tews, Michel, & Allen, 2014). There are several reasons an employee may voluntarily leave an organization, so leaders must understand employee turnover and take actions to decrease the phenomenon. Employees can be a source of great value for firms, but employee departures impose additional costs and destroy value (Younge & Marx, 2016). Organizations invest time and money grooming new employees, making them job self-sufficient, and bringing them up to par with existing employees, so the whole organization loses when a fully trained employee voluntarily leaves the job (Rose & Raja, 2016). Employee turnover, a successor of turnover intentions, is a prevalent issue and substantial challenge for employers in the hospitality industry (Rehman & Mubashar, 2017). The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies that hospitality business leaders use to reduce employee turnover.

Background of the Problem

High turnover rates not only affect employee attitudes, but also may influence valuable employees to leave the organization while simultaneously lowering productivity (Dwesini, 2019). Surji (2013) argued that high employee turnover rates often lead to business failure, an unmotivated workforce, and a lack of attractiveness to skilled workers in the hospitality industry. Organizational leaders in the hospitality industry should implement strategies to improve competitiveness and profitability when they know the causes of employee turnover (Dwesini, 2019). Voluntary employee turnover is

detrimental to the competitiveness and profitability of organizations in the hospitality industry, so industry leaders need to understand factors that significantly affect turnover rates among employees (Holston-Okae & Mushi, 2018). Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, and Callan (2014) found that employees often stay with an organization if presented with a combination of retention strategies that make leaving seem less advantageous.

Problem Statement

Ongoing employee turnover and recruiting costs may affect a business's financial situation, but results of low retention rates not only change the bottom line, they also negatively affect the morale and culture of the workplace (Mandsager & Saccocio, 2016). In December 2018, 642,000 hospitality workers decided to quit their jobs for an annual 54% national quitting rate, compared to December 2014, where 522,000 quit, and the annual rate was 49% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). The general business problem is that without adequate procedures, hospitality business leaders are not able to minimize employee turnover, resulting in financial instability due to employee search and replacement costs. The specific business problem is that some hospitality business owners lack strategies to decrease employee turnover.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies that hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover. The targeted population consisted of small business owners in the hospitality industry, located in the northwest region of Florida, with successful strategies to decrease employee turnover. The results of this study may contribute to social change through a decrease in employee turnover, and

an increase in the quality of life for employees and their families, thus improving the economic viability of the surrounding communities.

Nature of the Study

The three research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). I selected a qualitative methodology for this study to explore the strategies hospitality business owners use to decrease turnover. In qualitative studies, researchers use open-ended questions alone or in combination with other interviewing techniques to explore topics in depth, to understand processes, and to identify potential causes of observed correlations (Weller et al., 2018). Qualitative researchers use nonstandardized methods to achieve data collection that consist of interviews and other interactive processes whereas the quantitative method works best when identifying and describing connections between statistics (Saunders et al., 2015). A quantitative methodology was not appropriate to examine strategies hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover because I wanted to conduct face-to-face interviews, and I did not want to use questionnaires or build hypotheses. In a mixed-method study, researchers combine the use of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analytical procedures (Saunders et al., 2015). Again, hypotheses are a part of a quantitative research study and the quantitative portion of a mixed-method study, which made the mixed-method inappropriate for this study.

For this study, I considered three qualitative research designs: phenomenology, ethnography, and case study. I chose to use a case-study approach to explore strategies that hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover. A case study is an in-

depth inquiry into a topic or phenomenon within its real-life setting (Yin, 2014). A researcher uses a phenomenological approach to focus on the participants lived experiences (Saunders et al., 2015). A researcher uses the phenomenological inquiry to draw upon complexities of philosophy, human science, and humanities (Adams & van Manen, 2017), which made it inappropriate for this study. Researchers use ethnographical studies to explore the culture or social world of a group (Saunders et al., 2015). An ethnographic study design was inappropriate because an evaluation of a specific culture or social world of a business was not the goal of this study.

Research Question

What strategies do hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover?

Interview Questions

1. What rationale do your employees give as reasons for leaving?
2. What challenges have you encountered in developing strategies to decrease employee turnover?
3. How do your employees respond to your employee retention strategies?
4. What additional strategies would you use to decrease employee turnover?
5. What strategies are the most effective in retaining employees?
6. What strategies are the least effective in retaining employees?
7. What are the organizational benefits of decreasing employee turnover?
8. What additional information would you like to share about decreasing employee turnover?

Conceptual Framework

I used the job embeddedness theory as a conceptual framework for this study. Mitchell and Lee (2001) developed the job embeddedness theory to explain how and why people decide to leave a job. Mitchell and Lee (2001) suggested that if an employee were unhappy with their job, the individual would look for alternatives, and if he finds an acceptable one, he will leave. Mitchell and Lee (2001) also argued that events or reasons that lead to voluntary turnover, which may be positive or negative, uncontrollable, unexpected, or outside of the job, are a significant precursor to leaving. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, and Erez (2001) described the aspects of job embeddedness as the extent to which people have links to other people or activities, the extent to which their jobs fit with other parts of their life, and the ease with which job and personal relationships become breakable.

Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al. (2001) focused on three areas that lead to the construct of job embeddedness: sacrifice, fit, and links. The job embeddedness dimensions correlate with an individual's organization and environment, so embedded figures immerse themselves and attach to personal backgrounds and are difficult to separate from their embedded backgrounds (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al., 2001). I used the job embeddedness theory to explain how job dissatisfaction leads to intentions to search, evaluate, and compare alternative employment options and how job satisfaction motivates employees to stay.

Operational Definitions

Employee engagement: Organizational engagement is the degree of absorption into one's role performance in an organization and is one of the most reliable indicators of employee turnover and job engagement (Saks, 2006).

Employee turnover: Riadi, Hendryadi, and Tricahyadinata (2019) define employee turnover as when an employee leaves a working position voluntarily.

Hospitality industry: The hospitality industry is a business sector that consists of bars, restaurants, and hotels and typically employs cooks, waiters, barkeepers, and front-desk employees (Schneider & Treisch, 2019).

Job embeddedness: Mitchell and Lee (2001) stated that job embeddedness is the extent to which one builds attachments to people or groups on-the-job and in their community; their fit or match with their job and community; and the amount of sacrifice suffered if they left their job.

Job satisfaction: Spector (1997) suggested that job satisfaction reflects how people feel about their jobs and the different aspects of their duties.

Turnover intent: Turnover intent is a proxy measure of an employee's intentions to leave an organization (Pugh, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Simple constructs in research lead to assumptions that imply truth with no factual supporting evidence (Wolgemuth, Hicks, & Agosto, 2017). There were three assumptions for this study. The first assumption was that business owners monitor employee turnover

and develop retention strategies. The second assumption was that the participating business owners would answer the interview questions honestly, providing accurate information. The third assumption was that each participating business owner would provide information with common themes to explore the phenomena.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher's control but may still affect the study design, results, and conclusions (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). There were three limitations for this study. The first limitation was that participating business owners might not recall all the strategies they have used to reduce employee turnover. The second limitation was that the participants' schedules may influence the length and quality of their responses. The third limitation was researcher bias because a carefully designed study is only mostly free of bias. There is no guaranteed process to eliminate researcher bias (Siddiqi, 2011).

Delimitations

Researchers refer to anticipated constraints in interpreting the results of a study related to the scope of the research as delimitations (Sampson et al., 2014). There were three delimitations in this study. The first delimitation was that the study participants were all geographically located in the northwest region of Florida. The second delimitation was that the sample size was limited to just five small business owners that fit the population description. The third delimitation was that business owners provided all the data with no inputs for anyone else in the organization.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Hospitality business owners face the daunting task of operating businesses in the most cost-efficient manner possible. Therefore, hospitality business owners must recognize volunteer employee turnover as a risk to profitability and seek to minimize employee intentions to quit. This study is significant to business practice in that the results may provide a useful framework for understanding the relationship between an employee's perception of job dissatisfaction and an employee's intent to leave. Comprehending the link between job satisfaction and voluntary turnover helps business owners address expenses currently considered uncontrollable. Employee retention strategies can help minimize direct and indirect losses due to turnover. Recruitment, training, and administration may inflict direct costs while indirect costs, such as lowered productivity and competitiveness likely hinder small business growth and success (Abdullah et al., 2007). The results of the study may contribute to business practice by inspiring small business owners to improve their retention rates and therefore save money and use it for other business growth opportunities.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Building relationships that lead to individual and community bonds may tighten job embeddedness and mitigate an employee's intent to leave. Small organizations are best suited to enhance employee perceptions of community and job embeddedness associated with low turnover rates (Coetzer, Inma, & Poisat, 2017). Conditions created by strategies in this study are inclusive to a diverse socioeconomic background. Pitesa,

Thau, and Pillutla (2017) defined *socioeconomic standing* as a person's relative social advantage typically associated with money and other assets, educational attainment, and occupational prestige.

The northwest region of Florida encompasses a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. The U.S. Census Bureau (2018) estimated that the northwest region of Florida contained over 315,000 people with 69% considered White, 23% Black, and 6% Hispanic; a median household income of \$47,000; and 26% of the population over age 25 possessed at least a bachelor's degree. In ethnically and culturally diverse workplaces, group and team members take longer to bond with people who hold different perspectives and values (Thatcher & Patel, 2012); so building relationships can help speed that effort and create a socially embedded atmosphere where people want to stay. The results of this study may implicate positive social change by minimizing employee turnover and furthering community relationships in the ethnically diverse northwest region of Florida.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore strategies hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, I conducted an academic literature review to draw on knowledge developed by scholars using several studies to understand the phenomenon of employee turnover in the hospitality sector. In this section, I provide a critical analysis of various sources of literature centered on the conceptual framework of the job embeddedness theory. Badenhorst (2018) noted that researchers select sources, extract texts, and synthesize sources to create literature reviews. This literature review includes a critical

analysis and synthesis of various peer-reviewed sources of literature about voluntary employee turnover within the hospitality sector organized in a topical pattern. A topical pattern is a way to achieve coherence in writing derived from how the writer positions the topic within a clause and then how it progresses within the entire composition to show how the sequencing of topics works through the text to build meaning progressively (Flores & Yin, 2015). The start of this topical structured literature review begins with a discussion of the job embeddedness theory as the conceptual framework. The literature review then continues with an analysis of the three elements that Mitchell and Lee (2001) described as the elements that build the construct of job embeddedness: sacrifice, fit, and links. The literature review then provides other supporting studies, conceptual models, and contrasting theories to help explain employee turnover, employee motivation, leadership styles, and strategies that may reduce turnover.

I used academic resources such as the Walden University Online Library and Google Scholar, to find relevant information for this literature review. I used Ulrich's Global Serials Directory to cross-reference the source data to confirm it was peer-reviewed material. The strategy I used to collect recent and seminal works involved searches in different databases such as Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, ProQuest, the Business Source Complete, and ScienceDirect. I also researched government sites such as the U. S. Small Business Administration and the U. S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics for statistical figures and historical trends. Keyword searches *included job embeddedness, employee turnover, employee retention, small business owners, leadership strategies, and employee engagement*. This literature review contains 169

sources of peer-reviewed and nonpeer-reviewed articles. Among these articles, 158 articles are peer-reviewed, and 153 were peer-reviewed research articles published in the last 5 years.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the job embeddedness theory. An author uses a conceptual framework to focus on concepts as a way to explore relationships for mental visualization, enacting critical thinking for cognitive development of subordinated elements within each key concept (Khamung, Holmes, & Hsu, 2019). Mitchell and Lee (2001) presented the theory of job embeddedness to explain why people stay at a job. Mitchell and Lee initially studied research from the field theory (Lewin, 1951) and the embedded figures testing (Witkin, Dyk, Faterson, Goodenough, & Karp, 1962) to develop the job embeddedness construct. Witkin et al. (1962) described embedded figures as those immersed in their background, attached, and linked with their surroundings. Lewin (1951) suggested that people live within a network of connections and attachments because of various factors. The connections, attachments, and links can be loose or strong, but their measurement may allow researchers to determine whether an employee will stay or leave their job. Afsar and Badir (2016) said that embedded factors might be family, friends and coworkers, marital status, community involvement, health care and other fringe benefits, promotional opportunities, and job tenure. Employers possess the ability to build compensation packages and create other environmental factors that encourage employees to stay at the organization.

Three main factors make up the job embeddedness construct. Mitchell and Lee (2001) described the factors as (a) the extent to which one has strong attachments or links to people or groups on the job and in their community, (b) the extent to which they fit or are a good match with their job and community, and (c) the degree to which they would have to give up or sacrifice things if they left their job. Mitchell and Lee (2001) labeled the three factors into simpler terms and used *links* for attachments to people or groups, *fit* for an employee's match to their job or community, and *sacrifice* for things people lose when they leave a job. A highly embedded employee embodies many links, much like a web or net in which a person may become stuck (Mitchell, Holtom, & Lee, 2001). Lang, Kern, and Zapf (2016) argued that strong links, a good organizational fit, and high sacrifices upon leaving increase employee retention. Prestholdt, Lane, and Mathews (1987) declared that job embeddedness creates normative pressures to stay on a job, which derives from family, team members, and other colleagues.

