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Strategies to Reduce Restaurant Employee Turnover Rates

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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Abstract

High employee turnover rates adversely affect profitability. Restaurant owners who fail to retain employees are at risk of increased employee turnover costs, reduced profit potential, and risk business failure. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor theory, the purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore leadership strategies to reduce employee turnover. Participants comprised 6 restaurant leaders based out of the same New York restaurant. Leaders participated in semistructured interviews to provide information on strategies they used to reduce employee turnover. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Three themes emerged: leadership, financial benefits, and contributing to a higher purpose. A key recommendation for restaurant leaders is to establish an ongoing process to ensure fair and competitive wages, advancing an organizational culture of leadership engagement, and creating organizational initiatives to contribute to positive social change in their community. The implications for positive social change include the potential for small business restaurant leaders to create jobs and support the regional communities' economic development.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my wife, Nadja Dewey. Thank you for standing by my side and for encouraging me to go the distance. Many times, I wanted to turn off the doctorate road; however, you inspired me to push forward. Your dedication and commitment to me are unwavering and a tribute to the genuine person you are.

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First, I must acknowledge God, my rock, and my redeemer. Thank you for always forgiving my mistakes and for lighting my path. Next, I want to thank Dr. Jamiel Vadell, Dr. Gregory Washington, and Dr. Judith Blando, who challenged me to do more and to see things through a different lens. The continuous feedback through phone calls, emails, and relentless blackboard discussion proved effective.

To Dr. Joyce Conner-Boyd and Dr. Marcia Adams, thank you for the guidance, encouragement, and for dedicating countless hours of personal time toward me and others in our classroom to ensure all were on task. Both of you demonstrated a testament of selfless service and dedication through your actions over the past two years.

Lastly, to my colleagues who made the doctorate journey alongside me. Earning the highest educational degree is challenging and laced with unforeseen roadblocks. The journey would not have been the same without the partnerships and collaboration. Some have already graduated and moved to the next challenge, while others are in the final stages of completing their study – keep up the hard work, and thank you for making a difference!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

High employee turnover negatively affects a company's profit margin, performance, product quality, and the health of an organization. As of February 2019, over 66.6 million people fell into an employee turnover category, calculated over a 12-month period (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Retention strategies may contribute to an organization's ability to minimize turnover and to improve profit margin (Edmans, 2012; Moreland, 2013; Ravari, Bazargan-Hejazi, Ebadi, Mirzaei, & Oshvandi, 2013). The findings within this study stand to improve on perspectives regarding strategies for reducing turnover within an organization. In Section 1 of this study, I expand on the existing problem and highlight the research method used to understand employee turnover within a restaurant based out of upstate New York. In this study, I also provide a detailed list of professional literature qualifying the need for new research in this area, as well as the contribution to business practices within the restaurant industry.

Background of the Problem

Employees are critical to a company's success (Ganesh, 2016). Controlling high turnover rates within an organization continues to be a challenge for all employers. Companies should consider recruitment, development, and incentives to retain quality employees (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016). Employee turnover, which includes quits, layoffs, discharges, and other separations, could cost an organization about 200% of an employee's annual salary (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Understanding employee recruitment and retention strategies could play a role in an organizations' ability to succeed. Companies rely on competent leaders to sustain profits (Nwokocha & Iheriohanma, 2012).

Employee turnover hinders the performance of organizations, operations, customer relations, and morale of employees (Lee, Hom, Eberly, & Li, 2017). Employers must retain a talented employee to survive against competitor restaurants (Mohr, Young, & Burgess Jr., 2012). Performance within an organization slows when a trained employee leaves, and a new employee starts work. Employee production is also hindered during employee turnover times. Customer relations are affected by employees in training, especially in the restaurant industry. To retain talented employees, additional research on employee turnover is needed to provide restaurant managers with strategies used by different managers.

Problem Statement

High employee turnover rates adversely affect profitability (Lee, Hom, Eberly, & Li, 2017). In the United States, employee turnover was 43% in 2017, costing businesses about 200% per replaced employee in annual salary (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). The general business problem is that some employers spend an excessive amount on employee training only to lose trained employees because of high turnover rates. The specific business problem is that some restaurant leaders lack strategies to mitigate employee turnover, which results in profit loss.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore strategies restaurant employers can use to mitigate employee turnover, which results in profit loss.

The study population consisted of six restaurant leaders from the same organization based out of Greece, NY. The findings of this study may reduce employee turnover within organizations. Increasing employment ratios, reducing poverty within families, and improving family relationships enhances social change. Improving community employment ratios may reduce insecurity and may improve living conditions that may contribute to positive social change (Dyllick & Muff, 2015).

Nature of the Study

The nature of the current study was to discover what strategies restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover. I chose a qualitative study to explore the specific business problem by analyzing collected data to gain a new understanding of strategies for reducing employee turnover in New York. Qualitative methodology was suitable for an exploratory study and is used to gain understanding through participants' experiences (F, 2018). I did not use the quantitative method in this study because examining the relationship between variables or differences between groups through testing hypotheses was not my desired goal. Using a mixed-method research design requires combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to address complex business problems (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). I did not use the mixed methods approach because the purpose of this study only required qualitative data, not quantitative data. I used a qualitative semistructured interview with open-ended questions to explore the strategies that restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover.

For this research, I selected a single case study design. A case study is a research strategy that investigates a phenomenon in a real-life context (Saunders et al., 2015). I used an in-depth exploratory study. Qualitative designs such as narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography were not suitable for this study. The narrative approach requires the researcher to capture the stories of participants, which is not appropriate for an in-depth exploratory study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I did not document historical decisions made by individuals and how those decisions may impact retention strategies; therefore, the narrative approach was not appropriate for this study. Phenomenology may be used to explore the meanings of experiences of participants within the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology was not suitable for this study because I did not explore the lived experiences of the participants within the phenomenon. If a researcher intends to develop a new theory based on data, then the grounded theory design may be used (Smith, Leslie, & Wynaden, 2015). I did not intend to develop a new theory based on data; therefore, the grounded theory design is not suitable for this study. Ethnographic researchers may explore business problems that exist within a cultural or unique scope distinct from business norms. I did not want to identify cultural uniqueness within the population study; therefore, the ethnographic approach is not appropriate for this study. I selected the case study design to conduct an in-depth exploration of strategies that restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover. The qualitative methodology encourages the researcher to use data from multiple sources to increase the validity, reliability, and credibility of the study (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Question

The research question for this study was: What strategies do restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover?

Interview Questions

The interview questions for addressing the research question were:

1. What are the successful employee retention strategies in the organization?
2. What strategies, if any, are used to provide job-based feedback to employees?
3. What strategies, if any, have been most successful for motivating the organization's employees?
4. What strategies, if any, are focused on promoting employee advancement in the organization?
5. Based on your experiences, how does leadership play a role in employee retention?
6. What additional information would you like to share?

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a roadmap, much like a schematic with relevant concepts suitable for rigorous study (Peter & Peter, 2017). I used the two-factor theory of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) as the conceptual framework for this study. Herzberg et al.'s model link employee turnover through the two-factor theory, which includes hygiene factors and motivational factors. The two-factor theory yields an explanation of hygiene and motivational factors, which could affect an employee's job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). Hygiene factors surrounding employee's workspace include work requirements, pay, benefits, and interpersonal relationships with both coworkers and supervisors (Herzberg, 1987).

Herzberg et al.’s (1959) hygiene or dissatisfiers include working conditions, policies and administrative practices, salary and benefits, supervision, status, job security, fellow workers, and personal life. Employee turnover stems from adverse working conditions or poor administrative practices. Salary and benefits are the driving factors for some employees to stay or change jobs. Job security can play a role in higher employee retention.

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivators or satisfiers include recognition, achievement, advancement, growth, responsibility, and job challenge. Herzberg et al. argued that job satisfaction is an attitude that improves performance and commitment to an organization. The two-factor theory relies on managers who try to increase employee job satisfaction, and job performance is an indication of the factors affecting employee job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). The correct level of motivation or satisfiers could improve employee retention. Herzberg et al.’s 1959 theory of hygiene and motivational factors could affect an employee’s job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and may be useful toward a better understanding of employee turnover.

Operational Definitions

Dissatisfiers: Also known as motivating factors, highlight employee achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and growth (Herzberg, 2018).

Extrinsic motivators: Also referred to as extrinsic factors, or hygiene factors, and refers to basic physical needs (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2017).

Gestalt: Aligned to Gestalt theory (1922), gestalt links visual layout aligned to perception. Parts of a whole simplifying a problem grouping similar things together (Fischer, 2017)

Hard Elements: Aligned to McKinsey 7s Model (1970s), hard elements include structure, strategy, and systems collectively and reference a company's organizational design (Bhattacharyya, 2013).

Hygiene factors: Herzberg's two-factor theory aligns with hygiene factors within the workplace and includes the work environment, salary, job security, and relationships (Herzberg, 2018).

Intrinsic motivators Are motivation factors and highlight emotional needs (Herzberg et al., 2017).

Motivators: Herzberg's two-factor theory aligns motivators to intrinsic factors like rewards, recognition, goals, advancement, and increased responsibility (Herzberg, 2018).

Self-actualization: A concept where an individual reaches full potential (Herzberg, 2018).

Soft Elements: Aligned to McKinsey 7s Model (1970s), soft elements include skills, style, staff, and shared values collectively and reference a company's organizational design (Bhattacharyya, 2013).

Transformational leadership: Transformational Leadership is subordinate motivation and empowerment toward the achievement of extraordinary outcomes (Geier, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are part of qualitative studies and must be defined. Assumptions are unverified factors researchers consider to be factual (Madsen, 2013). Limitations are out of a researcher's control. Delimitations are restrictions controlled by the researcher to define the scope of the study (Yin, 2016).

Assumptions

Researchers accept assumptions, despite risks, as beliefs or factors possibly influencing a study without empirical or theoretical support (Akaeze & Akaeze, 2017). I assumed that restaurant managers would have specific employee retention strategies. I also assumed that I would identify a population of restaurant managers who have low employee turnover. Additionally, I assumed all participants involved in the study would be honest when answering interview questions. Finally, I assumed all selected participants would schedule the appropriate amount of time to provide a face-to-face interview.

Limitations

Limitations are the restraints on the study's findings beyond the control of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), which could be considered probable weaknesses of the study (Olufowote, 2017). A limitation was that participants may not have been able to articulate the details of implemented strategies to reduce employee turnover. Yin

(2016) acknowledged that memories are overloaded with information, and being able to recall specific events without some distortion might be problematic. Additionally, a limitation is the variability of the restaurant manager's schedule and having the opportunity to conduct a face-to-face interview in a timeframe conducive to completing the study. One limitation was that all interview participants came from the same geographical location in New York. Another limitation was that turnover retention strategies may be unique to each manager, which may have affected data saturation. The final limitation was that the findings from this study cannot be generalized to other businesses, industries, or locations because of the small sample size. Despite limitations, qualitative research provides scientifically potent and socially acceptable knowledge-making ideas aligned to real-world importance (Henwood, Dicks, & Housley, 2019).

Delimitations

A study's delimitations are factors controlled by the research, including, but not limited to, participant selection and sampling techniques (Muqadas, Rehman, Aslam, & Ur-Rahman, 2017). A delimitation for this study was the geographical location; all participants were from Greece, New York. Researching restaurant leaders was another delimitation. Another delimitation was the sample size. Qualitative research allows for a smaller sample size, whereas more time is needed for a larger sample size (Yin, 2016). Another delimitation would be to ask subordinates their opinion on their leaders' retention strategies.

Significance of the Study

High employee turnover is costly and reduces an organization's efficiency and performance (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). The highest cost for most organizations is employee wages and training. By making monetary contributions, donations, and creating new job opportunities, profitable restaurants can bring positive change to communities. Employee retention is critical to restaurant owners because retaining talented employees contribute to increased profit margins (Alshanbri et al., 2015). The hospital industry reported an example of costly employee turnover with reported losses of $1 billion of potential profit annually as a result of high employee turnover rates (Guchait, Cho, & Meurs, 2015). Employers from all organizations are negatively impacted by high employee turnover, which includes, but is not limited to, continuity gaps in production, training, and increased overhead spending from high employee turnover.

Contribution to Business Practice

Employee turnover can be defined as costs associated with hiring and retraining new employees (Lee, 2018). Lee (2018) noted employee turnover costs should include new employee training up to similar levels of productivity of the previous employee. The overhead costs associated with employee separation contributes to increasing employer expense. Employee turnover was reportedly 43% in 2017, costing businesses approximately 200% per replaced employee in annual salary (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

Employee turnover imposes a tremendous financial burden on an organization. In addition to additional costs of training, high turnover also influences lower employee morale and image within public opinion (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). Low profitability leads to a decrease in financial and professional resources (Arnoux-Nicolas, Sovet, Di Fbio, & Bernaud, 2016). Employee turnover negatively affects an organization's bottom dollar because of increased overhead budgeted toward training new employees.