Links. Job embeddedness explains the number of links an employee connects with in a social, psychological, and financial web that includes work and nonwork friends, groups, and communities to bond them to their job (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al., 2001). Not all links are as important as others, so some people are more reluctant to abandon some links, whereas other employees willingly end links with little or no preparation. Mitchell and Lee (2001) defined *links* as the formal or informal connections an individual develops with other individuals or groups either on or off the job. Coetzer et al. (2017) claimed that small organizations typically adopt a narrow range of informal human resource management practices because of the lack of a true human resources

department; the informal human resource management practices that small organizations tend to employ may be ineffective at embedding employees in their jobs. Saridakis, Muñoz-Torres, and Johnstone (2013) wrote that smaller organizations could offer a family environment with fewer but stronger links that larger organizations cannot replicate. Smaller organizations may also offer informal management practices that contribute to higher reports of job quality (Storey, Saridakis, Sen-Gupta, Edwards, & Blackburn, 2010). Owners of smaller business may also possess more influence on social benefits by virtue of the size of the organization because job quality decreases as organizational size increases; therefore, links in small organizations grow but with a higher intensity (Storey et al., 2010). The impact of links may reverberate throughout a small business in various ways. Mitchell and Lee (2001) argued that the number of strong links may pressure an individual to stay and that discussing a job change with those links may cause disruptions in linked relationships. A highly embedded individual develops an intense degree of interconnectedness with their peers and consequently would lose a lot if they decided to leave their organization (Afsar & Badir, 2016).

Fit. Fit is another aspect of job embeddedness and brings about an additional element to help explore employee turnover. Mitchell and Lee (2001) described the *fit* construct as an individual's compatibility with their work and nonwork setting and claimed that the better the fit, the less likely an individual is to leave. Allen, Peltokorpi, and Rubenstein (2016) stated that fit was the perception that one's values, skills, and preferences match the organization or community. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al. (2001) also stated that an employee's values, career goals, and future plans must fit with the

broader culture and demands of their job. Business leaders can be proactive with job embeddedness by paying attention to the fit condition by matching employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to job requirements (Lee, Mitchell, Sablinski, Burton, & Holtom, 2004). Initial job choice and socialization relate to perceived fit, which in turn affects turnover, thus fit with the job and organization relates to attachments to the organization (Afsar & Badir, 2016). The fit element pertains to off-the-job activities as much as it does to on-the-job activities. Mitchell, Holtom, and Lee (2001) said that an employer should become aware of employee recreational preferences and personal responsibilities because of time requirements appropriate for good work-life balance. Hsu et al. (2019) reported that work-life balance is associated with job satisfaction, which is also believed to impact employee turnover. If the employee is not able to fit off-the-job activities into their schedule, it disrupts work-life balance, and the job may prove not to be a good fit. The better the organizational fit, the higher the likelihood that an employee will feel professionally and personally tied to the organization, which decreases turnover intent (Afsar & Badir, 2016).

Sacrifice. The last of the three dimensions of job embeddedness involves the things one forfeits when they leave an organization. Mitchell and Lee (2001) defined *sacrifice* as the things that someone must relinquish when leaving a job, such as material or psychological benefits currently available or that may be available in the future. Employers have several options available that lead to significant sacrifices if an employee chooses to leave. For some businesses, this consists of compensatory benefits related to salary, retirement, fringe benefits, and connections established by relationships on the

job. Coetzer et al. (2017) stated that employees in small organizations forfeit fewer material benefits because they likely receive less pay, training, and room for advancement. Dron (2019) considered an effective benefits package to be one that attracts talented employees and keeps them embedded within the organization for as long as possible. Tian, Cordery, and Gamble (2016) saw training and development leading to the enhancement of job skills as a benefit of employment designed to increase job productivity and to embed employees. Sabbagha, Ledimo, and Martins (2018) noted that promotion opportunities lead to job satisfaction and satisfies employee needs, such as power and status.

Ampofo, Coetzer, and Poisat (2017) referred to sacrifice as the selection of social, financial, and psychological job and organizational conditions that affect employees' decisions to remain in or leave their current job or organization. Sacrifice comprises perceptions of person-job sacrifice, which denotes aspects of the job such as having freedom and autonomy on the job, respect from people at work and promotional opportunities, while person-organization sacrifice refers to compensation and organizational benefits, and prospects of continued employment (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al., 2001). The more resources an employee must sacrifice, the less attractive an outside job opportunity may appear to them (Zhang et al., 2019), and the more embedded they become to the organization.

Employee Turnover

Employee turnover is a critical phenomenon to understand for this study. Turnover occurs when an employee voluntarily decides to exit an organization. Riadi et

al. (2019) define *employee turnover* as when an employee leaves a working position voluntarily. Voluntary turnover is a managerial challenge that requires consideration because in many cases, disgruntled employees leave for better employment opportunities, and talented employees leave since it is easier for them to obtain alternative jobs (Dwesini, 2019). The turnover decision subsequently leaves the organization to fund future recruitment and training costs associated with the loss. Traditional methods of recruitment include advertisements, referrals, employment agencies, internal job postings, and even social networking on sites such as LinkedIn (Acikgoz, 2019). Bauman (2017) stated that as the gap widens between the availability of qualified candidates and the numbers of unfilled jobs grow, employers might become frustrated by the number of unqualified applicants and begin to believe their current recruiting models fail at addressing skill demands.

There are indirect costs associated with voluntary turnover. What happens when an employee leaves for negative reasons that may reflect poorly on the employee and employer? Klotz and Bolino (2016) noted that departing employees often become an informal source of either positive or negative publicity to potential customers, and their actions may influence the attitudes and behaviors of current and future employees. When employees voluntarily leave, no matter the reason, it affects the entire organization.

Turnover in the hospitality sector. The hospitality industry is a business sector that consists of bars, restaurants, and hotels and typically employs cooks, waiters, barkeepers, and front-desk employees (Schneider & Treisch, 2019). Employee turnover is the successor of turnover intention and is a prevalent issue and substantial challenge for

employers in the hospitality industry (Rehman & Mubashar, 2017). Dwesini (2019) noted that the hospitality industry faces a challenge of high employee turnover because of a situation described as “*job-hopping*.” Rehman and Mubashar (2017) theorized that employment in the hospitality industry is unpredictable because of its high reliance on human capital and use of unskilled labor. Many hospitality employees show a low level of job satisfaction but a high turnover intention (Kim, Knutson, & Choi, 2016). Turnover can be detrimental to a business because high labor turnover often results in a lack of business success, a lack of inspired employees, and a lack of appeal to talented employees (Dwesini, 2019). Self and Gordon (2019) proclaimed that to some leaders, the turnover culture becomes routine or perceived as unavoidable, and thus management eventually does little to prevent employees from quitting.

Employees who feel connected to their place of employment are less likely to leave because they create links, which is a key concept in job embeddedness (Self & Gordon, 2019). Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) argued that perceived organizational support produces a significant positive effect on employee job embeddedness and a significant adverse impact on their turnover intention. The hospitality industry may suffer from unusually high turnover, but leadership that engages in job embeddedness might curb employees’ turnover intentions. Afsar, Shahjehan, and Shah (2018) posited that it is important for hospitality organizations to control actual turnover, and to do so, effective human resources practices such as empowering individuals, providing training and growth opportunities, and maintaining a fair reward system, can help to increase job embeddedness, and consequently reduce turnover intent.

Turnover intent. The answer to the seldom asked question of why people stay at a job could be the vacuous opposite of the reason for turnover, that is, because they like their jobs and do not have some place else to go (Lee, Burch, & Mitchell, 2014).

Turnover intent is a proxy measure of an employee's intentions to leave an organization (Pugh, 2016). Turnover intent is another factor that helps to comprehend the idea of job embeddedness. In general, models of turnover illustrate strong correlations between job satisfaction and turnover intent, as well as a correlation between turnover intent and actual turnover (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). Ramalho-Luz, de Paula, and de Oliveira (2018) suggested that the noun *turnover* means the inflow and outflow of employees of a company and is an essential organizational phenomenon. Leaders cannot stop turnover; the goal of leaders should be to control turnover by encouraging the best employees to stay by intentionally putting retention systems in place (Ali, 2018). Alatawi (2017) called employee turnover a complicated, continuous issue that affects the stability of the organizational climate, business performance, productivity, and the retention of qualified personnel. High turnover intentions can disrupt the company's financial position, lead to low organizational performance, productivity, morale, and a disruption of services (Bazawi, Syah, Indradewa, & Pusaka, 2019).

Ali (2018) argued that the study of turnover intent is important because evidence indicates that managers and organizations can improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover. Alatawi (2017) claimed that changing the managerial style of insufficient managers could prompt better employee retention and reduce turnover intentions. Peltokorpi, Allen, and Froese (2015) suggested that before leaving an organization

voluntarily, employees display intentions to quit by searching for alternative jobs; disengaging from the current job; behaving rudely with peers, supervisors, and customers; engaging in counterproductive work behaviors; and performing poorly in accomplishment of tasks. Swider, Boswell, and Zimmerman (2011) said the effect of job searching on turnover was stronger for those employees with more alternatives, lower satisfaction, and lower embeddedness because those with higher job embeddedness require finding a far better job opportunity in order to leave than those with lower embeddedness.

Employee Motivation

Comprehending theories of employee motivation is vital to understanding this study. Honore (2009) asserted that employee motivation is important for organizations to research because it can help provide information to understand employee performance levels as well as turnover rates. Sabbagha et al. (2018) stated that employee motivation refers to the effort made to achieve organizational goals. Several motivation factors lead employees to respond either positively or negatively. Reizer, Brender-Ilan, and Sheaffer (2019) mentioned that autonomous motivation refers to personally meaningful activities and controlled motivation describes engagement in an activity out of pressure attributed to other sources, such as rewards or punishment. There are also extrinsic and intrinsic factors that lead to motivation. Intrinsic motivation concerns behaviors enacted for the sake of the employee, while extrinsic motivation involves actions done for an instrumental reason (Howard, Gagne, & Bureau, 2017). There are several theories that attempt to explain the impetus behind motivation. Lloyd and Mertens (2018) mentioned

that as firms face increased diversity of workers in an expanding presence across sectors and the globe, managers require modernized and more applicable theories to aid in management, including employee motivation.

Many motivation theories fall into the category of a content theory. Content theories emphasize the needs that encourage and inspire an employee's behavior and performance with the assumption that all employees share the same set of needs (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017). Hofstede (1980) even suggested that there were many different motivational differences throughout the world, which correlate to the differences in culture. The employee motivation theories applicable to this study include Maslow's hierarchy of needs; the existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) model; expectancy theory; and equity theory.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's theory of motivation is a fundamental approach to understanding and motivating people at work with the pyramid representing one of the most intuitively logical and easy to understand principles in management (Bridgman, Cummings, & Ballard, 2019). Maslow introduced the hierarchy of needs model in 1943. Maslow's hierarchy of needs revolves around lower-level and higher-level needs and stated that there were five basic needs: physiological needs, safety and security needs, belongingness, love needs, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). Stewart, Nodoushani, and Stumpf (2018) noted two ways a company could compensate employees, namely, material or economic rewards, and emotional or psychological rewards neither was sufficient by itself, and material rewards do not beget psychological ones on their own. From a work perspective, the theory brings together

wages, benefits, company culture, and management practices into one unified construct (Maslow, 1943). On the pyramid of basic needs, the average person is partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied and displays increasing percentages of non-satisfaction as they proceed to the top (Maslow, 1943). Harkins (2019) remarked that in a workplace version of Maslow's hierarchy, the foundational level of employee needs includes a sufficient wage, stable employment, periodic breaks, and other characteristics that make continued employment sustainable, but an organization that fails to meet these needs almost certainly employs dissatisfied employees.

The ERG model. Alderfer developed the ERG model in 1969. The ERG model is a concept that involves three human needs: existence, relatedness, and growth (Alderfer, 1969). The ERG model is a refinement of Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs with three levels instead of five and the addition of a frustration process that leads the member to redirect their attention to lower levels when unable to satisfy the growth stage (Snow, 2019). The ERG theory attempts to answer the question of what motivates a person to act, and assumes that need motivates all human activities (Chang & Yuan, 2008). The existence level consists of physiological and safety needs, the relatedness level concerns belongingness and love, while the growth level includes self-esteem and self-actualization needs (Alderfer, 1969). The theory does not include prerequisites of satisfying lower-needs before higher-needs and suggests that more than one level activates at a time (Snow, 2019). Satisfaction at the final level of growth, depends on one finding opportunities to fully maximize one's potential (Alderfer, 1969). Chang and Yuan (2008) argued that ERG theory differs from Maslow's theory in three ways: it allows

pursuance of different levels simultaneously; it allows the needs order to be different for different people; and, when the highest level of needs remains unfulfilled, a person may regress to a lower, easier to satisfy level. Schneider and Alderfer (1973) said that Maslow's theory implies that a person is born with what he or she must become, but the ERG concept of growth places the source of potential in closer interaction with their environment. The management implications of ERG theory assist managers in recognizing that an employee has multiple needs that must be satisfied simultaneously, and when growth opportunities are not present, employees may regress to relatedness needs out of frustration (Chang & Yuan, 2008).