Leaders may gain a financial benefit from this study's findings by adopting strategies to minimize employee turnover. As profits increase, the organization may provide increased employee benefits, increase the quality of the service they provide, enhance the environment to the customer, and increase their marketing campaign to sell more products. As a restaurant demonstrates additional service to the community and employees, the reputation of the restaurant increases, which influences the greater desire for employment and utilization of the restaurant for meals. Employment hiring strategies to improve employee retention could lower restaurant costs and increase profits.

Implications for Social Change

Implications for social change include improved community employment ratios, reducing poverty among families. Reduced employee turnover may lead to higher employee engagement within organizations, which may limit poverty. Employers can increase employee engagement by giving employees the motivation to stay with the organization to reducing employee turnover and reducing poverty. Involved employees typically have lower turnover and unemployment rates, which benefits local economies (Memon, Salleh, & Baharom, 2016). Businesses with increased employee engagement equate to increased productivity and can promote growth within communities. Employees, employers, families, and communities can benefit from increased employee retention, which may contribute to positive social change (Lee, 2018).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

I conducted a review of the professional and academic literature to identify studies about employee turnover and to explore the strategies restaurant leaders used to reduce employee turnover. This literature review served as the groundwork for exploring reasons for employee turnover in the restaurant industry and other retail establishments. My goal for this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that restaurant owners use to minimize employee turnover and retain talented restaurant employees. Retention of employees is critical to achieving a competitive advantage (Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016).

The Herzberg two-factor theory is the basis of the conceptual framework for this study, with emphasis on motivating factors and hygiene factors. Herzberg's two-factor theory aligns with this study and includes supervision, employment conditions, salary, and job security. Herzberg's two-factor theory consists of both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Additional themes reviewed included a review of the restaurant industry, employee turnover, employee retention, and transformational leadership.

I reviewed articles and journal entries depicted in Table 1 from Science Direct, Emerald Management Journals, Sage, ABI/Inform Complete, Business Source Complete/Premier, PsycINFO, and ProQuest Central. I used the following keywords when conducting searches: *employee turnover*, *job turnover*, *leadership, leadership style*, *restaurant profitability*, *restaurant sustainability*, *job culture*, *toxic leadership*, *toxic culture*, *leadership*, *business performance*, *job satisfaction*, *Herzberg theory*, *two-factor theory*, *poor leadership*, *employee retention*, *leadership turnover*, *employee satisfaction*, *organizational commitment*, and *employee motivation.* The federal government publications were retrieved from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to obtain statistics on total separations in the United States.

Table 1

Source of Data for Literature Review

Literature Review Source Content	Total	Total Within Years of Expected Graduation Date	% Within 5 Years of Expected Graduation Date
Peer review journals	92	85	91%
Government websites	5	4	80%
Books	10	8	80%
Total	106	82	77%

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

The conceptual framework for this study was the motivation-hygiene theory by Herzberg et al. (1959), also known as the two-factor theory. Analyzing data, understanding raw data, turning data into information, and developing themes all support conceptual framework throughout this study. Support for Herzberg's two-factor theory includes a proper understanding of job satisfaction factors and the impact on employee turnover. Herzberg's two-factor theory focuses on extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors that are connected to employee's motivation. Herzberg (1987) aligned motivating employees with two groups within the Herzberg's two-factor theory: hygiene factors and motivators.

Understanding employee behavior is key to understanding how employees will both act and react to situations within an organization (Herzberg, 1966). Herzberg's two-factor theory is known worldwide as a framework to motivate employees (Herzberg, 1987). Herzberg noted relationships between employees and what motivates employees in his study (Herzberg et al., 1959). Also indicated by Herzberg (1987) were relationships that dissatisfied employees. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) conceptual framework is used by scholars to understand motivators and dissatisfiers applied to current organizations enabling shared understanding about where to gain efficiencies minimizing employee turnover.

The motivator factors of Herzberg's theory include achievement and recognition; work itself, responsibility, and advancement; salary; and 10 infrequently appearing factors (Herzberg et al., 2017). Motivator factors hinge on job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 2017). The hygiene factors of Herzberg's theory include work conditions, coworker relations, policies and rules, supervisory quality, boss relations, salary, and job security (Herzberg et al., 2017). The hygiene factors are influenced by intrinsic considerations and are aligned to job dissatisfaction.

Motivating factors. Achievement is the first of the motivating factors and is defined in Herzberg's theory as the output from the accomplishment of work itself (Herzberg et al., 2017). Employees feel satisfaction from achieving work accomplishments. Achievement, also referenced as quality performance, is labeled as the primary reason employees are motivated at work (Herzberg et al., 2017). Achievement motivates employees by instilling a sense of accomplishment and pride within themselves.

Recognition includes feedback from both managers and coworkers. The source of recognition is typically accepted by employees from all sources, including, but not limited to, supervisors, managers, coworkers, clients, peers, professional colleagues, or the public (Herzberg et al., 2017). The work itself provides a level of accomplishment and satisfaction when the work provides growth or a sense of meaning for the employee. The work itself is also the input to the output of achievement and growth provided the work is quality and meaningful (Herzberg et al., 2017).

In Herzberg's two-factor theory, responsibility is defined as self-scheduling, the authority to communicate, control of resources, and accountability (Herzberg et al., 2017). In general, some employees appreciate being trusted to perform duties, which adds to an employee's motivation to do well in the organization. Advancement and growth give employees goals to strive for. Factors of advancement and growth align with work itself and responsibility (Herzberg et al., 2017). Advancement or growth within a job motivates some employees. When career advancement is aligned with more responsibility and meaningful work, an employee is more likely to be motivated about the job.

Hygiene factors. Hygiene factors are tied to emotional connections an employee feels about a situation. Employees can be dissatisfied with an unpleasant environment, ultimately leading to premature employee turnover (Herzberg et al., 2017). Work conditions referenced in Herzberg’s two-factor theory include ventilation, lighting, tools, space, and other conditional considerations within an employee’s working environment (Herzberg et al., 2017). An employee's motivation could be hindered from a substandard working environment. Coworker relations referred to Herzberg's two-factor theory as interpersonal relations and includes interpersonal relations superior, interpersonal relations subordinate, and interpersonal relations peers (Herzberg et al., 2017).

Employee motivation is positively or negatively affected by the interaction between coworkers. Company policy referenced in Herzberg's two-factor theory dissatisfies employees when organization policy is unfair or inadequate (Herzberg et al., 2017). Policy ties into hygiene factors, more than motivation factors, because when the policy is expected to be good and does not stimulate additional employee motivation. When the policy is unfair or inadequate, employees are more likely to resign prematurely.

Supervision is a hygiene factor within Herzberg’s two-factor theory when inadequate supervision is a consideration (Herzberg et al., 2017). An unreasonable boss or unfair manager can lead to employment unhappiness for the worker. On the other hand, a good supervisor does not lead to employee motivation because a good boss is expected. Boss relations are included in interpersonal relations referenced in Herzberg's two-factor theory. An employee's motivation is positively or negatively affected by interaction with leadership (Herzberg et al., 2017).

Salary in Herzberg’s two-factor theory is referenced in the motivator factors and the hygiene factors (Herzberg et al., 2017). For motivator factors, employees were not motivated by expected pay or benefits. For hygiene factors, employees were motivated or dissatisfied by salary when the pay was considered unfair (Herzberg et al., 2017). Job security referenced in Herzberg's two-factor theory is an employee's tenure consideration or a company's stability or instability (Herzberg et al., 2017). Job security is a hygiene factor, for example, when an employee fears pending employment termination.

Development of the two-factor theory. Research into the two-factor theory continues in current studies. Matei and Abrudan (2016) believed motivational factors are actions all employees choose to initiate. Motivators are influential factors that influence job satisfaction and include recognition, work duties, responsibility, growth potential, and employee advancement within the organization (Lukwago, Basheka, & Odubuker, 2014). The lack of employee motivation has a direct impact on turnover rates. Discontented and unproductive employees can lead to a lack of productivity and a high rate of turnover (Ncube & Samuel, 2014).

Employees are driven by internal motivation often contribute to a company's growth (Kerns, 2014; van der Walt, 2018). Employees' internal motivation is often stimulated by work duties and responsibility (Lukwago, Basheka, & Odubuker, 2014). Happy employees minimize employee turnover and maximize employee productivity. Organizations benefit from employee motivation range from increased productivity to increased company growth (Ali, 2020).

Job enrichment has a definitive effect on making employees satisfied with their roles within an organization. Often companies include job satisfaction, reducing turnover, and improving the productivity of employees as metrics for the organization's success rates resulting in increased productivity (Larkin, Brantley-Dias, & Lokey-Vega, 2016). Recognition and responsibility are growth factors that have a significant influence on workplace motivation (Civre, Lovec, & Fabjan, 2013).

Supporting and contrasting theories. Maslow's motivational theory highlights the five levels of needs: physiological, security, social, esteem, and self-actualizing needs (Maslow, 1943). In Maslow's 1943 paper, Maslow discussed the hierarchical order of individual needs and that the individual assigns the level of importance to those needs, and each need is unique. Motivational needs of workers coincide with an individual's current situation, and that low-level needs will not motivate employees unless a situational change occurs (Maslow, 1943).

Both Maslow (1943) and Herzberg (1959) stated individuals, to be contained within a defined situation, must achieve specific needs. Maslow's theory defines a hierarchy of needs. Herzberg's two-factor theory, a two-way paradigm (i.e., hygiene and motivators), is the basis of the theory, which states that a person's needs must meet two specific requirements. Maslow (1943) categorized human needs, not reflecting highly on areas such as individual emotions, whereas Herzberg's two-factor theory focuses on hygiene and motivators.

In contrast, Herzberg was more specific in areas of physiological and tangible aspects of needs within individuals to inspire motivation (Herzberg, 1959). Herzberg et al. (1959) noted self-actualization should be considered in Maslow's theory. Furthermore, employers should provide self-actualization techniques as the catalyst for employee motivation, which is also aligned to Maslow's theory. Herzberg's theory was prescriptive, and the data were collected through professional interviews and provided insights into incentives and goals that satisfy individual needs (Herzberg, 1959). In contrast, Maslow identified the needs and motives of the individual studied (Maslow, 1943). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is well known throughout the world as a five-tiered model, with each level supporting the next.

In 1969, Alderfer identified the Existence, Relatedness, and Growth (ERG) theory (Alderfer, 1969). Expanding on Alderfer theory, three categories of human needs known as ERG, Alderfer identified physiological and psychological needs. Existence was the only physiological need. Alderfer argued an individual's internal drive to satisfy multiple needs at one time could be reflective of a motivational factor. In comparison, Herzberg (1959) focused on employee needs building toward motivation depending on motivational factors.

McClelland and Burnham (1976) expanded on the theories of needs and identified how the individual need for power, achievement, and affiliation influence individuals. Workshops with hundreds of employees in 25 U.S. corporations were conducted by McClelland and Burnham (1976). Findings from these workshops identified three motivational groups: those with a need for achievement, those with a need for affiliation, and those with a need for power. Individuals that need achievement focus on achievement levels and subsequently look for careers with a similar level of risk (McClelland, 1995). The affiliation need is like the need for achievement in that the higher the need, the higher the risk (Orlowski, Bufquin, & Nalley, 2020).

McClelland's (1995) theory has similarities with Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory. These two theories showed that high-achieving employees showed interest in motivators, and low-achieving employees were interested in hygiene factors. McClelland did not identify a lower order of needs. McClelland's (1995) theory aligns with self-actualization and self-esteem. The need for achievement within McClelland's theory was not identical to Herzberg's motivators or Maslow's higher-order or needs; however, there are some similarities as described.

Other Theories Considered

In the following section, I address theories not used as the framework for this study. The research in this study is focused on employee turnover and how employee turnover affects the restaurant industry. The research is also focused on ways to minimize employee turnover, which could increase profit margins within the restaurant industry and ultimately positively affect social change. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) conceptual framework are the building blocks for a researcher to understand employee motivators and dissatisfiers. Armed with research highlighting motivators and dissatisfier knowledge, an organization gains a better understanding of where to gain efficiencies to minimize employee turnover.

The alternative theories referenced throughout this study could provide useful information as consideration of the root causes of employee turnover. The framework alignment between different theories highlighted in Table 2 is a summary comparison between the various theories as they relate to possible employee turnover indicators. Other theories included in this study were McKinsey 7S Framework, Kotter's eight-step change model, Five Disciplines Systems Thinking, and Theory Gestalt Theory (G.T.).

Table 2

Theory Comparison Related to the Root Cause of Employee Turnover

Conceptual Framework Theory Name	Year Introduced	Author/Theorist	Key Component(s) of Theory
Herzberg’s two-factor theory	1959	Frederick Herzberg	Two factors: Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivators; achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, promotion, growth, pay and benefits, company policy, coworker relationships, supervision, status, job security, working conditions, and personal life.
McKinsey 7S Framework	The late 1970s	McKinsey	Two elements: 7 elements including 3 hard (3H) and 4 soft elements (4S); 3H = structure, strategy, systems; 4S = shared values, skills, staff, style
Kotter’s eight-step change model	The late 1990s	Kotter	8-step model: Urgency, coalition, develop a vision, share vision, clear obstacles, win, keep moving, and anchor the change
Five Disciplines	The 1990s	Peter Senge	Five primary factors: Systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, and team learning
Systems Thinking Theory	1961	Jay Forrester	Steps: Identify a problem, develop a hypothesis, simulation model, test the model, policies, and implement the solution
Gestalt Theory (G.T.)	1922	Max Wertheimer	Four primary factors: Proximity, similarity, closure, and simplicity; grouping and proximity, focused on the overall structure of the problem.

McKinsey 7S model. McKinsey's 7S model is a model leader, and managers use for strategic change management. McKinsey's 7-S model consists of two elements, which include hard elements and soft elements. Hard elements of McKinsey's 7S model includes strategy, structure, and systems. Soft elements include shared values, skills, style, and staff (Bhattacharyya, 2013). McKinsey's 7S model was introduced in the late 1970s, and leaders have used this model to improve company performance for 3 decades because the 7S model works (Bhattacharyya, 2013). The 7-S model's hard element strategy includes a company's mission statement (Kaplan, 2005). Businesses' mission gives employees understanding, and shared understanding allows employees to work toward a common goal. Company value is underlying in a company's mission.

McKinsey 7S model is stakeholder and performance-based focused but does not align with employee retention considerations. McKinsey's 7S model provides a purpose for employees, which aligned with Herzberg's hygiene factors from the sense that the established company mission is rewarding, and the job is fulfilling. McKinsey's 7S model does not focus on employee motivation, and Herzberg's two-factor theory explores factors that motivate employees, making Herzberg's two-factor theory an overall better framework to employee root causes of employee turnover.

Kotter's eight-step model. The eight-step model of Kotter is about leading change and strategic transformation. Kotter's model includes creating a sense of urgency, building a team or coalition, developing a strategic vision, sharing the vision, clearing obstacles, short-term wins, sustainment, and institute change (Dyer, J., Godfrey, P., Jensen, R., & Bryce, D., 2016). Kotter's model, which creates a sense of urgency, sets the stage for change because people must believe change is critical. Building partners that share the same ideas equate to building a coalition. Between the coalition, sharing ideas with the same theme further developed the visions which can then be implemented. Some obstacles need to be removed. Some employees or teammates might get discouraged when the outcome fails to go as planned. Small wins are significant because small wins build motivation and encouragement.

Comparing Kotter's model to Herzberg's model, Kotter's model aligns with Herzberg's motivating factors because both models highlight wins. Ensuring leadership capitalizes on small wins and building on a shared vision is team building (Dyer et al., 2016). Herzberg's motivating factors hinge on achievement, recognition for accomplishment, and opportunity for growth (Herzberg et al., 2017). Herzberg's model focuses more on the employee, and Kotter's model focuses more on the organization, making Herzberg's model a better framework for understanding the cause of employee turnover.

Five disciplines. The five disciplines model, initially developed by Senge in the 1990s, includes systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, and team learning components. The five-discipline model is a system change management model (Senge, 2006). Systems thinking ties into processes. Organizations that use the five-discipline model categorize themselves as a learning organization. Personal mastery is a characteristic in everyone, which hinges on wanting to be the best at what a person does. For companies, striving to improve the organization is an ongoing saga because change is always occurring. Like Kotter's eight-step model, Senge's five discipline model includes a vision step. A shared vision is imperative for organizations to endure change and for change management to be effective. Feedback is a crucial component of the Systems thinking theory (Stritch, Molina, & Favero, 2020). Feedback ties into team learning, which stimulates growth and allows change to be sustainable within an organization.

Systems thinking theory. Forrester (1961) developed systems thinking theory; the theory is made up of several components. Systems thinking includes identifying a problem, explaining the cause of the problem, building a simulation of the problem, testing the model, testing the model which alleviates the problem, and implementing a solution. Systems thinking is tied to parts and is part of a surrounding medium made from other systems (Broks, 2016). Systems thinking is compared to the five disciplines theory developed in the 1990s.

Gestalt theory (G.T.). Gestalt theory (1922) pertains to the association. First, the proximity of grouped ideas is critical to this theory because comparing things in a grouping manner provides a better overall observation. Similar items fit a grouping concept and provide a holistic picture. Closer is the third step in the gestalt theory and hinges on bringing things to close together to provide simplicity, which is the fourth step. Ultimately, gestalt theory is based on seeing the problem, grouping the problem, and simplifying the problem for a sustainable outcome.

According to Fischer (2017), gestalt is a process that is linked to fields associated with each other. Simplifying the problem, based on grouping similar things together, and comparable to systems thinking, in that things are related, and work together to provide potential solutions. Gestalt is an order and structure theory that is useful for sustainability practices because it is needed for sustainable operations.

Transformational Leadership

The concept of transformational leadership is the ability of a leader to inspire and stimulate followers to work towards the good of the whole and not the individual (Bormann & Rowold, 2016). Transformational leaders may have a significant connection between how leaders influence the work environment and how it may impact turnover and job satisfaction (Jenkins, & Sherman, 2020). Bormann and Rowold (2016) stated transformational leadership have a relationship with employee satisfaction.

Transformational leaders help to transform organizations by pioneering new methods for productivity, which may positively impact the overall environment (Bormann & Rowold, 2016). Transformational management highlights a triple axes approach, which includes top-down direction setting, bottom-up performance improvement, and core process redesign cross-functionally within the organization (Bormann & Rowold, 2016). Transformational employers may allow for a significant influence on mitigating turnover among employees, which may have a profound effect on sustainable profitability for the organization (Choi, Gho, Adam, & Tan, 2016).

Transformational managers have positive relationships with employees, which fosters a higher degree of satisfaction, performance, motivation, commitment, and profitability for the organization (Jati, Hassan, Harman, Jabar, & Majid, 2015). Referenced leaders promote individual development, distinctive coaching, encouragement, and intellectual motivation (Lee, Fernandez, & Lee, 2020). Leaders who follow a transformational philosophy can influence their employees through intellectual stimulation. Transformational managers encourage employees to challenge the norm openly, question the standards, and help to define and evolve the vision.

Transformational bosses have a core sense of community; they sincerely care about the well-being of employees and create a sense of trust with one-another (Jati et al., 2015). The needs of the employees are of interest to a transformational leader; the leader is genuinely considerate of the needs of the employee (Hentrich et al., 2017). Leaders demonstrating transformational leadership tendencies are the preferred leaders in the twenty-first century (Dike, Odiwe, & Ehujor, 2015).

Personality

Personality is defined as traits and patterns which influence an individual to think, believe, and behave in a specific way (Spielman, 2017). Researchers have found evidence to support the connection between personality characteristics and the individual's ability to deal with stress. These findings may link personality traits and job satisfaction (Magnano, Paolillo, & Barrano, 2015). Employees view life through a lens aligned to personality traits. An employee striving for education benefits within an employment package might appreciate college classes funded by an organization as part of the employment.

Pre-employment personality tests are being used more frequently during the interview process. Personality tests assist management in defining strengths and weaknesses within a candidate and can help to determine if an applicant is a good fit within the organization (Yildirim, Gulmez, & Yildirim, 2016). When utilizing a Gallup assessment tool, results showed the use of the employee personality tests decreased voluntary turnover from 1.26% to 1.11%, and total turnover may decline from 1.66% to 1.51% (Yildirim, Gulmez, & Yildirim, 2016).

Background of the Restaurant Industry.

Restaurant organizations are part of the hospitality industry (Backman, Klaesson, & Oner, 2017). The hospitality industry is one of the most significant sectors worldwide, contributing to employment and the gross domestic product (Karavardar, 2014). The hospitality industry, which includes restaurants, is one of the most labor-intensive industries (Tracey, 2014). Leadership within the restaurant industry may benefit from low employee turnover rates, which could influence competitive advantages and profitability targets (Tracey, 2014).

Managers within the restaurant industry are high-risk businesses and immensely competitive. There exists saturation within the restaurant sector that may impede growth initiatives (Jogaratnam, 2017). There is a defined need for managers to develop and execute strategies to reduce employee turnover and retain valuable staff to maintain a competitive advantage and sustainability within the sector (Chawinga & Chipeta, 2017). The sharing of strategies amongst restaurant managers is limited because of the need to retain high caliber employees.

The strategic vision of management is essential for the overall success of the restaurant. The restaurant business model is highly imitative and simplistic; however, complications may arise because of management's ineffectiveness with employee relations (Seo, Kim, & Sharma, 2017). Restaurant leaders have a profound influence on the overall success of the establishment. The output of decisions affects the intangible and tangible metrics (Tang et al., 2014).

The human element within the restaurant business can become a catalyst to contention and lack of productivity. Inconsistencies, human error, and turnover are primary factors for high turnover and a failure to execute on strategic initiatives (Kim & Jang, 2016). Implementation of training programs concentrating on efficiencies, service quality, and customer interaction strategies may mitigate employee turnover (Kim & Jang, 2016). High employee turnover, and a lack of training initiatives highlight inefficiencies, an increased cost of doing business, and a deficit to return on investment (Liang, Chang, Ko, & Lin, 2017). Despite retention challenges, the ability to train and retain staff creates organizational continuity, functionality for high performing teams, and effective business practices (Fernet, Trepanier, Austin, Gagne, & Forest, 2015). It is of high importance that managers create effective strategies to retain productive and valuable staff to capitalize on the competitive advantage.

Employee Turnover

Employee turnover negatively affects organizations. Losing top performing employees negatively affects both productivity and resources of an organization (Guha, & Chakrabarti, 2016). Additional experts concluded similar findings of employee turnover rates and the negative impact on organizations (Bothma & Roodt, 2012). The success of an organization hinges on a leaders' ability to foster sustainable business practices, profitability, and employee retention (McManus & Mosca, 2015).

Substantial consequences of high turnover include a negative impact on employee morale, organizational sustainability, and low productivity. In 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Statistics reported 65.5 million employees were involved in employment separations, an increase of 1.0% from 2017 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). An organization may lose upwards of $1M indirect costs because of the recruitment process, interviewing process, and training of employees (Memon et al., 2016).

Substantial employee turnover may cause the restaurant industry to incur significant direct and indirect costs related to recruiting, training, loss of productivity, and negatively impact profit margins (Puni, Agyemang, & Asamoah, 2016). As each employee leaves an organization, they take with them their experiences, knowledge, and relationships with coworkers and patients. Turnover is also associated with decreased customer satisfaction, decrease future growth, and lower organizational profitability. Nursing turnover can lead to higher general business destruction, including staffing instability and an inability to continue to meet the demand of customer needs (Oncology Nursing Society, 2018).

Turnover within the restaurant industry may not always be detrimental to the business. There are some benefits to turnover when the opportunity for new employees may provide a higher level of customer service, which can positively impact performance and profitability. Some benefits can exist with turnover, which prevails over the cost it generates. Benefits of turnover can include acquiring lower-paid replacement employees, more significant opportunities to promote restaurant employees who are loyal and stay employed by the hiring restaurant (Larkin et al., 2016). Also, to bring in new employees with new ideas, knowledge, and experiences. On average, turnover rates of 10-12 percent are considered healthy by leading scholars (Lider, Harper, Shon, Sellers, & Castrucci, 2016).

Management, as an entity, must be mindful of the impact of employee turnover and develop strategies to mitigate the overall effects on the business. Strategies to minimize employee turnover require a high degree of awareness and discipline during the recruitment stage to identify and select employees with a more significant potential of staying actively employed within the organization (Idris, 2014). Historically, entry positions have the highest rate of employee turnover (Tews, Stafford, & Michel, 2014). Strategies which implement a higher degree of discipline and rigor at the recruitment stage may help to mitigate employee turnover (Guilding, Lamminmaki, & McManus, 2014). Implementing discipline at the hiring stage may provide a significant benefit to the organization by limiting the high cost of retention and the cost associated with recruitment and training. The results of implementing retention strategies arising from a more streamlined approach to employee selection may result in a competitive advantage by optimizing the workforce that ultimately contributes to the organizational bottom line (Guilding et al., 2014).