Expectancy theory. Vroom developed the expectancy theory in 1964 as a way to view employee motivation and management. Vroom (1964) created the theory with the assumption that an individual's behavior results from their choices after considering alternative actions and outcomes (Vroom, 1964). The core beliefs behind this theory are valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. Valence is the desirability of the outcomes associated with each behavior, expectancy is the likelihood that attempting the behavior will result in successful execution of the behavior, and instrumentality is the impact of each behavior on those outcomes (Baumann & Bonner, 2017). Vroom based the expectancy theory on the postulation that individuals have choices, and they make decisions based on which choice they perceive will lead to the best personal outcome (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018).

Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2017) theorized that the employee chooses the behavior determined by the desirability of the outcome, however, at the core

of the expectancy theory is the cognitive process of how an individual processes the various motivational elements and this occurs before the choice. The chooser combines these evaluations multiplicatively to form an overall assessment of each behavior referred to as the behavior's motive force (Baumann & Bonner, 2017). People combine their needs with their beliefs and expectations of the chances of success (Barba-Sanchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017). Given that the chooser selects from the selection of behaviors available to him or her, the choices inherently belong to the chooser (Mitchell, 1974). In traditional human resource management, an employee's hardworking does not change their rewards because pay and promotions mainly depend upon how long one serves in the organization, leading to low expectancy (Lee, 2019). One argument against this theory is that it is too simple and individualistic. A collection of individuals is not merely a conglomerate of individual motivations; rather, workplace results are a product of the group's influence on all individuals within the group (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018).

Equity theory. Adams first wrote about the equity theory in 1963. Inequity exists for a person whenever their perceived job inputs and outcomes stand psychologically in an obverse relation to what they understand are the inputs and outcomes of other workers (Adams, 1963). Scholars use equity theory to examine justice in the workplace environment, but it is also part of a broader set of social exchange theories, which applies to understanding workplace behaviors (Arvanitis & Hantzi, 2016). The approach includes discussions on employee inputs, outcomes, and imbalances. Inputs are contributions employees give to their organization, outcomes are rewards employees receive from their

organizations, and imbalances are perceived or real differences (Kollmann, Stöckmann, Kensbock, & Peschl, 2019).

People who perceive that their input-outcome ratio is unfavorable compared to the input-outcome ratio of others may attempt to restore equity in the relationship, by reducing effort, or leaving the organization altogether (Pohler & Schmidt, 2016).

Moriarty (2016) theorized that most people agree that employees, who perform equal work, equally well for an employer, are equally valuable to that employer, and therefore should receive equal pay from that employer. Bloom and Michel (2002) called pay dispersion the amount of difference or variation in pay created by a firm's pay structure.

Downes and Choi (2014) mentioned that in compressed pay systems, high and low earners in the pay scale are relatively close to each other in terms of total rewards, so the perceptions of inequality might not be as significant. Pay dispersion has a critical outcome for firms because employers can structure pay scales to motivate, demotivate, attract, retain, and encourage turnover among employees (Bloom & Michel, 2002).

Leadership Styles

Leadership is another essential principle to consider when analyzing employee turnover. Leadership skills focus on potential changes by establishing direction, aligning people, motivating, and inspiring (Wajdi, 2017). Leadership contributes significantly to business failure, especially in small independent businesses, and this could be due to the unique, smaller operations and the lack of leadership skills (Putra & Cho, 2019). In service and people-oriented businesses, such as in the hospitality sector, the success of an organization largely depends on the role of managers and their direction (Terglav,

Konečník-Ruzzier, & Kaše, 2016). Putra and Cho (2019) mentioned that most leadership studies used employees of large companies such as hotels or chain restaurants, neglecting the employees of small businesses, especially of small independently owned businesses operated by the individual who owns the property. Certain leadership styles can play a crucial role in achieving positive employee outcomes, which may dictate the survival of the business (Huertas-Valdivia, Gallego-Burín, & Lloréns-Montes, 2019). The next discussion focuses on servant leadership, authentic leadership, charismatic leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire leadership.

Charismatic leadership. Charismatic leadership is a concept of leadership developed by Weber, published in 1922 in Germany, and translated to English in 1978. The charismatic leader appears when a social crisis happens, creates a radical vision to solve the crisis, attracts followers who believe in the vision, and achieves the vision (Bazawi et al., 2019). Weber (1978) characterized the charismatic form of leadership by the belief in the unique and exceptional qualities of one particular individual. Scholars often ignore the actual attributes of charismatic leaders in favor of the effects on followers, but the effect-centric approach to defining charisma has roots in some of the earliest works on the subject (Sy, Horton, & Riggio, 2018). Wu and Wang (2012) said that charismatic leaders are those whom followers heavily depend on and strongly admire. Weber (1978) suggested that people obey because they consider the validity of the state or the authority figure to be good, right, or just. Charismatic leaders create a culture oriented to support collective rather than individualistic outcomes, encouraging

employees to use their autonomy to help and support others in ways that should improve performance and retention (McClellan & Collins, 2019).

Yukl (2013) expressed that charismatic leaders probably expend great effort in boosting their image because the result is that followers perceive their leader as extraordinary, which increases their dependency on him or her. Yavan, Sökmen, and Biyik (2018) found a positive correlation between charismatic leadership and job satisfaction and said that charismatic leadership could decrease turnover intention. McClellan and Collins (2019) claimed that firms that invest in motivation and opportunity enhancing practices and a charismatic leader benefit by higher performance and lower turnover because charismatic leaders may positively enhance the effectiveness of the human resource practices. Some scholars perceive charismatic leadership as a benefit for employees because subordinates reciprocate the behavior through loyalty and more work efforts, and subsequently, reduce their turnover intentions (Wu & Wang, 2012).

Servant leadership. Greenleaf introduced the idea of servant leadership in 1970 as a philosophy that supported the well-being of employees over the leader's self-interest (Harris, Hinds, Manansingh, Rubino, & Morote, 2016). The servant-leader uses a selfless approach to managing others with the style that is an alternative to authoritative, top-down management (Davis, 2017). Liu (2019) stated that servant leadership offers a compelling ideal of self-sacrificing individuals who put the needs of others before their own and cultivates a culture of growth in their organizations. The servant-leader is different from the standard leader who may see themselves as a leader first because the leader first may seek power or material possessions, whereas the servant first seeks the

well-being of their employees (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leadership offers a compelling ideal of self-sacrificing individuals who put the needs of others before their own and cultivate a culture of growth in their organizations (Liu, 2017).

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership refers to directing and inspiring efforts by motivating employees and thus conceptualizes behaviors that seek to satisfy an employee's higher-order needs and engage them in attaining organizational goals (Jensen et al., 2019). Transformational leadership consists of four behavioral components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). Idealized influence refers to charisma that appeals to employees on an emotional level and inspirational motivation captures the extent to which leaders articulate a vision for and energize followers to reach ambitious goals (Bottomley, Mostafa, Gould-Williams, & Leon-Cazares, 2016). Intellectual stimulation encourages subordinates to question previously held presumptions and think in new ways, while individualized consideration involves identifying and addressing followers' needs and helping them achieve goals (Mostafa, 2019). Transformational leadership is a construct that leaders use to encourage employees to go the extra mile, and motivates them to display behaviors that are beneficial to the organization and its stakeholders (Bottomley et al., 2016).

Authentic leadership. As a practitioner, George proposed the authentic leadership approach in 2003. Authentic leadership refers to a pattern of leadership behavior that draws upon and promotes a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness (Oh & Oh, 2017). Such leaders build enduring relationships, work hard, and

lead with purpose, meaning, and values (George, 2003). The four elements that encapsulate the characteristics of authentic leadership are self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalization of ethical perspectives (Luthans, Norman, & Hughes, 2006). Oh and Oh (2017) explained that self-awareness refers to knowing one's personal strengths and weaknesses as well as their effects on others, while relational transparency involves openly sharing information and expressing thoughts and motives. A leader utilizing balanced processing reviews and analyzes all relevant information objectively before deciding, and internalization of ethical perspectives means that the leader follows their internal standards rather than being influenced by external pressures (Jeong, Lee, & Kim, 2017).

Lewin's styles of leadership. Psychologists Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) identified three major leadership styles, namely the democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire styles. The extent to which a leader delegates their authority, utilizes authority, and shows concern about human relations or the execution of tasks, reflects their style of leadership (Komarov & Aloyan, 2017). The studies included a small group of boys led by a leader who behaved in a democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire manner. Lewin et al. (1939) concluded that productivity stayed high, but only when the leader was physically present for the autocratic style, the boys accomplished nothing under the laissez-faire leader, and under the democratic leader, productivity remained level whether the leader was physically present or not.

Democratic leadership. A democratic leader gives employees a chance to contribute to decisions made for the group (Ince, 2018). Members in a group under a

democratic leader believe the leader will provide them with all the information before making any decisions (DeBell, 2019). This kind of leader is on a spectrum varying from the one who does not take action without subordinate concurrence, to the one who starts decision-making but discusses with subordinates before following through (Vincent, 2016). Ince (2018) stated that democratic leadership is suitable for a lot of organizations, which have an effective communication network to foster contributions from everyone. A communication failure may occur within the group when a team member lacks the necessary knowledge to participate in decision-making or when there is a short deadline but not enough time to facilitate everyone's opinion (DeBell, 2019).

Autocratic leadership. Fiaz, Ikram Amir, and Saqib (2017) argued that the autocratic leadership style places more emphasis on performance and low emphasis on people, where the focus of power is with the leader and all interactions within the group move towards the leader. Some autocratic leaders take the position that they exist to make key decisions, and subordinates exist for executing those decisions (Chishty-Mujahid, 2016). Autocratic leaders have self-confidence, and at the same time they employ empathy and know how to inspire, manage, and lead organizations in new directions (Drzewiecka & Roczniowska, 2018). Chishty-Mujahid (2016) asserted that autocratic leadership is a mode normally associated with the military, but many corporate leaders also employ this form of governance to varying degrees.

Laissez-faire leadership. Laissez-faire leadership is a hands-off approach where the leader only provides the resources necessary for a task, without directing, supporting, or stimulating subordinates regarding their task (Singfiel, 2018). Wong and Giessner

(2016) suggested that too much responsibility handed over to followers might seem inappropriate if the followers believe that they do not possess the ability to fulfill the expectations. Kanwal, Lodhi, and Kashif (2019) specified that the laissez-faire leadership style is where leaders usually delegate all the decision powers to their followers through over-empowerment, allowing them to exercise complete control. Whether employee expectations are over-fulfilled or under-fulfilled, they may attribute the delegation or retention of autonomy to laissez-faire leadership (Wong & Giessner, 2016).

Strategies to Reduce Turnover

Stewart et al. (2018) argued that employers have a disproportional advantage over their workers because most workers depend on their income to survive and need their job, whereas employers can replace workers in the face of a financial hardship. An organization's ability to retain employees closely relates to its ability to achieve high performance levels and accomplish greater business results (Rose & Raja, 2016). Leadership plays a critical role in the attitudes of employees throughout an organization. The style a leader chooses may also affect job embeddedness and turnover intentions. Bazawi et al. (2019) concluded in their study that charismatic leadership significantly affects turnover intentions, which, in turn, might mean that charismatic leadership reduces employee turnover intentions. Thacker, Sullivan, and Self (2019) published findings that suggested a strong relationship between servant leadership, employee satisfaction, and employee retention. Eberly, Bluhm, Guarana, Avolio, and Hannah (2017) stated that job embeddedness decreases turnover intentions, and transformational leadership plays an embedding role on followers. Oh and Oh (2017) found in their study

that if employees consider their leaders authentic, they were more willing to demonstrate affective commitments toward their respective organizations, which eventually diminishes turnover intentions.

Puni, Agyemang, and Asamoah (2016) found in their study that an autocratic leadership style induces turnover intentions and counterproductive behaviors among employees, a democratic leadership style produces fewer turnover intentions among employees, and the laissez-faire leadership style creates fewer turnover intentions but more counterproductive behaviors. Stewart et al. (2018) said that increasing employee compensation, providing employee fulfillment, ensuring employee empowerment, and providing managerial support results in improved employee productivity, efficiency, spirit, loyalty, and retention. For this literature review, I chose to address work-life balance, employee empowerment, training and development, employee compensation, employee engagement, job satisfaction, job burnout, span of control, emotional intelligence, and performance management as additional factors that may affect employee turnover in the hospitality sector.