Employee Motivation

Employee motivation can lead to increased productivity in the workplace (Herzberg, 1987). Researchers highlight the tangible and intangible aspects within the workplace, which have a definitive impact on employee motivation (Grönroos, 2017). Some of these factors may reflect pay, flexibility with schedules, respect, and benefits, to name a few. A dissatisfied employee may manifest in poor work performance and, ultimately, a lack of employee motivation and turnover. Both employee satisfaction and turnover yield different results within an organization, which mirrors the customer's attitude toward an organization (Grönroos, 2017). Employee motivation can be contagious to leaders, peers, and subordinates, fostering a productive atmosphere. Motivational factors, including responsibility and work itself, are intrinsic, which align with Herzberg's two-factor theory (Ciobanu, Androniceanu, & Lazaroiu, 2019).

A satisfied employee equates to a motivated employee providing the highest performance toward an organization's goals (Ciobanu et al., 2019). Motivations stem from a social exchange rapport within an organization based on fairness, value, and growth (McCarthy, Moonesinghe, & Dean, 2020). A better understanding of what people want in a job yields the answers to what motivates people. Herzberg's two-factor theory, which includes intrinsic motivators, and environmental hygiene factors, or extrinsic factors, provide a framework to help employers understand what motivates employees leading to decreased turnover (Herzberg et al., 2017).

Employee Retention

The catalyst to employee turnover may involve a multitude of factors, all of which have a profound effect on retention. The definition of employee retention is the strategy organizational leaders use to create an atmosphere where employees feel encouraged and inspired to remain with the organization (Belkin, Becker, & Conroy, 2020). A further definition of employee retention may be described as an organization's initiative to maintain their employees by offering performance rewards, fostering open and harmonious working relationships between employees and employers, and creating a safe and healthy work environment (Harmon, Kim, & Mayer, 2015). Managers need to be aware of the causes influencing employee turnover and implement strategies to mitigate these potential risks.

The need for productive and effective employees is critical throughout all phases or stages within the restaurant industry, from greeting the patron to food servers and cooks. Each of these stages may have a direct impact on defining and executing on competitive advantage within the market space (Rathi & Lee, 2015). The staff of a restaurant appears to be one of the most valuable assets within the organization. Management who can define and execute implementation strategies for improving employee retention may capitalize on sustainability and the creation of competitive advantage (Kamalzaman, Zulkerflee, Hamid, Sahari, & Halim, 2015).

The restaurant industry is extremely competitive and has a low barrier to entry. Strategies to improve and manage employee turnover is within itself a competitive advantage to retain a competent workforce. Managers understanding the indicators which may influence employee turnover can define strategies for improving retention of key staff members (Vasquez, 2014). When employers value the needs and wants of the employees, develop strong bonds with these employees, and recognize and value the output of employees, the result is a higher retention rate of these employees.

Employee retention strategies are directly impacted by effective leadership. Leaders who demonstrate confidence, embrace a supportive work environment, recognize, reward employees for successes, and have an emotional connection may be more likely to mitigate risks to the business because of employee turnover. Herzberg et al.'s model links employee turnover through the two-factor theory, which includes hygiene factors and motivational factors incorporating work requirements.

The two-factor theory could have an impact on employee retention. Herzberg's (1987) theory defines the need for hygiene and motivational factors, which could affect an employee's job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors surrounding employee's workspace include work requirements, pay, benefits, and interpersonal relationships with both coworkers and supervisors (Herzberg, 1987). Motivators or satisfiers include recognition, achievement, advancement, growth, responsibility, and job challenge. Herzberg (1987) argued that job satisfaction is an attitude which improves performance and commitment to an organization. The two-factor theory highlights managers who try to increase employee job satisfaction, and job performance should develop strategies to identify and address the factors affecting employee job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction depends on a productive and mutually relationship between the management of an employee. The perception an employee has about their job, role, and relationship within a company is a direct correlation to the level of job satisfaction (Bakotic, 2016). Many researchers describe job satisfaction as the behavior and attitude employees have toward his or her job and management (Bakotic, 2016). When the level of job satisfaction increases, the company may experience higher profit margins. In contrast, if employee job satisfaction is low, morale is low, productivity declines; therefore, negatively impacting profit margins.

Employees who view their work environment as a positive experience and an opportunity to grow have a higher level of job satisfaction and overall commitment to the employer (Birtch, Chiang, & Esch, 2016). Researchers have described job satisfaction as the cumulative sum of an employee's emotional and mental attitude toward their job, work environment, work conditions, and workload (Tews, & Stafford, 2020). The tangible aspects of a job such as benefits, salary, the opportunity for advancement and growth, relationships with coworkers and management, and the level of stress as essential metrics which can impact job satisfaction (Bakotic, 2016).

Leadership traits of management have a defined influence on job satisfaction of employees. Research within the restaurant industry has shown a correlation between turnover, employee satisfaction, and satisfaction with roles (Birtch et al., 2016). Leadership's ability to commit to creating an environment with satisfying employment and a positive relationship may impact organizational commitment and performance outcomes (Birtch et al., 2016). Job satisfaction plays a critical role in employee engagement and maybe the primary reason why an individual may leave a position (Tarvid, 2015).

Cost of Voluntary Turnover

Employee turnover and employee disengagement cost the restaurant industry over 200% of an employee’s annual salary (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Employee turnover costs should take into consideration both the tangible and intangible costs associated with it. Tangible costs associated with employee turnover may include administrative costs, advertising costs via job postings, employment screening, interview costs, background checks, training expenses, and costs associated with public relations (Meyer-Rath et al., 2015). Intangible costs may include job skills knowledge, market knowledge, relationships with colleagues and customers, and efficiencies of the organizational systems (Meyer-Rath et al., 2015).

Organizations can save $1.3 million yearly if they successfully reduce employee turnover by 1% (Hanzlik, 2014). Employees must invest in employees' skills to mitigate the risk of high turnover statistics. Restaurant employees engage with the public daily; the perspective of these interactions play a vital role in the overall success of the restaurant. Consumers become repeat customers based on the service they have received from the staff. Low-quality service and high turnover impact the potential profitability of a restaurant.

Strategic Leadership and Organizational Competitiveness

There is not a defined definition of the word strategy; however, there is a broad agreement among leaders who believe strategy is an essential soft skill set needed among business supervisors (Markides, 2014). Definitions may differ based on varying approaches restaurants use to prepare, implement, and integrate strategies amongst teams (Markides, 2014). New concepts on strategic roadmaps or initiatives should align with market demands to develop sustainable goals for strategic leaders to execute on (Markides, 2014). Defining these strategies may assist leaders in clarifying means to mitigate turnover risk and define short- and long-term goals to reach a competitive advantage (Markides, 2014).

Competitiveness within the market highlights the need to foster responsibility, creativity, recognition, and emotional trust within a strategic plan Pelser (2014). Additional factors influencing organizational competitiveness may include a highly experienced workforce and an internal and external knowledge base (Pelser, 2014). Organizational profitability is a primary goal of strategic leadership and sustainability (Pelser, 2014).

Strategic leadership may have a profound impact on an organization's success, supporting needed changes to occur for long term competitiveness. Barney and Hesterly (as cited in Nyamu, 2017) discussed two types of organizational competitiveness. These being temporary and sustainable competitiveness. Organizational competitiveness may be the catalyst for increased profitability (Nyamu, 2017). Defining strategies within the restaurant industry and the ability to maintain long-term staffing solutions is an essential part of maintaining organizational competitiveness and a differentiator with the competition (Nyamu, 2017).

The Role of Leadership in Sustainability

The restaurant industry is a highly competitive market characterized by competition and complex situations. Managers must stay ahead of the market changes to maintain their competitive position. Restaurants who take the lead on strategic initiatives may define initiatives needed for a competitive advantage (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). Leadership within the restaurant industry should embrace and guide sustainability throughout an organizational change (Jolly, & Self, 2020). In addition to the decisions required to be made by management, external forces and changes require the need to adjust to fluctuations within the market (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015).

Leadership can create growth and sustainability throughout the organization by providing a clear organizational vision. When a leader employs approaches that align with employee needs, the opportunity for sustainability and success is fostered (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). When an employee needs to coexist with sustainability goals in critical times of business, organizations can endure volatile times within the market (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). A shared understanding gained through published organizational goals fosters sustainable growth and success.

Strategy, leadership traits, and sustainability apply to all levels with the organization, primarily within interpersonal relationships throughout the hierarchy of staff (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). Strategic leadership plays a pivotal role in identifying problems and anticipating the solution to those problems in times of complexity (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). The role of a leader within the hospitality industry is to overcome challenges and incorporate actions to maintain sustainability (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015).

The role of leadership to create sustainability may differ based on the leadership style, or the vertical an organization is a part of (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). Leaders who incorporate strategy into a vision and recognize the importance of motivating factors and the need to develop an emotional connection with subordinates significantly increase the ability to capitalize on organizational stability and sustainability in the future (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). The future may be undefined and chaotic; however, the role of strategic management may minimize the variance in employee turnover and overall sustainability (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015).

The Effect of Senior Leadership on the Organizational Performance

According to Kraus and Insurance (2016), the guidance and soft-skills of leaderships are a valued piece needed to execute the organizational performance. Senior leadership within an organization is multi-faceted and has many objectives. Some objectives include maintaining a corporation’s environment, supporting values, and planning strategically. Other leadership agendas include, but are not limited to, organizational growth. The bottom line, senior leadership influences the overall performance of an organization.

Cohesion among leaders and staff has a direct impact on the organizational success (Kraus & Insurance, 2016). Cohesive managers work with one another and subordinates in harmony for the enlargement of organizational performance (Kraus & Insurance, 2016). Shared leadership within organizations promotes a high probability of sustained success and the ability to adapt to fluctuations within the industry (Kraus & Insurance, 2016). Shared leadership hinges on senior leaders transferring authority to subordinate leadership, which aligns with increased responsibility.

Senior leadership, which engages ineffective leadership initiatives for the development of a healthy work environment, is less likely to experience high turnover rates with employees (Harmon et al., 2015). Restaurant managers who engage in strong leadership skills can create a sense of loyalty and purpose among employees. An environment fostering happy employees offers a pleasurable atmosphere for customers.

Strong leadership includes fair employee treatment, which fosters cohesiveness within an organization.

According to Moon (2017), employee turnover rates negatively affect organizational performance. Employee turnover rates associated with unfair work-related outcomes align with social exchange theory. Moon (2017) noted the social exchange theory relates to employee turnover rates and organizational performance. Successful organizational performance is a byproduct of senior leader influence and happy employees. Senior leadership influences social exchange and work-related exchange within an organization (Moon, 2017). Employees who enjoy a working environment because of senior leader influence are less likely to explore different employment opportunities.

Senior leadership affects organizational performance positively or negatively, depending on the criteria. Fair and robust leadership fosters a sense of loyalty on an employee team (Islam, Jantan, Yusoff, Chong, & Hossain, 2020). Moon (2017) noted unfair treatment within an organization fosters a higher employee turnover rate, which negatively affects organizational performance. Selecting a male or senior female leader comes in forms of organizational, political, and even military and must consider a motivational framework which fosters organizational performance (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017).

Employee Retention Strategies

Employee retention strategies are a top priority for the restaurant industry. The workforce is a valuable resource a business leader must consider when managing a retail organization (Kamalzaman et al., 2015). Personnel departments, also known as Human Resource Departments, argue that the success of any organization includes leadership's ability to maintain top employees (Mandhanya, 2015). Training is one method a leader can use to retain top-performing employees. According to Mandhanya (2015), providing training for employees enables employers to ensure a developmental process occurs within an organization. Employees tend to consider training a benefit of the job and an opportunity for advancement within an organization. Kamalzaman et al., (2015) identified training development within a company increases the retention of performing employees and promotes employees' commitment to an organization.

Leadership and the role they play is a pivotal strategy to retain top performers within the restaurant industry (Mandhanya, 2015). Great leaders can create an environment which facilitates engagement among the employees and an atmosphere of confidence, both of which are crucial to the organization (Gupta & Shaheen, 2017). Building a sense of trust among empowering to an employee may also be leveraged as a retention strategy. Boyd (2017) stated trust is crucial in the development of relationships among employers and employees and helps to bolster the level of commitment to one another and the organization. Employers who align with and value employee insights and suggestions have a higher rate of engagement within the company.

Leaders need to show their teams they are trustworthy. The confidence and competence in which a manager portrays to the team are critical in getting followers to perform their jobs, especially under times of stress (Ozyilmaz, Erdogan, & Karaeminogullari, 2018). Developing these strong relationships with employees is vital in influencing the level of commitment. Employers who establish a clear vision and organizational goals can motivate employees and institute a sense of trust and purpose are more likely to create job performance and a low retention rate.

Skillsets restaurant employers desire from employees include but are not limited to talented cooks and proficient servers. Food services with positive attitudes foster a positive atmosphere for customers to enjoy a meal while in a relaxed setting (Fernandez, et al., 2019). Fernandez et al.'s, (2019) interviewed nearly one-hundred and fifty restaurant employees across sixty-two restaurants to gain a better understanding of employee motivation relating to the restaurant industry. Employers motivated employees within the restaurant industry by providing published visions aligned to organizational goals (Lester, 2020).

Restaurant managers face significant challenges which may test their leadership skillset. The relationship between employer and employee is a critical element to the overall success. Restaurant managers who are attentive and clear in their communications with employees facilitate a positive work environment, are more likely to mitigate some of the challenges which may arise in moments of high stress (Kamalzaman et al., 2015). The relationship between leaders and followers can be a crucial intangible indicator for the success of the business. Leaders can mitigate the risk of turnovers by being mindful of signs and symbols from employees which may become the catalysts to retention issues.

Summary and Transition

In Section 1 of my study, I provided a detailed review of theories which could be the root cause of employee turnover. I also included the interview questions, the conceptual framework, and appropriate operational definitions. Also included in Section 1 of this study is the significance of the study and the review of the professional and academic literature review. The literature review included an extensive analysis of valid research used to understand employee turnover.

Section 2 includes information about research methods and designs. I expanded on the selected research method and design for this study. In Section 2, I included the responsibility required of me as the data collection instrument for this study and provided information about the data collection, organization, and analysis process. Finally, I expanded on the requirement of me, as the data collection instrument, to ensure researched information contains both reliability and validity in my qualitative study.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 of this study focused on critical requirements for planning this research project. Subsections include a restatement of the purpose, the role of the researcher, and participant details. The research method and the project design were elaborated on in greater detail. The population is addressed, which also included sampling processes for obtaining details from participants. Interview based methods are often considered creative with a mind-to-world direction (Jellema, Annemans, & Heylighen, 2019). Final topics in Section 2 include ethical considerations, interview questions used in the research, data synthesis, data fusion, reliability, and validity.

Purpose Statement

High employee turnover rates adversely affect organizational profitability (Lee, Hom, Eberly, & Li, 2017). In the United States, employee turnover was 43% in 2017, costing businesses about 200% per replaced employee in annual salary (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). The general business problem is some employers spend an excessive amount on employee training only to lose trained employees because of high turnover rates. The specific business problem is some restaurant leaders lack strategies to mitigate employee turnover, which results in profit loss.

Role of the Researcher

I was the primary data collection instrument for this qualitative study. For qualitative research projects, researchers are the primary data collection instruments (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). A researcher’s role in the data collection process includes, but is not limited to, gathering information on a phenomenon, observing the phenomenon, organizing collected findings from research, evaluate data reliability, and validate the information (Yin, 2016). For this study, I reviewed and collected data from over 200 peer-reviewed case studies relating to employee turnover. Collecting data on employee turnover specific to the restaurant industry and compared employee turnover throughout all organizations provided a baseline of information about employee turnover. Preestablished open-ended interview questions provided the structure for interviews with restaurant leaders and added to the data collection of research on employee turnover (Yin, 2016).

I selected the topic of high employee turnover because of my management experience in both retail and government organizations. I examined employee turnover to understand root causes and learned methods to minimize the employee turnover phenomenon possibly. The selected data collection and sampling strategies assisted with providing open-minded possibilities on reasons organizations experience high employee turnover. Data collection must be broadly defined and open-minded in order to yield fruitful results (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

I minimized bias on the employee turnover phenomenon by being open-minded and by being the primary data collection instrument in this qualitative study (Yin, 2016). A well thought out interview questionnaire for this study was designed to be open-ended to yield rich data during the interview collection process (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). A researcher starts interviews with a necessary conversation to put the interviewee at ease, opening a dialog on the subject (Yin, 2016). I continued to mitigate bias on the employee turnover phenomenon by remaining open-minded throughout the data collection process. Accurate decision-making hinges on unbiased information (Featherston et al., 2018).

An interview protocol enables consistent outputs aligned to the researched employee turnover over the phenomenon. By asking participants opened-ended questions, I enabled the interviewee to respond beyond a single-word answer (Yin, 2016). Data collection in a qualitative study includes interviews and the results from the interviews. In qualitative studies, there are four methods for collecting data: interviewing, observing, collecting, and examining information (Yin, 2016).

Ethical considerations must be at the forefront of a researcher's mind because harming or doing wrong is counterproductive to progress. The 1949 Nuremberg Code through the 1979 Belmont Report hinges on three ethical principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Hasking, Lewis, Robinson, Heath, & Wilson, 2019). Demonstration of respecting a person, or persons, includes acknowledging a person's ideas. Requesting consent as a researcher is a step toward respecting an interviewee's autonomy as an individual. Recognizing people's rights as individuals and their right to decide for themselves is a cornerstone of ethical research (Hasking et al., 2019).

Beneficence, the second ethical principle, highlights the benefit to broader society. As a researcher, understanding the need for balanced and evidence-based research is a step toward adhering to the ethical principle beneficence (Hasking et al., 2019). Justice, the third ethical principle referenced in the Belmont Report, highlights justice for all involved throughout the research process. Justice includes, but is not limited to, all participants being treated fairly, and research findings that are justly articulated (Hasking et al., 2019). Appendix A includes my CITI training certificate of completion affirms successful training of the Protecting Human Subject Research Participants training.

Participants

The targeted population for this qualitative case study was three leaders from a restaurant based out of Greece, New York. Participants’ journals provided rich information to glean an understanding of the employee turnover phenomenon. Field-based data collected from participants included direct observations, interviews, focus groups, personal documents, participants’ journals, logs, and photographs (Yin, 2016). Also, an oversight to identify knowledgeable participants on employee turnover could impact data reliability and validity of the findings.

The criteria for the study participants included managerial positions within the restaurant industry. Participant selection is a critical step in the data collection process and determines the reliability and validity of the data outcome (Tian, Tang, & Ma, 2019). I visited the restaurant selected in this study to validate further study possibilities based on participant selection. Conducting face-to-face dialog with participants to validate eligibility is a preferred method in participant selection and allows additional observation (Sharp, 2019).

Possible communication options with participants include email, digital messaging, and official mail. Scholars need to obtain participants' trust before data collection starts (Condit et al., 2015). Opening a digital dialog with potential participants fosters a relationship that grows over time into trust between both parties. Skype is another digital tool used to conduct interviews. Internet-based tools, like Skype, are tools researchers use to connect to other people (Lo Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016).

A relationship between interviewer and interviewee is the framework for data collection during an interview. Words themselves are raw data; however, open-ended research questions yield a theme that leads to data saturation (Constantinou, Georgiou, & Perdikogianni, 2017). Data are collected and processed to gain a holistic understanding, which leads to a better understanding of the researched phenomenon.

Research Method and Design

Scholars need to consider an appropriate research method and design as the catalyst for answering the main research question on a quest to understanding a phenomenon (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). I used a qualitative method with a case study design for this research. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method are typical methods selected by scholars. Qualitative research is typically interpretive as scholars make sense of a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2015). A case study design goes beyond a research question and collecting data. Preparation, training, protocol, screening candidate cases, and a pilot case study are the vital elements in a case study project (Yin, 2018). The following subsections describe the chosen research method and design in greater detail.

Research Method

Exploring employee turnover through a qualitative research method aligned with participants' experiences by understanding the phenomenon in their words (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Providing a summarized collection of data reflecting what a person has experienced is the basis of the research method (Yin, 2018). Qualitative exploration hinges on a participants' experiences through their lens and a collection of data through member discussion (Ozdemir, 2019). Scholars capitalize on rich data for interviewees by asking participants open-ended interview questions. Open-ended interviews can take approximately 1 hour to yield rich data aligned to understanding a phenomenon and follow a case study protocol (Yin, 2018).

A qualitative study focuses on details from participants' experiences, where a quantitative study focuses on data or evidence. Qualitative studies extract understanding from peoples' experiences, and quantitative studies extract knowledge from data evidence (Yin, 2018). Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because of the flexibility over the other research methods. The purpose of the study was to explore strategies that restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover.

Qualitative research is aligned with understanding peoples' motivations, purposes, and experiences in an inclusive manner related to employee turnover (Ozdemir, 2019). Learning and understanding peoples' motivations, purposes, and experiences laid the foundations on understanding the employee turnover phenomenon. Scholars use a qualitative method to understand human experiences and insight, which are the building blocks toward grasping the phenomenon of employee turnover (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Based on the referenced reasons, I selected a qualitative approach to understand the research topic, rather than using a mixed-method or quantitative approach.

Research Design

I used a case study design for this study. There are four research design scholars typically use when conducting qualitative research, including case study, ethnography, phenomenology, and narrative research design (Yin, 2018). The research design is the backbone of a study in which scholars use to integrate components of a study into a completed project. A practitioner uses research design as a framework to align multiple data points and provide new evidence that yields new knowledge (Peavey & Vander Wyst, 2017). A research design provides a scholar with a blueprint to follow throughout the research process. According to Peavey and Vander Wyst (2017), practitioners use a research design as a unifying framework.

At a minimum, collecting data from two different sources is optimal. Yin (2018) provided examples when utilizing research design, such as direct observations, interviews, documentation, archival records, participant observations, and physical artifacts. Ensuring at least two sources are used when collecting data enables a scholar to reach data saturation. Scholars use case study design to gain a new perspective and a new understanding of the phenomenon being studied. A qualitative case study design provides researchers the ability to explore a phenomenon of an organization, person, group, or situation over some time to gain a new perspective (Peavey & Vander Wyst, 2017).

Population and Sampling

Researchers use willing participants from a targeted population when conducting qualitative research. Initially, I planned to interview three restaurant leaders from the same restaurant organization. Based on not reaching data saturation, three additional interviews were required for a total of six interviews. Interviewing six restaurant leaders provided the building blocks to reach data saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Data saturation is the main principle aligned to sample sizes in qualitative research (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). According to Hennink et al. (2017), reviewing 25 detailed interviews, Hennink reached data saturation within much fewer interviews. During the data-gathering phase of this study, I planned to use a single case study design to understand how managers retain high-performing employees. Factors that influence sample size include research design, characteristics, analytic approach, and resources (Hennink et al., 2017).

Population references a data set within a study (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016). Scholars must ensure the sample size is fitting for the researched phenomenon. Sample sizes too large waste research funds, time, and bog down data points (Hennink et al., 2017). Concurrently, smaller sample sizes are not large enough for risk failure in leading a scholar toward understanding the phenomenon.

Scholars need to select an interview setting that enables interviewees to share information without privacy concerns (Robinson, 2014) openly. A quiet office without distractions from people or noise is an example of such a location. Researchers must consider an excellent area to conduct interviews, including, but not limited to, privacy, distractions, and comfort (Shahian et al., 2013). When considering an interview location, scholars should seek approval to use a private area at the organization's site to conduct all interviews. To facilitate privacy and foster participation, I coordinated with the organization's leaders for a private location to conduct interviews onsite. According to Shahian et al. (2013), conducting interviews on location minimizes lost production while a planned interview takes place and eliminates the participants' requirement to travel.

Ethical Research

Researchers must wait to start data collection until receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Fiske & Hauser, 2014). Scholars must also seek permission from companies and provide interviewees with a consent form (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Providing a consent form to participants in conjunction with ample information about the study is the method researchers use to gain an interviewee’s permission with being part of a study (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Interviewees can ask questions and sign a voluntary agreement to participate during the informed consent process (Bristol & Hicks, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015). An informed consent form is a tool used to protect research participants from wrongdoing (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). The data collection process did not start until the organization provided a letter of consent.

After receiving a letter of consent from the organization, a prospective interviewee who meets this study's interview condition received an email inviting them to participate in the study. Following IRB approval, interviewees received a consent form with time to read, understand, and ask questions if necessary. Participants were provided with a copy of a sign consent form for records.

Participants who initially agree to be part of the study have the right to withdraw from the study at any time (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014).

Participants who wish to withdraw from a research project must be respected and honored. Scholars must discontinue interaction and communication with the referenced participant, and scholars must destroy any previously collected data (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). The consent form includes information about interviewees who can withdraw from the research project if desired. After receiving IRB approval, and before starting the interviews, potential interviewees received information about the withdrawal process and be allowed to withdraw before the data analysis phase begins.

Scholars can offer incentives to compensate participants for their time during the study process. Incentives can include but are not limited to, cash vouchers, gift cards, cash, or monetary value. Scholars must ensure incentives do not interfere with the study and do not diminish the quality or reliability of data received by interviewees (Bouter, 2015). Offering interviewees incentives for their time is another tool scholar can use to recruit enough participants (Mduluza, Midzi, Duruza, & Ndebele, 2013). I did not offer incentives for this study and only sought volunteers.

Scholars must consider the influence of ethical issues whenever a study involves human participants (Mitchell & Wellings, 2013). Ethical impacts are mitigated through the protection of the interviewee's information. Confidentiality of participants and companies' information must be safeguarded (Mitchell & Wellings, 2013). According to Yin (2018), researchers must take appropriate measures to secure collected information, including personal information on participants and personal information on the organization. To ensure the ethical protection of both participants and the organization, I disclosed all information related to the study, to interview candidates, and to ensure subjects are instructed to validate permissions from leaders of the organization. I also guaranteed the privacy of both the participants and the organization.