Work-life balance. Work-life balance means an employee achieves psychological and emotional balance between work, home, and other life roles (Soomro, Breitenecker, & Shah, 2018). Jaharuddin and Zainol (2019) suggested that work-life balance was essential in achieving the psychological, emotional, and cognitive stability of employees, which promotes organizational effectiveness. Richert-Kaźmierska and Stankiewicz (2016) noted in their study that younger employees report more dissatisfaction with work-life balance than older employees and theorized that younger

workers might confront more personal conflicts because many of them have not reached life milestones such as marriage or buying a home. Jaharuddin and Zainol (2019) defined a *work-life conflict* as an inability to divide time and resources between personal life and work life, which leads to exhaustion and stress among employees. Soomro et al. (2018) found that productive employees reported an acceptable balance between work and life commitments. The more control employees feel they have over their lives, the more they can balance work and family, and consequentially, balancing one role will benefit the other role by creating equilibrium (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019).

Employee empowerment. Ravisha and Pakkerappa (2017) defined *employee empowerment* as the transference of power from superior to subordinates. Some scholars and management practitioners find employee empowerment counterproductive because it signifies a certain amount of authority and autonomy given to employees and presents the possibility for management to lose control over those employees (Choi, Goh, Adam, & Tan, 2016). Cheong, Spain, Yammarino, and Yun (2016) suggested that empowerment introduces an enabling process that enhances self-efficacy and performance, but empowerment can also present a burdening factor that creates tension and acts as a demotivation influence. Spreitzer (1995) theorized that psychological empowerment is one's perception of control over their environment and the match between their values and those of the organization. Empowerment may foster critical thinking and trust, which positively shapes employees' perceptions of their jobs, reduces stress, and eventually leads to higher job satisfaction (Choi et al., 2016). Shah, Khattak, Zolin, and Shah (2019) found a positive relationship between empowerment and positive employee attitudes,

such as employee job satisfaction, normative organizational commitment, and reduced turnover intention.

Training and development. The concept of training comes from the model of *change through learning*, and is necessary for human development (Aleem et al., 2018, 149). The use of training and development as an embedding factor, which affects organizational commitment, also links to organizational growth and employee productivity (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Retaining employees can be done through several avenues and is a critical aspect that organizations must balance to maintain a productive workforce, which is beneficial for a firm's sustainability (Aleem et al., 2018). Moreover, employees with strong organizational commitment are likely to develop an emotional attachment to their organization and feel happy, with stronger aspirations to make meaningful contributions (Hanaysha, 2016). Tanwar and Prasad (2016) emphasized that organizational growth and productivity positively affect an organization and produces sustainability throughout the organization.

Hanaysha (2016) urged organizations to view training and development as a competitive advantage, and as a way to improve the quality of employees because as the more training employees receive, the more efficient their levels of performance should become. One-time costs associated with training employees produce returns over the long-term, building up towards the sustainable development of the company (Boțoc, Vătavu, & Gheorghe, 2019). Aleem et al. (2018) noted that employee retention not only relates to turnover, but also focuses on how organizations motivate their workforce and retain them which helps to achieve goals and further the objectives of the organization.

Employee compensation. Employers cannot forbid employees from looking for more attractive and lucrative opportunities; instead, the purpose of a retention strategy is to make employees loyal for the time they stay with the organization (Khalid & Nawab, 2018). Heneman and Schwab (1985) argued that pay level, pay raises, benefits, and pay structure and administration comprise the most important areas of pay satisfaction and developed a multidimensional instrument called the Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire to measure pay satisfaction. Heneman and Schwab (1985) found high correlations between pay levels or the individual's current direct wages and benefits or the indirect form of payment for time worked on turnover intentions. Dron (2019) asserted that a company should continuously analyze the compensation and benefits policy so employees feel that the benefits are beneficial to their lifestyles.

Khalid and Nawab (2018) stated that compensation could be a moderating function to create equilibrium between employee participative practices and employee retention. Compensation packages entail basic features that tend to make employees satisfied with their job, which may include salaries, bonuses, incentives, allowances, promotion, and recognition (Michael, Prince, & Chacko, 2016). Dron (2019) said that salary attracts potential employees, maintains current employees, and motivates employees through equity and fairness. Nombeko (2019) posited that employers should apply compensation strategies that engage workers and improve their performance, which leads them to be more loyal and interested in the success of the organization.

Employee engagement. Kahn (1990) began research on employee engagement with the idea that in personal engagement, people employ and express themselves

physically, cognitively, and emotionally during job role performances. Engaged employees immerse themselves within their role. Organizational engagement is the degree of absorption into one's role performance in an organization and is one of the most reliable indicators of employee turnover and job engagement (Saks, 2006). Kahn (1990) also mentioned that in disengagement, people withdraw from job assignments. Engaged employees feel obliged to bring themselves more deeply into their role performances as repayment for the resources they receive from their organization, but when the organization fails to provide these resources, individuals are more likely to withdraw and disengage themselves from their roles (Saks, 2006).

Kahn (1990) identified meaningfulness, safety, and availability as the three psychological conditions related to engagement at work. Psychological meaningfulness is a primary element that creates incentives to engage; psychological safety is an element that creates predictably; and consistent social situations to engage, and psychological availability is a distraction that preoccupies people and leaves them more or fewer resources in which to engage (Kahn, 1990). When employees engage themselves in their work, they enter into an interactive mode comprised of challenges, inspirations, and pride, which provides the main contribution to job satisfaction of these employees (Garg, Dar, & Mishra, 2018). Harkins (2019) suggested that organizations that hold annual picnics and acknowledge employees' personal milestones are attempting to foster a sense of community and meet the belongingness needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Job satisfaction. Spector (1997) suggested that job satisfaction reflects of how people feel about their jobs and the different aspects of their jobs. Employee job

satisfaction has two distinct elements. The term *intrinsic job satisfaction* refers to when employees consider only the kind of work they do or the tasks that make up the job, while *extrinsic job satisfaction* refers to how employees consider work conditions, such as their pay, coworkers, and supervisor (Garg et al., 2018). Sabbagha et al. (2018) suggested that as employee motivation increases, so does job satisfaction, and vice-versa, so employees who are satisfied with their jobs demonstrate motivation in their organization. Employee retention policies address the various needs of employees to enhance their intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and reduce the substantial costs involved in hiring and training new staff (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

A low turnover rate may not automatically signal that employees are motivated as there might be a discrepancy, and employees reluctant to leave may remain with the company but become disengaged (Lee, Hom, Eberly, & Li, 2018). Afsar et al. (2018) reported that employees become intrinsically motivated to remain committed to teams and organizations; consequently, negative behaviors, absenteeism, intent to quit, and burnout are likely to decrease. Stewart et al. (2018) mentioned that it is essential to establish the necessity of employers helping employees be happy at their workplace because research shows that happy workers are productive workers. Harkins (2019) claimed that the opposite of job satisfaction was not job dissatisfaction, but a lack of satisfaction; and the opposite of job dissatisfaction is simply a lack of dissatisfaction, employees can, therefore, experience job satisfaction and dissatisfaction simultaneously.

Job burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1981) declared burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and that a critical aspect of burnout was feelings of emotional

exhaustion or that the worker feels that they are no longer able to give more on a psychological level. Stewart et al. (2018) called employee burnout emotional exhaustion that causes a stressful work environment and creates apathy within the employee. Maslach and Jackson (1981) identified three areas of concern for stress: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. *Emotional exhaustion* refers to the feeling of overextension or depletion of energy; *depersonalization* occurs when employees dehumanize clients or treat them with a detached response; while *reduced personal accomplishment* originates from feelings of reduced motivation, and low self-esteem (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

According to Koc and Bozkurt (2017), the social exchanges between customers and service staff may be a significant source of stress for employees. Work comprising of face-to-face encounters with customers is challenging because it involves balancing a complex set of demands from coworkers, managers, and customers (Söderlund, 2017). Koc and Bozkurt (2017) proclaimed in their study that an employee's negative expectations might act as an antecedent of learned helplessness and burnout in hospitality establishments and that negative expectations of stress shape future negative responses and cause burnout syndrome.

Span of control. Ouchi and Dowling (1974) regarded span of control as the measure of the limits of hierarchical authority exercised by a single manager. Remenova, Skorkova, and Jankelova (2018) argued that actual span of control refers to how many subordinates report to one manager and that optimal span of control represents the maximum number of subordinates the team leader effectively manages in terms of their

limited capabilities. Organizational leaders should consider the supervisory labor required in comparison to a given number of production workers (Ouchi & Dowling, 1974).

Nasrallah, Ouba, Yassine, and Srour (2015) asserted that an essential aspect of a team is its size, and as team size increases, it poses the challenge of coordination among members which affects communication time, work efficiency and effectiveness, and team performance, in general.

Some scholars argue that compared to leaders who have wide spans of control, followers view those with a narrow span of control as beneficial because the closeness of supervision allows the leaders to spend more time communicating and interacting individually with their followers (Gumusluoglu, Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, & Hirst, 2013). Gumusluoglu et al. (2013) indicated in a study that performance problems and turnover might occur after the departure of a leader if the followers committed to the leader but not the organization, which may also decrease organizational morale, performance, and effectiveness. Moon and Park (2019) claimed that transactional leaders with a narrow span of control might provide more role clarification and feedback than those with many followers; therefore, employees with managers who exhibit transactional leadership behaviors become embedded and less likely to leave.

Emotional intelligence. Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined *emotional intelligence* as the ability to accurately perceive, appraise, and express emotion, and the ability to understand and regulate emotions. Giardini and Frese (2006) suggested that emotional work was at the core of customer service, where customers demand high levels of personal services, such as in the hospitality sector. Emotional work is an effort to

express the emotions desired by the organization (Giardini & Frese, 2006). Goleman (1998) divided emotional intelligence into the five components of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. *Self-awareness* is the ability to understand ones' emotions; *self-regulation* refers to the ability to keep emotions and impulses under control; *motivation* is a propensity to pursue goals with persistence; *empathy* expresses the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people; while *social skill* refers to talent in managing relationships and building networks (Goleman, 1998). Huang (2019) concluded that emotional intelligence did not have a significant impact on turnover but could lead to job burnout and emotional exhaustion, which leads to a stronger turnover intention. Jordan and Troth (2011) identified a connection between employee emotional intelligence, employee turnover intentions, high levels of job satisfaction, and high levels of quality leader-member exchanges.

Performance management. Central to the practice of performance management is the notion that it enhances overall employee motivation because it provides employees with clear expectations for organizational rewards such as pay and promotion (Lee, 2019). The term employee performance management system implies a human resource management system that serves to monitor continuously the performance of employees (Van Thielen, Bauwens, Audenaert, Van Waeyenberg, & Decramer, 2018). Lee (2019) defined *performance management* as the practice of making personnel decisions about distributing organizational rewards, such as pay raises, awards, and promotions, based on the performance of individual employees. Smither and London (2009) mentioned that a poorly implemented performance management system results in unfavorable outcomes,

such as job dissatisfaction, employee burnout, increased turnover, and damaged relationships. Demartini (2014) stated that performance management was a set of informal and formal mechanisms as well as systems and networks that organizations use to convey crucial objectives and goals required by management for assisting the strategic process and ongoing management by planning, analysis, control, measurement, reward, and management of performance.

Van Thielen et al. (2018) commented that leaders should not conduct performance planning without performance evaluations, because when this happens, it sends mixed messages that likely increase perceptions of job demands because, without offering employees an integrated system, workers must determine the standards first. Rabenu and Tziner (2016) said that traditional performance management systems incorporate processes that use a one-size fits all approach where both low performers and high performers use the same standard, resulting in decreased motivation for high performers to achieve a higher level of performance. Quinones and Sosa-Fey (2018) proclaimed that individualized performance appraisals provide individualized feedback, focusing on areas of strengths and creating an environment that motivates employees to be creative and different and to realize that their differences are valued. Performance appraisals are a human resources process of talent management meant to circumvent employee turnover and job burnout and may act as a vehicle of communication between management and employees to ensure role clarity and job expectations (Johennesse & Chou, 2017).

Transition

Section 1 of this qualitative multiple-case study proposal included an introduction to research on the strategies hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover. Employee turnover is a subject studied by several scholars. The research question for this study was, “What strategies do hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover?” This section also included interview questions, the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations along with the significance of the study. In the last segment of section 1, the review of the professional and academic literature included an extensive collection of completed studies by scholars and practitioners.