Securing researched data collected from participants and organizations is imperative. According to Check, Wolf, Dame, and Beskow (2014), locking data in a secure location for five years after completing a study is an essential step in protecting personal information. I will store collected researched information about this study in a locked safe for five years following the completion of this study. I will store all digital data about this study on a password protected zip file located on my Intel i9-7900x CPU 3.30GHz computer's hard drive. Check et al. (2014) stressed the significance of destroying researched data and the appropriate timeframe following the completion of a scholarly study. Yin (2018) highlighted that shredding documented data relating to a study is an acceptable way to destroy referenced material. Following five years after completion of my study, I will shred all documented data relating to this study, and I will delete digital data stored on my Intel i9-7900x CPU 3.30GHz computer's hard drive.

Data Collection Instruments

The primary data collection instrument for this doctoral study was in-depth interviews and open-ended questions to collect responses from the participants on their experiences with the phenomenon. During the interview process, I explored the depth of the participant's knowledge and the personal experiences within the phenomenon of the strategies for reducing restaurant employee turnover rates. I used personal in-depth interviews and open-ended questions to understand and comprehend the phenomenon from the participant's viewpoint (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2014; Sargeant, 2012).

A qualitative researcher may use multiple techniques for data collection, such as focus groups, site visits, observations, varying documents, archival records, and face-to-face interviews (Cleary et al., 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Sargeant, 2012). To ensure the validity, accuracy, and credibility of a study, qualitative researchers may use member checking (Anney, 2014; Sargeant, 2012). I confirmed credibility, validity, and reliability through member checking methods for this study.

I used triangulation to ensure the credibility of the study. Researchers use triangulation to compare multiple data sources (Petrova et al., 2014; Sargeant, 2012). Triangulation is a process qualitative researcher can use to validate the phenomenon (Anney, 2014; Petrova et al., 2014). To validate a phenomenon, the qualitative researcher may use multiple techniques. These techniques consist of data gathering, investigator, theoretical, or methodological triangulation techniques, all of which may increase the reliability and validity of research data (Anney, 2014; Petrova et al., 2014).

The methodological triangulation technique refers to the use of multiple theories to interpret data and multiple data collection methods used by the researcher (Petrova et al., 2014; Sargeant, 2012). To test data for validity, the researcher may use methodological triangulation (Cho & Lee, 2014; MacPhail, Khoza, Abler, & Ranganathan, 2016; Randles, Overton, Galloway, & Wallace, 2018). I intend to interview interviewed restaurant owners at individual time slots to gather a broad scope of views about the phenomenon.

I created the interview protocol referenced in Appendix B. I engaged in follow-up communications through phone calls and emails to mitigate any potential bias and to understand the participant's response further. A researcher may use various means of data, such as company websites, social media, and annual reports, to gain a thorough understanding and an interpretation of the in-depth interview (Cleary et al., 2014). I used a variety of digital resources available to assist in the understanding of referenced interviews. Digital resources include, but were not limited to, Skype, Skype recording manager, and audio transcribe software. Skype calls were recorded in MP4 file format and saved originally on the computer desktop using the referenced naming convention.

Data Collection Technique

The fundamental motivation for investigators to conduct qualitative research is to explore a phenomenon (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). Qualitative researchers collect data through transcribed interviews (Hutchings et al., 2013). For this study, I used open-ended questions and in-depth interviews to gather profound responses from the participants (Cleary et al., 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Sargeant, 2012). Engaging in face-to-face interviews with restaurant leaders assisted me in understanding the phenomenon of the effects of employee turnover on restaurant profitability. See Appendix B as a guide for the discussion with the study participants.

I used the consent to participate in discussing the rights of the participants, primarily their right to withdraw from the study at any point and to openly ask questions during the interview process. Data saturation was met when I received the same responses to the same questions from multiple participants (Cleary et al., 2014;

Moustakas, 1994; Sargeant, 2012). I used similar interview questions with study participants to ensure data saturation and consistency in the data collection process were met. The primary data collection method for my study was semistructured face-to-face interviews. Yin (2018) explained semistructured interviews allow a participant to answer pre-established questions, while also permitting open and free discussion to cultivate a more in-depth understanding. Following IRB approval, I provided the participants with an email invitation to participate in this study, consent, and study protocol.

Semistructured interviews increase the probability of participant honesty and transparency as it relates to their experiences (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & Lacey, 2016). The location where the interview is conducted can be a disadvantage if the participants are not comfortable in the environment (Yin, 2018). The interviews were scheduled on a convenient day for participants to avoid a scheduling conflict with the interviewees' schedule. As scheduling conflicts arise and risked the interview from being conducted, I offered to conduct the interview telephonically through Skype for Business application. I offered an hour of timeframe to conduct each interview. Throughout the interview, I asked six targeted, clarifying questions to gain a deeper understanding of the strategy's restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover. Asking targeted questions to clarify participant response is an appropriate interviewer tactic in qualitative research studies (Palinkas et al., 2013).

Qualitative method studies are explanatory and textual; in addition to open-ended questions, the researcher may include participant observations (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). The opportunity to observe the participant during the interview could provide information about the confidence of implementing expressed strategies, or if organizational influences existed to promote or discourage behavior (Yin, 2018). I recorded each interview with an electronic recording device, after receiving the participant's verbal consent, and was guided by the interview protocol referenced in Appendix B. Each audio recordings were supported with handwritten journal entries to ensure accurate documentation of the participant's responses and my observations. No participant refused to have their responses recorded, so my journal entries were used to synthesize the participant's responses.

The second data collection technique is method triangulation. Method triangulation allows the researcher to use two or more data collection methods for the same research study (Casey & Murphy, 2009). Researchers obtain confirmation of information when they collect data from multiple sources when exploring a phenomenon (Casey & Murphy, 2009). The journal entries of my observations and continued research about the subject of employee turnover confirmed method triangulation.

The final data collection technique is member checking. Member checking engages participants in the theme development process by encouraging validation of the researcher's interpretation of the participant's responses (Patton, 2015). Upon completion of the interview, I synthesized the data collected by each participant into a Word document, and I presented it to each participant for review of accuracy through email. No correction was noted through member checking; therefore, the accuracy of responses was confirmed as an accurate interpretation of verbalized and observed behaviors.

Data Organization Technique

To track study participant data, I used a naming convention. The participants were referenced as P1, P2, P3, and so on to ensure their confidentiality and privacy. Arora and Dhiman (2015) confirmed a participant could remain anonymous when generic codes are used as identifiers. The participants were not made aware of their unique study identifier. After collecting the participant data, I stored the synthesized information in Word format on my Intel i9-7900x CPU 3.30GHz personal computer with a handheld and unidentifiable password protection. All data is stored in folders according to their naming convention. Each folder contains the participant's specific interview transcripts, signed consent, and all other notes obtained from the interviewee throughout the study process. Placing data into manageable folders allows the researcher to break down, examine, reconstruct, and reflect on the data to gain a greater understanding of the participant's responses (Yazan, 2015).

I used NVivo Pro 12 as the qualitative analysis software tool. The NVivo Pro 12 tool is used to code the raw data into themes and provide a framework for the study analysis. The Dragon Naturally Speaking software was used to transcribe the audio recordings into Word format for member checking. The audio recording and the Word document of synthesized data are stored in the participant's folder according to their naming convention.

Upon completion of the study, I transferred the data from my Intel i9-7900x CPU 3.30GHz personal computer and placed it on a USB jump drive for storage in a personal locked safe, where I will store for five years. All handwritten journal notes and signed consents will be maintained in the personal locked safe. After the mandatory 5-year storage timeframe, I will delete electronic data files and shred handwritten notes to ensure I comply with Walden University's data storage policy.

Data Analysis

The incorporation of the collection, analysis, interpretations, and the meaning of data and reporting on those findings define qualitative data analysis (Cleary et al., 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Yin, 2018). For this study, I used Word, Excel, and NVivo Pro 12 software to translate data received from the interviews and observations. The conceptual framework of the study is the two-factor theory of Herzberg et al., (1959). The basis of this framework confirmed explanations and motivational factors that affect the study participant's job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and how it may impact employee turnover. The research design was a single case study applying in-person interviews and observations. I engaged in constant comparison of data analysis to ensure reliability and validity.

I used thematic analysis to help investigate, understand, and classify the participants' experiences and responses. The classifying, organizing, and analyzing patterns to identify themes across a wide variety of data is referred to as thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke, & Terry, 2014; Robinson, 2014). The thematic analysis allowed for a deeper comprehension of the data findings. A more profound comprehension of data findings yielded a better understanding of the phenomenon of employee turnover and solutions.

To increase flexibility, I used thematic analysis. There are six steps to thematic analysis. The first was to familiarize oneself with the data; the second was to begin creating initial coding. The third was to identify themes found within the specific coding; the fourth was to review the prospective themes. The fifth step was to define and name the themes, and the final step was to produce a report based on the findings (Braun et al., 2014; Robinson, 2014). I followed these six phases for analyzing and interpreting the data to identify themes and extract subsequent conclusions.

During data analysis, I identified and grouped the participant's critical statements to form themes. Qualitative researchers must be careful not to influence the responses or experiences of the participants with the phenomenon by introducing personally biased (Cho & Lee, 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Petrova et al., 2014). I pulled all the data from the transcripts, audio-recorded interviews of the participants, notes, and any company documents shared during the study. With the utilization of codes from multiple data sources, I was able to identify themes for the research project. I used an Excel spreadsheet to develop codes based on common themes and topics identified. Based on this, I created codes for participants and interview data (e.g., P1, P2, P3), and followed the same process for all company documents gathered (e.g., D1, D2, D2).

Horizontalization data analysis can be used by researchers to count the frequencies of the data and assign equal weight to each response (Moustakas, 1994; Yin, 2018). A researcher may use the reduction and elimination approach to use data from the transcript to group dominant statements from most frequently used to less commonly used (Moustakas, 1994; Yin, 2018). Horizontalization ultimately refers to a textual analysis of what is expressed by interview participants.

For this research study, I used data triangulation by collecting from multiple sources, such as company websites, annual reports, and social media sites (e.g., LinkedIn), to minimize the potential for personal bias and enhance the validity of the overall data collected for the study. The restaurant partner is publicly traded on the stock market, making all financial documents available to the public. Twitter, Skype, and Instagram accounts were also available for data collection purposes. Employees and customers shared comments about the working environment within the organization.

A researcher may use the triangulation technique with multiple resources to test for data validity (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputong, 2012). To ensure data saturation and validity to the study, I used follow-up questions during the interview process. The additional questions helped to ensure the responses/data are reliable and valid. Methodological triangulation uses multiple data sources for testing the validity of data (Cho & Lee, 2014; MacPhail et al., 2016; Randles et al., 2018). I interviewed three participants individually to gather a deep understanding of the phenomenon. I used company documents, company websites, and social media sites to validate the interpretation of the data.

One of the data analysis tools a researcher can use to code common themes and topics to identify relationships within the text is an Excel spreadsheet (Saldaña, 2014). For this research, I transcribed the data, entered the findings into the Excel spreadsheet, and highlighted any similarities identified within the data. For the Skype audio-recorded interviews, data was transferred onto the spreadsheet, identified, and placed with themes and topics into categories. Referenced within Unsatisfactory Saturation, data saturation occurred once the interview data and document review data became repetitive (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013).

I used NVivo Pro 12 software to perform coding data analysis, identifying the occurrence of critical themes and word frequencies. NVivo Pro 12 software was chosen for the qualitative analysis of the data because of the popularity and ease of use. Other data analysis software, such as SPSS, was not used because the study did not involve quantitative statistical analysis. I did not use qualitative software such as Atlas because the study did not include graphical or video data. The research question aligns with the outcome of the transcripts. The data analysis aligned with the research question, which must align with the complete study (Dickson-Swift et al., 2012; MacPhail et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Data analysis assists the researcher in identifying strategies for reducing restaurant employee turnover rates. The coding of the data allowed me to focus on common themes. The categorization of themes allowed additional research on current literature, which expanded on the universal themes highlighted.

The research for this study included online resources, journals, and peer-reviewed articles aligned with the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework of this study comprised of common themes and topics which identified strategies for reducing restaurant employee turnover rates. The two-factor theory of Herzberg et al., (1959) is the conceptual framework for this study. Herzberg et al.'s model is an excellent framework to improve employee turnover because of hygiene factors and motivational factors noted in this study.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability is achieved once the data analysis tools produce irrelevant results during data analysis (Alshenqeeti, 2014). During this research, several procedures were used, such as member checking and triangulation, to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Reliability measured the rigor and consistency of data collection, the coding of data, and the analysis of data (Cho & Lee, 2014; Cleary et al., 2014; MacPhail et al., 2016). For the qualitative researcher, a credible analysis of the data is essential. A researcher may use validity checks to highlight any potential threats which may influence the credibility of the study (Cho & Lee, 2014; Dickson-Swift et al., 2012; Petrova et al., 2014). I used internal and external validity methods to check the accuracy of research findings (Moustakas, 1994; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Petrova et al., 2014).

Reliability

A researcher may use reliability to be objective and to measure the consistency of the data collection, coding, and analysis (Cleary et al., 2014; Sargeant, 2012). By comparing data from a variety of sources, including but not limited to, interview transcripts, company website, social media, and published literature, the reliability of data was validated. To measure the dependability of the data in the research, I used member checking by sharing with the participant's research findings and verifying those findings with the participants (Cleary et al., 2014; Grossoehme, 2014; Petrova et al., 2014). Dependability is reached when the researcher gets to a point in the research where different researchers come to similar findings (Cleary et al., 2014; Grossoehme, 2014; Petrova et al., 2014).

To reach the validity and reliability of the research findings, a researcher may use member checking. Member checking is a process which shares research findings with the participants. Member checking allows the participants to qualify the research findings (Dickson-Swift et al., 2012; Petrova et al., 2014; Sargeant, 2012).

Validity

A researcher may use validity checks to address any potential internal or external threats which may negatively influence the credibility of the data analysis (Cho & Lee, 2014; Dickson-Swift et al., 2012; Petrova et al., 2014). Internal and external validation methods can minimize the possibility of threats to the validity of the research findings. Internal and external validity methods are strategies researchers use to increase the accuracy of the research findings (Moustakas, 1994; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Petrova et al., 2014). For this study, I used member checking and triangulation to test the validity and credibility of the data by comparing and contrasting the findings from multiple resources.

The ability to apply the findings in different perspectives is referred to as transferability (Anney, 2014). Member checking allows a researcher to share the research findings with the participants to authenticate the interviews (Dickson-Swift et al., 2012; Petrova et al., 2014; Sargeant, 2012). To validate the study interviews, I shared draft findings with the participants. The participants had the opportunity to address any misrepresentation of the research analysis and make suggestions to improve the overall communication of the findings; this process allowed mitigation of any personal bias within the study.

Data saturation occurs when a researcher receives similar responses to the same questions from the study participants (Cleary et al., 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Sargeant, 2012). In the data collection process, the participants must answer the same questions in the interview to reach data saturation (Cleary et al., 2014; Sargeant, 2012; Yin, 2018). For this research and study, I used an interview protocol as a guide to ask the same open-ended questions to all participants. At the point in time, when the participant responses were repetitive, I was able to confirm data saturation. Confirmability references the alignment of the findings by the researcher and what is reviewed by the participants (Cleary et al., 2014; Grossoehme, 2014; Petrova et al., 2014).

Summary and Transition

Conducting a qualitative, single case study design enables an exploration of the strategy's restaurant employers to use to mitigate employee turnover. In Section 2, I delivered a thorough narrative of the study and rationale for the selected study methodology and design. I presented the role of the researcher, study participants, research method and design, population, and sampling method. I concluded the section with a description of the need for ethical research, data collection, data analysis, data organization techniques, reliability, and validity. In Section 3, I present my findings, discuss the findings, apply to professional practice, list implications for social change, offer recommendations for action, propose recommendations for further research, provide my reflections of this study experience, and close with study conclusions.

Section 3: Application for Professional Practice and Implications for Social Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies restaurant employers used to mitigate employee turnover. Understanding Qualitative Research, from Start to Finish, by Robert Yin, included data compilation, data disassembly, data reassembly, data interpretation, and data conclusion (Yin, 2019). Noteworthy, data collection included interviews from six full-time managers from a restaurant based out of New York. Through the process of data analysis, three themes were revealed, which included leadership, financial benefit, and higher purpose. The central question for this study was: What strategies do restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover?

In Section 3, I reviewed the research findings, examined the application toward reducing employee turnover within the restaurant industry, made recommendations for action, and discussed further research ideas. To conclude Section 3, I considered implications for social change based on findings documented within this study, present my reflections, and summarize the study's conclusion.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question for this qualitative single case study was the following: What strategies do restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover? Upon receipt of IRB approval (#03-11-20-0610277) and written permission, I solicited a partnership for this study from one restaurant in New York. I received a signed letter of cooperation from the owner of the referenced restaurant, which provided consent to contact participants from their company. The letter of cooperation example used is included in Appendix E. The partner organization was not identified in this study; rather, I coded for specific shifts led by managers within the organization, with the letter A or a letter B in my research materials. The interview participants were coded as letter A and letter B as it aligned to their shift assignment, followed by a unique number. The 14 potential interview participants were emailed an invitation, referenced in Appendix C, whose contact information was provided by the partnering organization. The response rate for the 14 emails sent was 64%, as captured in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Response Rate for Invitation Email to Potential Participants

Restaurant shift team	# of invitations sent	# of positive responses	# of Negative Response	# of Undeliverable Responses	# of non-responses	Total
A	8	5	0	0	3	8
B	6	4	0	1	1	6
Total	100%	64%	0%	7%	29%	100%

Following confirmed emailed responses from nine of the 14 emailed participants, I emailed the interested participants the Interview Protocol form referenced in Appendix B, and the Informed Consent labeled Invitation to Participate in the Study, referenced in Appendix C. The proposed interview timeline spanned three weeks. I received signed Informed Consents from all nine interested participants via digital signature and within three days. The consent rate from the nine participants was 100%, as captured in Table 4 below. Four participants responded with a signed consent the first day of consent receipt, two participants responded the second day, and three participants responded the third day, totaling nine consenting participants. I planned for a minimum of three participants; however, understanding data saturation requirements might exceed the minimum interview requirement; I concluded interviews would continue until data saturation was met. Data saturation was met after six interviews.

Table 4

Rate of Consent

Company	# consents sent	# consents signed	% consent rate
A	5	5	100%
B	4	4	100%
Total	9	9	100%

Based on the emailed approval from IRB and IRB's recommendation on 12 March 2020 to conduct virtual interviews based on COVID-19 restrictions, three of the nine interviews were scheduled the first week of April and conducted with the Skype digital platform. Based on data saturation shortfalls following the initial three interviews, I scheduled three additional participants for a virtual interview mid-April for a total of six Skype recorded interviews.

Data saturation is a primary principle aligned to sample sizes in qualitative research (Hennink et al., 2017). Data saturation occurs when interview data become repetitive (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). All six semistructured interviews to gather in-depth information on the phenomenon were completed within four weeks of receiving IRB approval.

During the semistructured interviews, all interviewed members answered each of the six interview questions with insight worth consideration. I recorded each interview using my Intel i9-7900x CPU 3.30GHz personal computer and handwritten notes in my journal throughout the interview sessions. I transcribed each interviewee's response to the referenced interview questions in my journal with additional notes describing audible notations of humor, emphasis, or uncertainties and noted body language as visualized over the Skype video throughout the process. Visual interaction with participants during interviews allows for additional observation to occur (Sharp, 2019).

At the start of each interview, I verbally recapped the study protocol in detail, which provided participants with renewed details on their right to withdraw from the study. Reviewing the study protocol also provided an opportunity for me to highlight the study objectives, the interview questions, and verbal consent to record each interview session. I emphasized to all participants during the allotted interview that I was the only person able to hear the interview from my location and confirmed each participant was the only person in the area during the interview at their location-based from New York. All participants appeared comfortable during the interview process and vocalized their acceptance toward the interview protocol.

Following each interview, I transferred the audio file into Dragon Naturally Speaking software for dictation. I then reviewed the transcribed audio files for accuracy against audio and journal interview details. After validating accuracy, I emailed the interviewees a review of the transcripts and requested each member confirm accuracy as part of member checking. The procedure of member checking ensures the reliability of data (Cleary et al., 2014; Grossoehme, 2014; Petrova et al., 2014). To maintain an appropriate timeline with the study reporting, I informed the participants the transcript would be indicated as accurate if no response was provided within nine days of receipt. All participants replied to the member checking request and verified accurate reporting within five days of my inquiry.

Upon member checking completion, I uploaded interview details into NVivo 12 Pro software for theme development. I identified three themes related to the study of strategies to reduce restaurant employee turnover rates. I noted no new themes immerged after uploading the fifth interview transcript; however, I determined to upload the sixth interview as data saturation confirmation.

With all interview transcripts uploaded into NVivo 12 Pro software and validating no unique themes, data saturation was confirmed. Data saturation is a key requirement aligned to sample sizes in qualitative research (Hennink et al., 2017). Data saturation occurs once the practitioner receives the same responses, to the same questions, from multiple participants (Cleary et al., 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Sargeant, 2012). Raw data is derived from words; however, answers to the open-ended research question to yield a theme which leads to data saturation (Constantinou et al., 2017).

Table 5 represents the nodes from developed coding stripes derived from the interviews. I captured influences related to the interview's responses and noted the alignment to Herzberg's two-factor theory. The three emerging themes were leadership, financial benefits, and higher purpose. To develop each of the three themes, associated words or word phrases from the NVIVO word frequency report were grouped together. The corresponding words and word phrases that developed each theme are noted in Table 5.

Table 5

Word Frequency of Emerging Themes

Emerging theme	*N*	Word *f*	% of word *f*
Leadership	680	348	51.17%
Fair in Business			
Decision Autonomy			
Shared Vision			
Relationships			
Encouragement			
Financial Benefits	680	217	31.91%
Paid Leave			
Discounted Services			
Training Opportunities			
Job Security			
401K Benefits			
Higher Salary			
Higher Purpose	680	92	13.52%
Providing a Service			
Personal Growth			
Donating Opportunities			
Achievement			
Total	680	657 n	96.61%

The conceptual framework, the two-factor theory of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959), aligned to the emerging themes of leadership, financial benefits, and higher purpose throughout the interview process. The hygiene factors of Herzberg's theory include, but are not limited to, work circumstances, coworker dealings, policies and procedures, management quality, authority relations, income, and job security

(Herzberg et al., 2017). Hygiene factors are influenced by intrinsic considerations, and factors are aligned to job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction. Interview details and document review determined the connection with the findings to the hygiene factors of Herzberg's theory.

Theme 1: Leadership

The leadership theme developed as a result of words or word phrases that directly aligned with the role of the leader and how it influences job satisfaction. The words or word phrases that developed the leadership theme included fairness, autonomy, vision, relationships, and encouragement. This theme accumulated 51.17% of the word frequencies identified from the collected data. The leaders of a restaurant team include the team lead, shift lead, kitchen lead, dinner lead, administrative lead, assistant manager, and manager. Research within the restaurant industry has shown a correlation between turnover, employee satisfaction, and job satisfaction with the role the leader plays (Birtch et al., 2016).

Over multiple years of management, interview participants A1, A2, and B2 shared their belief of demonstrating fair business practices that yield greater trust between restaurant leadership, employees, and customers. Throughout the interview process, fair business practices emerged at 27.8% (97 words) of the interview responses and was determined to align directly and helped to build the leadership theme. Motivation stems from a social exchange rapport within an organization based on fairness, value, and growth (Ciobanu et al., 2019). Participants A3, A4, and B1 emphasized unfair management practices breakdown trust and diminish productivity and organizational growth.

Autonomy to make decisions emerged during interviews 25.5% (89 words) by participants to further support the theme of leadership. Interviewees A2, A4, B1, and B2 expressed that employees who felt autonomous to make decisions affecting the customers fostered ownership by workers. Participants A1, A2, and B2 preferred to allow their workers to make decisions about work obligations, leading to a more productive atmosphere within the organization. B2 provided an example of how the leader influences autonomy by allowing employees to determine tip disbursement. B2 further explained the belief that this practice influenced greater collaboration between team members.

Having a shared vision was a word phrase that supported the leadership theme in the volume of 17.8% (62 words). When a leader's vision of the organization, and work experiences align with that of the employee's vision of work experience, the opportunity for sustainability and success is fostered (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). Participant A2, A3, A4, and B1 facilitated a shared vision with employees by creating an honest two-way dialogue. The study participants explained their belief that having appropriate channels of communication allowed employees to share ideas and thoughts about the business and work environment. Further, that dialogue influenced a greater level of trust that, in turn, afforded the leader opportunity to provide well-received feedback when the expectations and experiences the employee was creating did not match that of the leader or organization. Participants A1 and B2 highlighted the importance of having a published policy with a vision statement to enhance awareness. A companies' published vision statement provides employees a shared understanding and ensures employees work toward common organizational goals. Leaders within an organization who develop a strategy from a vision recognize the importance of motivating factors and how developing an emotional connection with subordinates significantly increases the ability to capitalize on organizational stability and sustainability (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015). Management must capitalize on every win. Building on a shared vision is a team-building event (Dyer et al., 2016).