Section 2 consists of a restatement of the purpose statement, a discussion of my role as the researcher, and an overview of the study participants. It then covers the research methodology and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, and data analysis. Section 2 ends with a summary of the reliability and validity of the study. Section 3 provides the presentation of the findings, the applications to professional practice, the implications for social change, the recommendations for further research, my reflections, and the conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 of this study includes a restatement of the purpose statement, a discussion of my role as the researcher, and an overview of the study participants. It then covers the research methodology and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, and data analysis. Section 2 ends with a summary of the reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies that hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover. The targeted population consisted of small business owners in the hospitality industry, located in the northwest region of Florida, with successful strategies that decrease employee turnover. The results of this study may contribute to social change through a decrease in employee turnover, increasing the quality of life for employees and their families, thus improving the economic viability of the surrounding communities.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative studies use nonstandardized data, including interviews, to explore, analyze, synthesize, and address research objectives and questions (Saunders et al., 2015). I was the primary data collector for this qualitative study and conducted the participant interviews and synthesized of the data. Interviews are the primary data source in many qualitative studies, so the researcher interacts with participants on a personal level to engage in the narratives and stories the interviewees share (Karagiozis, 2018). During the interviews, one of my objectives was to mitigate biases, so I did not include

my ideas in the study and only interpreted the views and ideas of the participants. Researchers should have a profound understanding of their perspectives, shortcomings, and biases that might affect their interactions with the participants of the study, the data interpretation, the analysis of the data gathered, and the outcomes of the research (Karagiozis, 2018). There are four commonly identified types of researcher bias in qualitative research: biased questions, incorrect sampling, conceptual biases, and anticipated outcome biases (Morse, 2015). My role as the researcher was to avoid biases that I had about turnover in the hospitality sector while collecting data in the form of interviews, protecting the participants' rights, and securing the research data.

Participation in this study was voluntary, and there were no expectations of payment in any form. All participants reviewed the study requirements described in the recruitment letter (see Appendix A) to determine if they met the research criteria. I treated each person ethically as part of the study using elements from the Belmont Report as a guide. The content of the Belmont Report reflects fears of deception, harm, and exploitation of research subjects (Friesen, Kearns, Redman, & Caplan, 2017). The first principle in the Belmont Report described respect for persons and divided it into two separate moral requirements: the requirement to acknowledge autonomy and the necessity to protect those with diminished autonomy (National Commission, 1979). During this study, I did not reveal the identity of any participant or any of their personal identifying information. The second principle of the Belmont Report suggests treating participants with the use of beneficence that fits into categories: do no harm, maximize possible benefits, and minimize potential harms (National Commission, 1979). Nobody

was harmed during this study. The third and final principle from the Belmont Report described applications of the general principles of informed consent, risk, and benefit assessment, and the selection of research subjects (National Commission, 1979). The scope and objective of this study did not draw on any immoral applications from the participants or me.

Pedersen, Delmar, Falkmer, and Gronkjaer (2016) expressed that an interview protocol ensures consistency with specific questions that contribute to a natural conversation during an interview. I followed my interview protocol (see Appendix B) and presented each interview question so as to allow the interviewee to answer the questions without any coaxing from me or anyone else. I did not have any previous relationships with the business owners or their employees. I considered myself an outsider because I am not in the hospitality sector and possess no insider knowledge of what turnover looks like in these types of organizations. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) suggested that the critical component is not whether one is an insider or outsider, but an ability to be open, honest, authentic, interested, and insightful about the role of interviewer and wholly committed to representing the participants' experiences.

There are several ways researchers can mitigate biases, and I used concepts of bracketing and peer-review along with the semistructured interviews. *Bracketing* is a strategy to minimize researcher bias by illuminating and bringing implicit beliefs to the forefront, making them explicit throughout the study (Wadams & Park, 2018). My bracketing approach involved keeping a daily journal to document my assumptions to keep me aware of them throughout the study. *A peer review* occurs when peers review the

research design, analyze data, and collaborate on the synthesis of research findings (Morse, 2015). Walden University faculty members developed a peer-review process to evaluate this study that ensures multiple reviewers analyze the product from start to finish. Wadams and Park (2018) mentioned that unstructured interviews result from researchers who use open-ended questions to collect information. The interview questions for this study were designed to solicit narratives instead of simple “yes” or “no” responses. The interview protocol also ensured that each participant received the same questions and roughly the same amount of time to answer the questions.

Participants

The targeted population consisted of small business owners in the hospitality industry, located in the northwest region of Florida, with successful strategies that decrease employee turnover. The sample included five business owners, each at least 21 years of age, possessing experience implementing strategies that reduce employee turnover. Asiamah, Mensah, and Oteng-Abayie (2017) stated that researchers must encourage appropriate people from the target population to maximize the credibility of study results by ensuring the sample represents individuals with the ability and opportunity to provide the most accurate data. I used a purposive sampling approach for this study. Researchers use purposive sampling in qualitative studies where researchers select subjects based on the study purpose with the expectation that each participant will provide unique and rich information of value to the study (Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014). Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2017) argued that sampling was a critical component of the research process because regardless of the research question, research design, and data

collection procedures, if the sampling design is inappropriate, then any subsequent interpretations and recommendations will lack legitimacy.

Saunders et al. (2015) advocated that researchers should familiarize themselves with the organization before attempting to request physical access from potential gatekeepers to establish credibility and to identify possible organizational concerns. Before I sought participation from the target population, I used several sources to learn about their organizations to ensure the potential participants met the research criteria. I used the local chamber of commerce listing, Facebook, and LinkedIn to gather insight before I requested to meet with each business owner. I called the businesses and delivered the recruitment letters (see Appendix A) via e-mail until I found five interested business owners with strategies that successfully decrease employee turnover. Data saturation occurs when information takes place so repeatedly that the researcher can anticipate it and wherein the collection of more data appears to have no additional interpretive value (Sandelowski, 2008). I chose five participants as the goal for data saturation and decided that would be the point to evaluate the data to determine if any new data might immerge if I were to invite more participants. In this study, the five participants met the data saturation requirement.

A careful and deliberate effort to build and maintain a rapport with participants is of the utmost importance in the research process because participants are essential to the research process, and without their participation, such research would not exist (Tickle, 2017). To gain access, I built rapport using various methods to relax the participants so they could offer accurate data. Gremler and Gwinner (2008) defined *rapport* as a

harmonious relationship between participants built upon by rapport-building behaviors. I began by using attentive and imitative behaviors to create a rapport with the participants during conversations over the phone leading to the interview. Gremler and Gwinner (2008) said that merely being attentive to others could build rapport and that rapport often cultivates by imitating the behavior of the other party in an interaction. Throughout all discussions with the potential participants and subsequent participants, I demonstrated my interest by not interrupting the respondents' answers and mimicking their conversational tone to the best of my ability.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

I chose the qualitative method to explore strategies business owners use to decrease employee turnover in the hospitality sector. Qualitative research is an approach to study people, cases, phenomena, social situations, and processes in their natural settings to reveal the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world (Yılmaz, 2013). Saldaña (2011) argued that unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not have standardized methods of data analysis. In qualitative studies, researchers frequently use semistructured interviewing as a method for data gathering in different disciplines of social and human sciences to obtain firsthand data (Kaliber, 2019). The qualitative method was appropriate because I did not want to collect information using a standardized questionnaire or survey with predetermined responses.

Neither the quantitative nor the mixed-method methodology was appropriate for this research study. Weber (1949) cautioned the comparison of social sciences to natural

sciences as natural sciences pertain to quantitative domains, and social sciences deal with qualitative characteristics. Burns, Grove, and Gray (2015) defined *quantitative research* as a formal, objective, systematic process used to describe variables, to test relationships between them, and to examine cause and effect associations. Quantitative analysis generates numerical data with the use of a hypothesis (Davies & Fisher, 2018). Gathering statistical data related to the natural sciences is not the intent of this study. Numerical data might explain the monetary aspects of employee turnover, but the aim was to identify and analyze strategies business owners use to reduce turnover in the hospitality sector. Johnson (2019) said quantitative and qualitative research approaches integrate across methodological levels, so the goal of mixed-method research is to establish more in-depth, context-rich answers to questions with methods that overcome the limitations of mono-method studies. When a researcher uses a mixed-method approach, they combine elements of qualitative research and quantitative research, which made the mixed-method inappropriate for this study as well.

Research Design

I used a multiple-case study design to explore the strategies some business owners use to reduce voluntary employee turnover in the hospitality sector. Saunders et al. (2015) defined *research design* as the general plan of how researchers answer the study's research question. Anderson, Leahy, Del Valle, Sherman, and Tansey (2014) said that researchers typically choose narrative inquiries, phenomenological studies, ethnographic studies, case studies, or grounded theory as part of their qualitative research design. The same case study may contain more than a single case, and in that case, it then becomes a

multiple-case study (Yin, 2018). In this study, I wanted to explore the strategies five business owners used to decrease employee turnover, which made the multiple-case study design appropriate.

Saunders et al. (2015) called a narrative inquiry a strategy that collects the experiences of the participants as an entire narrative in a sequence of events such as an autobiography, which made that design not suitable for this study. A phenomenological study does not solve a problem; it only gives a better understanding of a given issue by asking those who lived through it what their experiences were like (Hopkins, Regehr, & Pratt, 2017). Phenomenological research designs require gathering information from many participants, which makes it a lengthy process (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), so I chose not to use the method for this study. Ethnographic studies study the culture of a group of people or ethnic groups (Saunders et al., 2015). This study did not categorize people by cultural group or ethnicity, so an ethnographic study was not appropriate. Grounded theory develops theatrical explanations of social interactions and processes through data collection techniques and analytical procedures (Saunders et al., 2015). I chose not to use grounded theory because I did not intend to develop explanations based on new theories originating from the gathered data.

Failure to reach data saturation negatively affects the validity of a study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is the stage where any additional data collected provides few, if any, new insights (Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers who design a qualitative research study eventually reach the dilemma of data saturation when interviewing study participants (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012). I created the interview questions to

achieve data saturation by using open-ended questions for each participant. Data saturation is particularly important as there are arguments relating to saturation, so researchers need to pay attention to the length of the interviews as well as the number of interviews obtained (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Researchers agree on some general principles of saturation and concepts: no new data, no new themes, no new coding, and the ability to replicate the study (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). In this study, the goal of data saturation was five business owner interviews. After I interviewed five business owners, I noticed there were no additional themes or data that could significantly influence the results.

Population and Sampling

A sample is a subset of the target population selected, which is an unbiased representative of the larger population (Suresh, Thomas, & Suresh, 2011). Choosing an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study presents a challenge because the goal is to select a sample that yields enough data to understand the phenomenon, and sample sizes vary significantly depending on the characteristics of each study (Hennink, Kaiser, & Weber, 2019). The targeted population for this study included small business owners in the northwest region of Florida that implemented successful strategies to decrease employee turnover in the hospitality sector. To ensure the participants provided the desired data, I used a funneling technique to gather information about potential participants. The funneling method involves using qualifying questions before the research interview, centered on experience in the industry, current position, and tenure

(Crawford, 2013). I included the funneling questions for the study in the recruitment letter (see Appendix A).

I used the local Chamber of Commerce listing, Facebook, and LinkedIn to gather insight before I made contact with any business owners. I then called local hospitality establishments and sent the recruitment letter (see Appendix A) with the study sample selection criteria via electronic mail. Yin (2018) commented that the amount of cases for a multiple-case study is up to the judgment of the researcher, which should consider the number of literal case replications required to attain data saturation. For this study, five cases provided enough data to satisfy saturation. I designed the interview questions with the intent to achieve data saturation by using open-ended questions that I could later analyze for common themes. Saunders et al. (2015) characterized thematic analysis as a process that helps comprehend large amounts of qualitative data from transcripts and notes by identifying themes or patterns that enable researchers to draw research conclusions.

I considered snowball and purposive sampling to draw participants from the target population. Noy (2008) said that snowball sampling takes place when the researcher accesses potential participants through the contact information provided by other participants. Snowball sampling enables access to difficult to reach populations, especially when the data is highly private (Waters, 2015). The employee business data might be sensitive to the organization, but the use of confidentiality eliminated this objection to participate. Researchers often use snowball sampling as an auxiliary means to gather access to additional participants when other sources dissolve (Noy, 2008). The

snowball method was not appropriate because it would only present access to potential participants that current participants believed might fit the selection criteria. I used the purposive sampling approach for this study. Researchers use purposive sampling in qualitative studies to select subjects based on the purpose of the study (Suen et al., 2014). To capture relevant data, I chose participants that could elaborate on several strategies used to decrease turnover in the hospitality sector. Purposive sampling was the appropriate method because, as the researcher, I wanted to have control over who participated in the study.

Ethical Research

My Institution Review Board (IRB) approval number for this study is 05-06-20-0981359. I began the data collection process only after receiving the IRB approval from Walden University. Universities and other research entities create an IRB to review research studies involving humans and must approve the research before any data collection takes place (Yin, 2018). In addition to IRB approval, before collecting data, researchers must request permission from prospective organizations and provide participants with an informed consent form (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). In this study, each participant completed the informed consent document before the interviews took place. Providing informed consent is one fundamental tenet in the ethical conduct of human research (Ioannidis, 2013). Researchers use an informed consent process to ensure ethical principles of respect for persons and that research participants are aware of the benefits and risks of the research so that they may make an informed decision (Van Nuil et al., 2018). Lindsley (2019) argued that a properly

executed informed consent was a continuous process, not a singular event. I delivered the informed consent form by electronic mail to every potential participant and collected the informed consent form before the beginning of each interview. After ensuring each potential participant had adequate time to read and understand the form, I made sure to answer any questions each candidate had regarding the study and their participation. No data collecting took place until each participant verbally stated that they desired to take part in the study.

Dutt and Roopesh (2018) wrote that some participants found difficulty in understanding the key elements of the research process, such as the right to withdraw from the study. The right to withdraw process allows research participants to evaluate the researcher's conduct and the research description provided in the informed consent process and is designed to minimize the incentive to withdraw and the number of withdrawal requests (Holm & Ploug, 2017). The informed consent form contained the process on how to withdraw from the study. Research participants could withdraw at any time by notifying me by electronic mail, telephone, or in person.

Recruiting participants for qualitative research studies can be challenging, but gaining cooperation from an adequate sample of subjects increases the likelihood of obtaining high-quality responses to research questions (Kelly, Margolis, McCormack, LeBaron, & Chowdhury, 2017). Because of the difficulty in finding available research subjects, some researchers decide to use incentives to encourage people to participate in their studies. Controversy over providing financial incentives to individuals to participate in research has a long history and remains an issue of contention in research ethics

(Zutlevics, 2016). Pescud, Pettigrew, Wood, and Henley (2015) found that qualitative research incentives could be significant in influencing participation due to the time commitment involved and disruption to their daily routine. Kelly et al. (2017) found little evidence to suggest that monetary incentives might be optimal in achieving high participation rates. I did not offer any incentives to participate in this research study. I began my search by calling 63 business owners. A total of seven originally agreed to the interview, but two canceled without rescheduling and never signed the consent form.

Oprea (2018) argued for the necessity to protect the identity of research subjects and not to make their content public without their informed consent, as well as a promise to keep their data confidential. Ethics is the branch of philosophy that seeks to address questions about values, freedom, conscience, and responsibility. This study contains no business names or personally identifiable information that could put the confidentiality of the participants in danger. There are no mentions of the business addresses other than being located in the northwest region of Florida and no references to any names. For this study, I labeled the participants as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5.

As stated by the informed consent form, I will continue to store the data from this study in password-protected electronic files that will only be accessible to me for at least 5 years as required by Walden University. I will keep any printed documents in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. At the end of 5 years, I will delete all the electronic files and shred all the hard copies from the study.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument for this multiple-case qualitative study using semistructured interviews. When researchers conduct qualitative research, they typically record data such as opinions, feelings, and experiences (Clark & Vealé, 2018). I conducted all the interviews and analyzed all the data. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) and predetermined interview questions to perform interviews and record the audio responses. When researchers use semistructured interviews, it allows participants to express their ideas, so that researchers obtain rich and direct information (Li, Deng, & Zhang, 2019). I administered and recorded the interviews using my cellular phone. After I collected the data, I analyzed everything and categorized all similar information into categorical themes. Clark and Vealé (2018) maintained that because qualitative data represents words from participant observation, field notes, interviews, journals, documents, and other literature, researchers must use thematic analysis to sort through all the information. Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) said that categories, themes, and subdivisions, including subcategories and subthemes, are the analytical products of qualitative data analysis.

In qualitative research, reliability means repeatability, so if another researcher follows the same procedures, and conducts the same study, they should arrive at the same findings and conclusions (Yin, 2018). I used member validations to enhance the level of reliability in this study. Member validation involves sending research data back to participants to allow them to confirm their accuracy (Saunders et al., 2015). After I thematically analyzed the recorded interviews and categorized the themes, I provided

each participant with their interview transcription and my interpretations of their data, and then allowed them to make comments. I also made efforts to increase the validity of the results. Fitzpatrick (2019) declared that validity referred to the conclusions of the research, based on methods used to address validity threats, and that the pertinent validity question to ask was if someone could make valid inferences and conclusions from the results of a study. I enhanced the validity of this study by ensuring that the sample accurately represented the target population. Saunders et al. (2015) noted that external validity answers the question of if the results can be generalized to other relevant groups. By only selecting participants that met the study criteria, the results of this study should relate to strategies other hospitality business owners use to reduce turnover.

Data Collection Technique

I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions as the primary data collection technique for this study. Semistructured interviews allow participants to express their ideas, so researchers obtain rich and direct information (Li et al., 2019). An open-ended question provides the respondent with the freedom to communicate about the topic, but the freedom they provide is the most advantageous feature of open-ended questions (Ciftci, 2019). Yin (2018) identified inaccuracies due to poor recall and biases due to poorly written questions as disadvantages in interviews as a collection technique. Saunders et al. (2015) indicated that the key to a successful interview was careful planning to avoid poor performance. To mitigate poor performance during the interviews, I created the interview protocol (see Appendix B) that consisted of instructions to help eliminate awkwardness and place the interviewees at ease. To alleviate poor recall, I

included the prewritten questions as part of the informed consent form, which I delivered to the participants before the interview.

I only called previously screened local hospitality establishments and electronically mailed the recruitment letter with the study selection criteria. I gathered all the information from the Chamber of Commerce, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The screening criteria included qualifications retrieved from the recruitment letter (Appendix A), such as being a small business owner in the hospitality sector, being at least 21 years of age, and having experience implementing employee retention strategies. The use of exclusion criteria can optimize internal validity, make a study more feasible, and reduce costs (Humphreys & Weisner, 2000). I contacted the potential participants by phone, and if they wanted to participate, I answered any questions and scheduled the interview.

Twenty-four hours before the scheduled interview, I sent a reminder electronic mail message to the participant, reminding them of the expected interview duration, the interview time, and my contact information if they needed to reschedule. Varner, McLeod, Nahiddi, and Borgundvaag (2018) found that text message reminders of upcoming interviews decreased the rate of participant attrition and resulted in more efficient study completion and potential for less biased results. One hour before each scheduled interview, I sent a text message reminder to the participant, so they could prepare by finding a private location to take my call and have adequate time to address any unforeseen issues that could distract the interview. Lau et al. (2017) found that interviews conducted in a private, quiet setting allowed respondents to answer questions accurately and thoughtfully. My goal as the interviewer was to eliminate unpreparedness

and promote a distraction-free environment so that the participants felt relaxed and could provide honest answers to the questions.

I obtained the signed informed consent form before beginning each of the interview sessions and used an interview protocol to guide the dialogue. A reliable interview protocol is crucial in obtaining useful qualitative data because an interview protocol increases the interview effectiveness by ensuring the respondent supplies comprehensive information (Yeong et al., 2018). With consent documented on the informed consent form, I recorded the audio responses using my cellular phone, which digitally saved the conversations so I could quickly load the audio files to my computer and transcribe the interviews. My final question asked participants to add any additional information they believed might help to understand strategies hospitality business owners used to decrease turnover, which provided the participants the freedom to speak about anything they believed relevant that I did not mention. Yeong et al. (2018) said that a proper interview protocol contains a final open-ended question at the end that allows the respondent to express any additional thoughts.

After the interviews, I listened to the audio recordings and transcribed the discussions. To enhance the level of reliability in this study, I used member validations. Member validation involves sending research data back to participants to allow them to confirm their accuracy (Saunders et al., 2015). Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) said that categories, themes, and subdivisions, including subcategories and subthemes, are the analytical products of qualitative data analysis. After I thematically analyzed the recorded interviews and categorized the ideas, I provided each participant with a transcription of

their particular interview and allowed them to make comments and clarifications. I gave each participant one week to respond with any changes to the transcripts via electronic mail message.

Data Organization Technique

Ortlipp (2008) cited keeping a reflective journal as a common practice in qualitative research. I used a reflective journal and a labeling system to help me keep track of and understand all the qualitative data. Cengiz and Karatas (2015) referred to reflective journals as a way to help improve reflective thinking skills, where learners reflect on current learning. Throughout the data collection phase of the study, I kept a daily journal to reflect on my thoughts and document discoveries. Reflective thinking involves the acquisition of facts, understanding of ideas, application of principles, use of analysis, use of synthesis, and use of evaluation (Alian, 2019). Data management and analysis are crucial stages in research, particularly in qualitative research, where the researcher analyzes the data as it is collected (Moule, Aveyard, & Goodman, 2016). Saunders et al. (2015) asserted that a researcher should protect their participants by disguising their identities. Anonymity serves to protect study participants and not place them in an awkward position, especially when the study topic is controversial (Yin, 2018). In this study, I labeled the participants as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. Disguising the names and organization protects the participants and keeps their data confidential.

Yin (2018) indicated that researchers should maintain a database to manage the data gathered during a study that keeps the information orderly and preserves the data in a retrievable format. My database consisted of a reflective journal, audio interview

recordings, and all other documentation in password-protected files on my personal desktop computer. I saved all digital documents on my desktop computer in password-protected files and kept all printed documents and my reflexive journal in a folder located in my home office filing cabinet. I will secure all data for 5 years to protect the confidentiality of the study participants. After the 5 years, I will permanently delete the digital files and shred all printed documents.

Data Analysis

One of the most popular ways of seeking confirmation in qualitative research is through the strategy of triangulation, which advocates for the use of multiple sources of data (Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedo, & Gonzalez, 2018). I used methodological triangulation to analyze the data about the strategies hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover. Methodological triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods as a way of obtaining a more complete and detailed accounting of the phenomenon and is the most applied method (Abdalla et al., 2018). My triangulation method involved conducting semistructured interviews, analyzing company-specific policies and procedures, and implementing a member checking procedure. Yin (2018) said that the invaluable advantage of a case study is that the researcher can use multiple sources of evidence that corroborate with one another.

I used the five-step process suggested by Akinyode (2018) to analyze the qualitative data, which included the use of data logs, anecdotes, vignettes, data codes, and thematic networks. Data logging is the process of documenting all the raw data from personal interviews, focus groups, discussions, observations, or other forms of qualitative

data collection (Akinyode, 2018). Anecdotes are a way to streamline the data logs by writing them in a narrative form and assigning a chronological sequence to assist in developing themes (Akinyode, 2018). Vignette is a step deeper than anecdotes and reorganizes the various dimensions of its subject for capturing into a brief representation of the information (Khan, 2014). Creswell (2012) defined *data coding* as a procedure of fragmenting and classifying text to form explanations and overall themes in the data. Coding helps in separating data into themes so that data from different sources can be easily organized and compared. According to Saunders et al. (2015), coding involves labeling units of data with a code that summarizes the actual meaning. The thematic network is the process of exploring the links that exist between the statements and the implicit meanings from the respondent (Akinyode, 2018).

Clark and Vealé (2018) said that because qualitative data represents words from participant observation, field notes, interview transcripts, journals, documents, and other literature, researchers must use thematic analysis to sort through all the information. Saunders et al. (2015) characterized thematic analysis as a process that helps comprehend large amounts of qualitative data from transcripts and notes by identifying themes or patterns that enable researchers to draw conclusions. To create transparency in theme development, the researcher needs to document the progress of the theme, to demonstrate the robustness of the findings (Noble & Smith, 2014). My documentation method of theme development for this study consisted of the use of a reflexive journal. In the journal, I recorded subjects each participant discussed and placed the ideas into categories and subcategorical themes. Graneheim, Lindgren, and Lundman (2017)

suggested that the use of field notes, reflexive journals, and decision trails help researchers create themes. After a thorough analysis of the data, I recognized the three key themes and named them according to the summarized focus of the data. After I finalized the themes, I placed them into categories that correlated to the current literature and the conceptual framework.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Guba and Lincoln (1989) introduced criteria for determining the trustworthiness of qualitative research and emphasized the dependability of data as it pertains to reliability. Dependability in qualitative research refers to the stability of data over time; therefore, it is an evaluation of the quality of the data collection, data, and theory generation undertaken in a study (Ellis, 2019). In this study, I addressed the dependability by using an interview protocol and included member validations on the participant qualitative data. A reliable interview protocol is crucial in getting useful qualitative data because an interview protocol increases the interview effectiveness by ensuring the respondent presents comprehensive information within the allocated time (Yeong, Ismail, Ismail, & Hamzah, 2018). Member validations involve sending research data back to participants to allow them to confirm their accuracy (Saunders et al., 2015). After I thematically analyzed the recorded interviews and categorized the themes, I provided each participant with their interview transcription and my interpretations of their data, and then allowed time for them to make comments.

Validity

Researchers find it challenging to write about validity in qualitative research because there are numerous ideas on what constitutes validity and varied terminologies, such as credibility, confirmability, and transferability (Fitz Patrick, 2019). Ellis (2019) noted that member validations and triangulation were two approaches to improving qualitative research credibility. I provided each participant with their interview transcription and my interpretations of their data as an approach to member validation. For triangulation, I collected data in the form of interviews, nonverbal observations, and business documentation. Triangulation can take several forms in qualitative research but employs multiple methods to allow the consistency of the findings for comparison (Ellis, 2019). Carnevale (2016) said that researchers create confirmability so readers of the research can confirm that, given the same data, they might make the same conclusions. Researchers increase confirmability by analyzing the data and presenting interpretations grounded in the data and not based on their personal preferences and viewpoints (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

To remain objective to the data, I used bracketing to minimize my biases. Bracketing is a strategy to reduce researcher bias by illuminating and bringing implicit beliefs to the forefront, making them explicit throughout the study (Wadams & Park, 2018). My bracketing plan involved keeping a daily journal to document my assumptions to keep me aware of my biases throughout the study. When a researcher provides a full description of the research design and interpretations, the researcher offers the opportunity to judge the transferability of the study to another research setting (Saunders

et al., 2015). Korstjens and Moser (2018) indicated that it was the researcher's responsibility to provide a description of the participants and the research process, to enable the reader to assess whether findings are transferable to another setting. For this study, I provided all documentation about the design and included the interview protocol and the recruitment letter as examples in the Appendix section.

Data saturation also relates to the validity of qualitative research. Researchers who design a qualitative research study eventually reach the dilemma of data saturation when interviewing study participants (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012). I created the interview protocol to achieve data saturation by using open-ended questions for each participant. I reached the point of data saturation after the five interviews.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 started with the purpose of this study. The section then covered my role as the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, and data analysis. It ended with a discussion on data reliability and validity. Section 3 includes an introduction, presentation of the findings, applications for professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further research, reflections, and the conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore strategies that some hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover. The data came from semistructured interviews with five hospitality business owners, and company documentation related to compensation, discipline, and voluntary turnover. Each participant reviewed and signed an informed consent form that conveyed the purpose of the research, permission for voluntary participation, assurance of confidentiality, and the right to participate or withdraw at any time. The findings showed various methods that these hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover.

Participants responded to eight open-ended interview questions, guided by an interview protocol (see Appendix B) to standardize the conversations. The participants completed validations of data through member checking, including the review of interview transcripts to ensure appropriate and accurate interpretation of the information. Section 3 begins with the findings of the study, the application to professional practice, and implications for social change. Section 3 ends with recommendations for action, recommendations for future research, my reflections on the study, and a conclusion of the study.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this qualitative multiple-case study was, “What strategies do hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover?” The conceptual framework for this research was the job embeddedness theory. Mitchell and

Lee (2001) developed the job embeddedness theory to explain how and why people decide to leave a job. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al. (2001) described the aspects of job embeddedness as the degree to which people have links to other people or activities, the extent to which their jobs fit with other parts of their life, and the ease with which job and personal relationships become breakable. Participants responded to open-ended questions used to elicit detailed information on effective strategies used to reduce employee turnover. Participants authorized a review of company-specific documents on employee compensation, discipline, and voluntary turnover to enhance the triangulation of data for this research. Five hospitality business owners in the northwest region of Florida participated in the study based on their experience implementing employee retention strategies. Data saturation became evident during the fourth interview, and the fifth interview served as confirmation that no new information was available; therefore, the study required no additional respondents.

After gaining IRB approval, I began my research by searching for eligible participants by contacting business owners with the information gathered from the local chamber of commerce listing, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Interviews occurred between May 11 and May 20, 2020. Before each meeting, the participants read the consent form and verified their voluntary consent by sending an e-mail, affirming that they understood the research guidelines. Interviews took place over the phone and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Each participant received 1 week to review and provide revisions on the transcribed interviews as part of the member checking process. Part of the data collection

process also included company-specific employment policies; I mainly looked for policies related to compensation, discipline, and voluntary turnover.

The participants from this study represented two restaurant owners, a bar owner, a caterer, and a bowling alley owner. To ensure confidentiality, the participants used code names P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. Data collection included participant interviews using eight standardized questions and the examination of company-specific guidelines. I used a five-step process suggested by Akinyode (2018) to analyze the qualitative data with data logs, anecdotes, vignettes, data codes, and thematic networks. Following the analysis of the qualitative data, three major themes emerged: (a) building employee-employer relationships, (b) maintaining fair compensation, (c) and balancing employee autonomy.

Theme 1: Building Employee-Employer Relationships

Ansah, Osei, Sorooshian, and Aikhuele (2018) argued that employers not only hire a workforce, but also start new affiliations, and often work nearby, thus developing professional and sometimes personal relationships. Each of the participants spoke about the importance of building a meaningful employee-employer relationship. P1 stated that several of his employees had worked with him for years. P2 disclosed that some of his employees had served in the military and that after their military commitment was over, at least three current employees chose to come back to work for him based on their positive working relationship. P2 and P4 claimed that creating a professional and personal relationship with employees helped to motivate employees to become more engaged in their workplace activities. Saks (2006) suggested that organizational engagement was the degree of absorption into one's role performance in an organization

and is one of the most reliable indicators of employee turnover and job engagement. P2 explained that he welcomed back his previous employees because he knew of their work ethic and their ability to work effectively with him.

Employer-employee relationships may most often contribute to the achievement of organizational goals and may affect productivity negatively or positively (Ansah et al., 2018). Each of the participants believed that employer-employee relationships were worth cultivating because they motivate employees to be more productive at their jobs. P3 claimed that employees needed strong employee-employer bonds to build loyalty to the business. P4 mentioned that the business owner is responsible for the survival of the business and that employees do not have a stake in the business but that the employees have a stake in the relationships that they build with the employer, other employees, and the customers. Ansah et al. (2018) said that interpersonal skills serve as the basis for managing and maintaining relationships, so interpersonal skills make it easier for business owners to manage relationships and succeed in business. P1 insisted that his business was small, so building relationships with employees was not difficult and it helped build a team atmosphere. An essential aspect of a team is its size, and as team size increases, it poses the challenge of coordination among members, which affects communication time, work efficiency and effectiveness, and team performance in general (Nasrallah et al., 2015).

Not all voluntary turnovers are the fault or result of a negative employee-employer relationship. P1, P4, and P5 expressed that most of their employee turnover resulted from situations out of their control. P4 gave an example of an employee who

married a military member and left the area shortly thereafter. P5 said that his last voluntary turnover involved an employee who went on parental leave after a rough pregnancy and never returned. All the participants commented that a friendly relationship came from genuine respect and care for their employees. P2 advised that people could tell when a friendship was not genuine and stressed that he did not have time for bogus friends. I reviewed each business owner's employee time off guidelines and found that they all publicly recognized employee birthdays and marriage anniversaries with additional compensatory time away from work. Organizations that acknowledge an employee's personal milestones are attempting to foster a sense of community and meet the belongingness needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Harkins, 2019). P3 and P5 also mentioned in their employee handbooks that they recognize employees with small gifts for professional milestones, such as meeting work goals and earning certifications.

An employee-employer relationship connects people and builds social links, aligning with the tenets of the job embeddedness theory. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al. (2001) remarked that a critical organizational factor not often discussed is the relationship employees have with their employers. Job embeddedness means that several links connect an employee and their web, which includes work and nonwork friends, social groups, and the community, so the higher the number of links between the person and the web, the more they are bound to the job and the organization (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al., 2001).

Theme 2: Maintaining Fair Compensation

For 2020, the federal minimum wage for employees is \$7.25 per hour, and \$2.13 for tipped employees; Florida has an \$8.56 minimum wage and \$5.54 wage for tipped employees (Display Posters, n.d.). Allegretto and Reich (2018) argued that the hospitality industry could absorb labor cost increases from a minimum-wage change with relatively small price increases that might have small effects on sales. After viewing the compensation documents, all the participants paid slightly higher than minimum wage, and each of the participants reported that they paid more to employees with previous experience and more to those with seniority within their company. P2 and P5 paid the most to their new hires, whereas P3 began with a probationary wage that incrementally increased after 18 months with the company. P3 said that he instituted a probation period because when he opened his business, some workers did not understand how to handle the demands of the customer service aspect of the job. Emotional work is an effort to express the emotions desired by the organization; it is the core of customer service, where customers demand high levels of personal services, such as in the hospitality sector (Giardini & Frese, 2006). P1 explained that he provided a means for his employees to make good money because most of his employees were tipped and received additional wages from customers.

Pay is an extrinsic job satisfaction factor that employers advertise to prospective employees, but a tipped employee's wages vary often and might be difficult to predict. The term *extrinsic job satisfaction* refers to how employees consider work conditions, such as their pay, coworkers, and supervisors (Garg et al., 2018). P1 and P4 paid the

same starting wage to each new employee and only gave raises when the company was able. Dron (2019) proposed that companies should continuously analyze compensation and benefits policies so employees feel that the benefits are beneficial. P1 admitted that salaries were a significant expense for his company, and that he was not able to provide regular wage increases.

Employers can apply effective compensation strategies that engage workers and improve their performance, leading the employees to be more loyal and interested in the success of the organization (Nombeko, 2019). Each participant's employee handbooks contained policies about employee discounts on certain food items and how to earn additional paid time off. P2 offered voluntary dental and life insurance benefits that employees could pay for without contributions from the business; however, he also noted a low participation rate. P3 said that he priced fringe benefits such as health and life insurance for his employees, but everything that he found was too expensive for his business to afford. Torre-Ruiz, Vidal-Salazar, and Cordón-Pozo (2019) said the perception that the employer supports their employees should strengthen the employee's sense of belonging and their identification with the organization and, consequently, should lessen their intention to withdraw. P5 stressed that his wages were not intended to make anyone rich, and that he offered a competitive wage that met or exceeded other businesses in the area. Employers of tipped workers such as waiters, bartenders, or bussers must pay their employees a minimum hourly cash wage, which, when added to an employee's average hourly tipped income, sums to at least the non-tipped minimum wage (Sabia, Burkhauser, & Mackay, 2018).

A high wage is not necessarily the solution to decrease employee turnovers. Afsar et al. (2018) said that the fairer the reward structure, the more the employee sacrifices if they choose to leave the organization. A significant loss could mean that the employee would have to sacrifice something, which is an element of the job embeddedness. Salary attracts potential employees, maintains current employees, and motivates employees through equity and fairness (Dron, 2019). P2 and P5 attract new employees with a higher than average starting wage, but to embed employees, the employers must use additional strategies. Differentiating between effective and ineffective employment benefits could be contingent on firm size (Messersmith, Patel, & Crawford, 2018). Each of the participants implied that they wanted to offer more fringe benefits, but concluded that the costs did not provide enough return on the investment.

Saridakis et al. (2013) asserted that smaller organizations offer a family-like environment with less but more intense links that larger organizations cannot replicate. Powerful personal and professional connections might present a more severe sacrifice if the employee were to leave the job, embedding them to stay with the organization. Sacrifice is one of the tenets used to explain job embeddedness. Mitchell and Lee (2001) described sacrifice as the things that someone must relinquish when leaving a job, such as material or psychological benefits currently available or available in the future.

Theme 3: Balancing Employee Autonomy

McClellan and Collins (2019) indicated that charismatic leaders create a culture that encourages employees to use autonomy to help and support others in ways that should improve performance and retention. When employers empower their employees,

reciprocity indicates that employees should feel obligated to give back, thus making them feel more attached and embedded to their employers (Afsar et al., 2018). P3, P4, and P5 stated that since their employees earned tips, it placed a certain amount of the responsibility to satisfy customers on the employee.

Customer service can be a standard quality indicator in the hospitality sector. Because employees have direct contact with customers, business owners must rely on their employees to make appropriate decisions. After reviewing the participant employee handbooks, I noted that each provided workplace training. P1, P3, and P4 trained employees on how to talk to customers and handle complaints. Tanwar and Prasad (2016) suggested that the use of training and development was an essential embedding factor, which affects organizational commitment, and also links to organizational growth and employee productivity. P3 and P4 developed training on what to do and even provided scripted responses in their new hire documentation. Employees in hospitality portray the quality of service customers derive since they have frequent encounters with the customers, so with adequate empowerment, they present a better picture of the organization to these customers (Akter, 2016). Empowerment is a human resource practice intended to create the links needed to gain social approval from peers and supervisors, the fit required to match one's needs and organizational demands, and the sacrifice to pursue collective goals (Afsar et al., 2018). P2 said that he thought empowerment was a significant factor as to why his employees enjoyed working for him.

Employee empowerment is the transference of power from supervisor to subordinate (Ravisha & Pakkerappa, 2017). Participative practices are those that give the

employee more power and privileges (Khalid & Nawab, 2018). All the participants agreed that for people to be successful in the hospitality industry, they must be self-motivated and develop a means to handle the stress of the job. Each of the participants also noted that the hospitality sector was demanding, so without self-motivation one could quickly experience job burnout. Job burnout is emotional exhaustion that causes a stressful work environment and creates apathy within the employee (Stewart et al., 2018).

P1 said that food orders occasionally come back wrong, and sometimes the food or drinks do not meet the customers' expectations. He stated that he could not run his business if every complaint went directly to him and that he empowers his employees to settle issues as they arise. Choi et al. (2016) argued that empowerment may cultivate critical thinking and trust, which positively shapes employee perceptions of their jobs. P2 paired new hires with seasoned employees so they could learn how to manage customer service situations. P1 noted that he directed employees to find him for significant concerns, but he expected employees to resolve small issues.

McClellan and Collins (2019) explained that encouraging employees to use their autonomy to help and support others should aid retention, but it also must come with a certain amount of latitude (McClellan & Collins, 2019). It is relevant to mention that each participant discussed employee autonomy when dealing with customers, but they also confessed that they did not punish employees unless it was necessary. P1, P3, and P4 documented various infractions and the consequences in their workplace documents. P1 indicated that severe lapses in judgment could lead to involuntary time off, including weekends where the employees earned the majority of their tipped salary. P3 presented

paperwork signed by each employee that explained how certain offenses could lead to written and verbal discipline and eventual job termination. P4 provided paperwork that described the discipline process but was quick to comment that he had never had to discipline any of his employees formally. P4 said that if he needs to correct an employee, he does it in a private location and tries to do it after the shift is over because he did not want to negatively influence the employee's demeanor. Walker, van Jaarsveld, and Skarlicki (2014) suspected that employees could mistreat customers with the intent of harming the business after receiving harsh discipline from their supervisors in the workplace. P4 stated that because employees have such close contact with customers, the customer can tell if something is bothering them, especially if the customer knows the employee. P4 also stated that he did not want to apply additional stress on his employees during a shift because it could affect the level of service offered to his customers.

P3 and P5 mentioned that providing autonomy helped motivate employees because it gave them the power to resolve problems without involving a supervisor. Each participant disclosed that part of their hiring process included a discussion that explained what the job entailed so the candidate could assess if they were the right fit for the job. P1, P2, P3, and P5 provided detailed documents of advertisements from past employment positions. The hiring process allows the employer to decide if the potential employee would be an acceptable fit in the organization. Fit is another tenet used to explain the job embeddedness theory. Mitchell and Lee (2001) described *fit* as an individual's compatibility with their work and non-work setting and claimed that the better the fit, the less likely one was to leave.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore strategies that hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover. Based on the research question, analyses of participant interviews, and a review of participants' company-specific guidelines, three main themes emerged: (a) building relationships, (b) fair compensation, (c) and employee autonomy. The findings from this study support the Mitchell and Lee (2001) job embeddedness theory, which explains how and why people decide to leave a job. Organizations want to ensure that their employees are motivated to deliver required services to customers, so reducing turnover through sound management practices is a paramount focus item that deserves attention (Henderson & Sowa, 2018).

All the study participants recognized voluntary employee turnover as a business liability that damaged the survivability of their company. Rehman and Mubashar (2017) said that employee turnover was a successor of turnover intention, which is a prevalent issue and substantial challenge for employers in the hospitality industry. Turnover often results in a lack of business success, uninspired employees, and a lack of appeal to talented employees (Dwesini, 2019). Employees accumulate knowledge directly related to successfully achieving business objectives. Ahammad, Tarba, Yipeng, and Glaister (2016) said that knowledge is highly valuable and may provide a competitive advantage, so voluntary turnovers hamper the transfer of knowledge throughout the organization. Hospitality business owners must realize that the strategies to decrease voluntary turnover are multidimensional and can vary from business to business. Hospitality

business owners may use the findings of this study to increase the embeddedness of employees by identifying retention strategies that decrease voluntary turnover.

Hospitality business owners might apply the findings of this study to implement a relationship-building strategy to reduce employee turnover. A highly embedded individual with several personal and professional relationships on the job develops an intense degree of interconnectedness with their peers and consequently would lose a lot if they decided to leave their organization (Afsar & Badir, 2016). Intentionally building employee-employer relationships may develop the links needed to increase job embeddedness and improve retention.

Hospitality business owners could apply these findings by implementing a fair compensation strategy; therefore, improving their prospects of reducing employee turnover. Compensatory benefits related to salary and fringe benefits create a sacrifice that employees have to lose if they choose to leave. Dron (2019) considered a productive compensatory package as one that attracted talented employees and kept them embedded within the organization for as long as possible. Devising compensation viewed as fair could motivate employees to stay and increase retention.

Hospitality business owners might implement the findings from this study by revamping hiring practices to ensure employees feel that they fit the organization's autonomy structure. Encouraging employees to use their autonomy to help and support others should improve performance and retention (McClean & Collins, 2019). Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, et al. (2001) stated that an employee's values, career goals, and plans for the future must fit with the broader culture and demands of their job. The initial job selection

made by the employee relates to perceived fit (Afsar & Badir, 2016) but, the employer makes the final decision to hire a potential employee.

It is important to note that there were no perfect retention strategies that worked for all employees in every business. Each participant acknowledged the importance of engaging with employees and implementing retention strategies. Conventional wisdom assumes that dissatisfied employees leave, whereas satisfied employees stay, but empirical studies do not support a strong predictive validity for this assumption (Lee et al., 2016). Every employee reacts differently, so business owners should engage and continuously evaluate strategies to determine what works and what does not work in their organization. As found in this study, building employee-employer relationships, maintaining fair compensation, and balancing employee autonomy may reduce voluntary employee turnover. The results of this study emphasize the importance of understanding the relationship between employers and employee retention. Business owners who implement the findings from this study may reduce turnover and create a sustainable business model that properly embeds employees.

Implications for Social Change

Positive social change is the process of transforming patterns of thought, behavior, social relationships, institutions, and social structure to generate beneficial outcomes for individuals, communities, organizations, and society (Stephan, Patterson, Kelly, & Mair, 2016). The results of this study might create social change by educating hospitality business owners about strategies that decrease employee turnover. Surji (2013) argued that high employee turnover rates often lead to business failure, an

unmotivated workforce, and a lack of attractiveness to skilled workers. The strategies may also help hospitality business owners remain competitive in the open job market, which can create new job opportunities, facilitate more influential families, and stimulate growth in the local economy. Small businesses account for a large share of U.S. employers and lead to local economic outputs that contribute to growth (Borchers, Deskins, & Ross, 2016). Fiori and Foroni (2019) mentioned that local economies lean on individually owned hospitality establishments that are owned and operated by members of the community. When business leaders adopt sustainable strategies for reducing voluntary employee turnover, they retain talented employees resulting in the creation of successful and stable businesses (Mozammel & Haan, 2016).

The results from this study may also help hospitality business owners understand what causes job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. The causes of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are complex and controversial. The opposite of job satisfaction is not dissatisfaction, but rather, no job satisfaction, and the opposite of job dissatisfaction is no job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). What may cause dissatisfaction in some employees may cause satisfaction in others. As applied to this study, the job embeddedness theory can explain how job dissatisfaction leads to intentions to search, evaluate, and compare other employment options.

In contrast, job satisfaction can motivate an employee to stay with the company. Changing the mindsets of hospitality business owners may influence how they control job embeddedness in their organizations. The business owners may recognize the positive aspects of links, fit, and sacrifice and devise better retention policies that stabilize

community relationships and improve services for customers to help foster business growth.

Recommendations for Action

Employee retention is a real problem that employers should recognize can hurt business sustainability. Hospitality business owners looking to reduce employee turnover should consider the strategies from the findings of this study. The findings may help provide useful information toward the development of strategies to reduce employee turnover and increase stability within a hospitality business. One recommendation for all business owners struggling with retention problems is to review the job embeddedness theory and decide if their organization may benefit by adopting a similar approach.

Each of the participants in this study individually expressed the importance of exit interviews with their businesses. Another recommendation is that business owners examine reasons as to why turnovers occur in their organizations with the use of tools such as exit-interviews to gain insight into why an employee chooses to leave. Spain and Groyberg (2016) said that a well-executed exit-interview process can create a constant flow of feedback on why employees stay, why they leave, and how the organization needs to change. Not all turnovers are avoidable, but business owners can be proactive instead of reactive in the strategies they employ to embed employees.

Dispersal of these findings is crucial because of the implications to business owners, employees, and local economies. The study emphasized the hospitality sector, but the findings may also be relevant to other industries such as retail or medical and to personnel such as human resource managers and business entrepreneurs. I disseminated

the results of this study to each participant in hopes that they will share with other business owners who may be experiencing high rates of employee turnover. I also plan to offer training to hospitality businesses in the local area on reducing employee turnover. I plan to publish the findings in ProQuest and other academic databases. Sharing my findings with other business practitioners should help increase the awareness of this critical business problem.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the successful strategies that hospitality business owners used to reduce employee turnover. Only five hospitality business owners represented the sample to provide perspectives on effective employee retention strategies. One recommendation for further research would be to use a larger sample size within the target population. This study met data saturation, but many additional factors may have led the participants to respond to the questions the way that they did. A more dynamic focus on the background and experience of the business owner may also help to understand the strategies chosen to decrease employee turnover. In service and people-oriented businesses, such as the hospitality sector, the success of an organization largely depends on managers and their direction (Terglav et al., 2016). Shifting the focus to the business owner and examining their demographics such as age, education, marital status, or other parameters may lead to a better understanding of how successful hospitality business owners decrease employee turnover.

Additional studies could also examine the retention strategies in hospitality establishments where employees earn above-average wages. Coetzer et al. (2017) noted

that employees in some organizations forfeit fewer material benefits because they likely receive less pay, which may mean they sacrifice less upon leaving the organization. Conversely, a higher-paid employee sacrifices more and may not be able to find alternative jobs with comparative pay. Further studies could reveal similarities and differences between retention strategies used at hospitality businesses that pay high wages and compare those to hospitality businesses that pay low wages.

Reflections

The Walden University Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) process was extraordinarily complex and intense at times but highly rewarding. The tiresome balance of work, family, and academics was a challenge, and it was easy to become overwhelmed by the numerous responsibilities. I had to develop strong time management skills to enable me to overcome the obstacles. I also had to strengthen my professional and personal relationships as I stretched my resources to meet deadlines and progress through the process. I found that I grew as a person because I refined personal attributes such as patience, tact, and empathy. I also enhanced my love for reading, my attention to detail, and my enjoyment of personal reflection time.

As a retired military leader, I held little knowledge of strategies used by hospitality owners to reduce employee turnover. I saw several people leave the military due to the attraction of finding something better. I had preconceived ideas of strategies that I thought might be useful, but I did not have any experience in this industry. My values reminded me of what I thought might make an excellent employee policy. However, I remained aware of my biases and adhered to ethical requirements to keep my

thoughts and opinions out of the study. Researchers should understand their perspectives, shortcomings, and biases that might affect their interaction with study participants, influence on data interpretations, and contributions to the outcomes of the research (Karagiozis, 2018). This study validated some of my initial thoughts related to employee retention and provided me with a new perspective. I now have a strong appreciation for business owners who genuinely attempt to embed their employees by using retention strategies. The Doctorate of Business Administration degree is a remarkable achievement, and I look forward to it facilitating my future endeavors.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore the strategies that some hospitality business owners use to decrease employee turnover in purposefully selected establishments in the northwest region of Florida. Since reducing employee turnover improves productivity and possibly profitability, the implementation of effective employee retention strategies is critical to businesses' survival. High employee turnover rates place organizations at risk and may create turmoil within the organization. Actual reductions in hospitality sector employee turnover rates are possible if leaders implement strategies aimed at increasing job satisfaction and decreasing job dissatisfaction. Throughout the research, I learned that voluntary employee turnover is not a simple business problem solved with just one or two direct solutions. The findings from this study indicate that employee turnover is an ongoing challenge in the hospitality industry. Leaders must engage with employees to discover meaningful ways to increase embeddedness through innovative and modern techniques.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

[Date]

Re: Invitation for Participation in Academic Study

Dear [Name]:

My name is Michael McGuire, and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University, pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration. I am conducting research analyzing strategies hospitality owners use to decrease employee turnover. I would like to invite you to participate in an electronic interview that should take no more than 90 minutes. I am reaching out to you because you may fit the following criteria:

- At least 21 years of age
- Small-business owner in the hospitality sector
- Experience implementing employee retention strategies

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. To prevent compromise of your confidentiality in the study, your name and the name of your organization are confidential and only known to me.

If you wish to participate, please see the attached consent form, which provides additional information about the study.

Sincerely,

Michael McGuire

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date:

Participant Identification Code:

Interview: Hospitality Sector Employee Turnover

1. Begin the interview with personal introductions and an overview of the research topic.
2. Thank the participant for volunteering their time and experience.
3. Conduct a performance check on the audio recorder. Confirm the interviewee understands and still accepts the consent form. Ask the interviewee if he or she is ready to proceed.
4. Begin the recording with the time and date of the location, and indicate that the consent form signing took place prior to the beginning of the interview.
5. Interviews should last approximately 30-90 minutes for participants to respond to the eight interview questions.
6. During the interview, I will record in my reflexive journal, ask probing questions, and clarify as necessary.
7. Upon the completion of the interview, I will remind participants that I will contact them again to perform member verifications.
8. Thank the participant for taking the time to participate in the study.