The term relationships aligned with the leader's role and were further used to support the primary theme of leadership. Relationships appeared in the word frequency 15.8% or 55 words captured during the interview process. Participants A3, A4, and B1 specified having an interpersonal relationship with the team members build trust, and that this can simply be achieved by knowing the personal lives of employees. Participants A1, A2, and B2 further referenced the importance of relationships outside of the workplace. A1 stated one strategy used by this restaurant is a routine company day where employees bring their families for a catered employer-sponsored meal within the organization. Hygiene factors of satisfaction include the employee's work environment made up of interpersonal relationships with both coworkers and supervisors (Herzberg, 1987).

Encouragement emerged as the final word in direct correlation to the leadership theme. Encouragement was referenced 12.9% (45 words) of the time during the interviews. All interview participants agree that a leader must inspire workers by providing regular and genuine encouragement, which will lead to increased satisfaction and productivity. Participant A3, B1, and B2 highlighted encouragement as a positive experience and correlates to productive accomplishments. Encouragement leads to individual development and intellectual motivation (Hentrich et al., 2017). Employees who perceive their work environment as a positive experience have a higher level of job satisfaction and overall commitment to the employer (Birtch et al., 2016).

Organizational leaders may influence the retention of employees, which ultimately correlates to the success or failure of the organization. Leadership is one's ability to influence others to accomplish a task or mission and arguably motivates followers through both examples and actions. Leaders must communicate effectively, be fair and impartial with judgment, maximize employee's capability to make autonomous decisions based on trust, shared vision, and encouragement. Effective organizational leaders work toward retaining employees by creating an atmosphere where employees feel encouraged to stay with an organization (Pittino et al., 2016).

The foundational concept of Herzberg's two-factor theory frames motivators and hygiene factors and aligns with minimizing employee turnover. Restaurant leaders who understand the factors of fairness, providing employee autonomy, sharing a vision with the team, building relationships with the followers, and providing recognition could improve employee retention. The two-factor theory centers on the concept that certain factors create job satisfaction and those that lead to job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). These two factors work independently of each other and have an influence on employee retention and overall organizational sustainability. Table 6 represents the major theme of leadership and the word frequencies that were used to develop and capture the full diversity of it as abundantly expressed by all six interview participants.

Table 6

Frequencies from NVivo 12 for Leadership

Major theme	*f* of Major theme	Subthemes	*f* and % of subthemes	Major theme % of total
Leadership	348	Fair	97 (27.8%)	51.17%
		Autonomy	89 (25.5%)	
		Vision	62 (17.8%)	
		Relationships	55 (15.8%)	
		Encouragement	45 (12.9%)	

Theme 2 Financial Benefits

Financial benefit was the 2nd emerging theme, built from the common word or word phrases expressed by participants, which were directly aligned with creating a positive financial impact on the employee. Accounting for a total of 31.91% (217 words) of word frequency, this theme was constructed by familiar word phrases noted within interview transcripts including, paid leave, discounted services, training opportunities, job security, 401K benefits, and a higher salary. Herzberg et al., (2017) indicated satisfaction hygiene factors were motivated positively by competitive wages and negatively when the payments were considered unreasonable.

Indications of having paid leave for personal time or sick time were made by interview participants and accounted for 22.1% (48 words) of the overall word frequency for this theme. Both paid leave and paid sick leave packages were noted as incentives to keep trained and quality employees employed. Restaurant employers must keep skilled employees to endure against competitors (Mohr et al., 2012). According to interview participants A2, A3, and B2, some competitor restaurants in the area do not provide paid leave incentives for their hourly employees, which provides a greater advantage to them when attracting and retaining quality employees.

The second-word phrase that demonstrated a positive financial impact on the employee and contributed to the theme of financial benefit is discounted services. Discounted services accounted for 17.9% (39 words) of this theme word frequency. Offering food at a reduced cost during breaks and free fountain drinks throughout work shifts is a benefit participant A3, and B1 emphasized during interviews. Participant A1, A2, and B2 provide a paid fifteen-minute break before and after lunch or dinner break to ensure employees received adequate time to relax, which leads to maximum productivity during non-break times. Benefits, salary, the opportunity for advancement, and growth are the tangible aspects of a job that can impact job satisfaction (Bakotic, 2016).

Training opportunities were the third-word phrase that demonstrated an occasion for greater financial benefit and accounted for 17.0% (37 words) of interview content. Interview participants A2, A3, B1, and B2, mentioned training programs within their restaurant improved promotion opportunities to workers, which correlate to greater salaries and enhanced financial benefit. Because these training programs are discretionary, they also provide an opportunity for an employee to demonstrate autonomy, which aligns with the primary theme of leadership. Employees want to excel, and training opportunities provide building blocks toward position advancements and increased salary. According to Mandhanya (2015), offering training to active personnel empowers employers to guarantee a developmental process occurs within a corporation, increasing both skills and productivity.

Interview participants A1, A2, A3, A4, and B2, discussed the importance of providing job security within the organization. Job security was the fourth-word phrase that built the second theme of financial benefit and accounted for 16.5% (36 words) of the theme. According to Herzberg et al., (2017), job security is an employee's tenure consideration or a company's stability or instability. Employees want to know they have a job next month, next year, and for the foreseeable future. Job security allows the employee to be confident that their financial obligations will be met. Participant B1 confirmed employees seek jobs with future opportunities and are not focused on day-to-day prospects. It is understood through the responses of this study that job security positively contributes to employee retention.

The phrase of retirement and 401k benefits accounted for 14.7% (32 words) of the interview content that built the theme of financial benefit. Participant A2, A3, A4, and B2 indicate an organization with a retirement package, such as a 401k benefits package, attracts personnel to an organization contributing to its sustainability. Participants A2 and B1 highlighted part-time employees do not receive a 401k sharing plan; however, full-time employees received a 401k profit sharing package. Interview participants A1 and A4 emphasized the importance of a retirement incentive within an organization to retain long-term, trained, and skilled employees. Businesses should consider recruitment, development, and incentives to retain quality employees (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016).

All interview participants referenced the importance of a higher salary for employees, which accounted for 11.9% (26 words) of the interviewed recorded content and supported the development of the financial benefit theme. For many, pay and benefits are influential factors for employees to stay in a current job, as indicated by participant A3, A4, and B1. Hygiene factors surrounding employee satisfaction in the workplace include pay and benefits (Herzberg, 1987). Table 7 represents the major theme of Financial Benefits and the word and word phrases that contributed to its meaning.

Table 7

Frequencies From NVivo 12 for Financial Benefits

Major theme	*f* of the major theme	Subthemes	*f* and % of subthemes	% of total
Financial Benefits	217	Paid Leave	48 (22.1%)	31.91%
		Discounted Services	39 (17.9%)	
		Training Opportunities	37 (17.0%)	
		Job Security	36 (16.5%)	
		401k Benefits	32 (14.7%)	
		Higher Salary	26 (11.9%)	

Theme 3 Higher Purpose

The final major theme revealed through interview responses is a higher purpose. Those interviewed restaurant leaders indicate they have received feedback from employees over many years of management, noting one learned input is an employee's appreciation for contributing to a higher purpose as a result of everyday actions. The higher purpose theme accounted for 13.52% (92 words) of this study’s word frequency.

Common words and word phrases that formed the higher purpose theme included service (both to community and people), growth, donation, and achievement.

Service to the people and the community contributed 44.5% (41 words) of the higher purpose themes word frequency. Participants A1, A2, B1, and B2 proposed having an internal restaurant policy that enables an employee the opportunity to serve customers and the surrounding community at their discretion. According to participant A1, an example may include resolving customer complaints or concerns quickly by whatever channel they feel is appropriate. This may include a free meal, drink, or gift certificate before bringing a resolution to the manager. Fostering a sense of gratitude toward customers for their business by resolving grievances ensures a positive atmosphere and repeat customers. In turn, the employee experiences gratitude from customers for resolving issues, which yields a sense of service and accomplishment.

The word frequency of growth made up 32.6% (30 words) of participant responses that I aligned with the study theme of higher purpose. Participant A2, A4, B1, and B2 captured that employee growth included internal growth within a learning organization and support of external growth outside of organizational responsibilities. It was further revealed that support of external growth could be demonstrated by giving attention to outside interests and offering a flexible work schedule so the employee could be successful at such. The factor of employee growth aligns with work and responsibility (Herzberg et al., 2017). Organizations that offer employee growth opportunities typically have lower turnover rates (Memon et al., 2016).

Donating to the community made up 22.8% (21 words) of the word frequency that contributed to the theme of higher purpose from the interview responses. Participants A2, A3, and A4 discussed having a practice that allowed workers to donate leftover food to local shelters or directly to families when a need has been identified. Participant A3 indicated a community donation form was available for employees to complete when requesting to make organizational donations to the community. Participants B1 and B2 voiced opportunities for workers to donate leftover food once completing their shiftwork. A point in which food would otherwise be thrown away because of storage constraints provided a way for workers to prevent waste. Participants' responses indicated the opportunity to provide outside donations offered employees a feeling of accomplishing something greater than anything they could accomplish on their own; this provides a greater sense of achievement as well. Herzberg's two-factor theory surmises personal growth and recognition within its satisfaction framework (Herzberg et al., 2017); employees who are recognized for support to the community align with interviewee responses and to Herzberg’s two-factor theory.

The final word frequency that contributed to establishing the final major theme is an achievement. Achievement accounted for 14.3% (13 words) of the higher purpose theme. Achievement is part of Herzberg’s two-factor theory captured within motivator factors (Herzberg et al., 2017). Participant A1, A2, A3, and B1 emphasized the importance of employee achievement and further, providing appropriate employee recognition for achievements made. Recognizing positive employee actions motivates employees to continue striving to achieve positive performance. Table 8 represents the major theme of Higher Purpose and the word frequencies that constructed this theme.

Table 8

Frequencies From NVivo 12 for Higher Purpose

Major theme	*f* of major theme	Subtheme	*f* and % of subthemes	% of total
Higher Purpose	92	Service	41 (44.5%)	13.52%
		Growth	30 (32.6%)	
		Donating	21 (22.8%)	
		Achievement	13 (14.3%)	

Summary of Thematic Findings

Herzberg's two-factor theory is the conceptual framework established for this study. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) hygiene or dissatisfiers include working conditions, policies and administrative practices, salary and benefits, supervision, status, job security, fellow workers, and personal life. Herzberg's two-factor theory supports the alignment of each theme identified in this study, which includes leadership, financial benefits, and higher purpose. It is understood by the data presented that the themes and word frequencies that contributed to developing each theme are critical contributors to reducing employee turnover. Herzberg et al.'s framework correlate employee retention to understanding each employee's motivators and applying business practices to improve employee relations.

Participants interviewed facilitated methods to reduce employee turnover to improve organizational productivity. Leaders interviewed emphasized their organization employees, an active and engaged management team who supports company initiatives for the development of a healthy work environment. Harmon et al., (2016) confirms this strategy will likely reduce employee turnover rates (Harmon et al., 2015).

Understanding of Herzberg's two-factor theory includes a proper comprehension of job satisfaction factors and the impact they have on employee turnover. All interview participants referenced training programs that improved leadership understanding of employees' reactions based on actions with a strong overtone of Herzberg's hygiene factors. Herzberg's hygiene factors additionally highlight an established company's mission to be rewarding, and the job must be fulfilling (Herzberg et al., 2017).

A multitude of factors identified through data analysis from six independent interviews directly aligned to the foundational premise of the Herzberg's two-factor theory. As noted by the dominant themes referenced in Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8, Leadership, Financial Benefit, and Higher Purpose directly support the hygiene and motivational factors that determine an employee's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their job. Through the experiences and strategies implemented by the leaders interviewed, it was confirmed that leadership, which creates job satisfaction opportunities, contributes to lowering employee turnover.

Applications to Professional Practice

The main objective of this study was to explore the strategies restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover. As referenced, employee turnover is an expensive business problem many organizations need to overcome (Alshanbri et al., 2015). The cost of turnover can negatively impact a company's profits, lead to increased employee training and spending (Alshanbri et al., 2015). Employee turnover could negatively impact resident employee morale and foster a poor public image of the organization (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016).

The research findings of this study apply to the practices of restaurant management by providing strategies which proved to be successful, as it relates to mitigating employee turnover. Managers from two teams within the same restaurant based out of New York who demonstrated success with reducing employee turnover provided insight to their methods, which aligned to three distinct themes, including (a) leadership, (b) financial benefits, and (c) higher purpose. Through a macro lens, data analysis showed the referenced themes are distinctly unique, and the strategies identified within each theme provide a foundation making each subsequent theme successful. For example, the strategy identified with the dominant theme of leadership provided building blocks for implementing strategies for the subsequent theme of financial benefits, which further ensured the building blocks for implementing procedures for the final theme of higher purpose. The sequencing of strategy from one theme to the next and recognizing the framework of job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction, aligned with Herzberg's two-factor theory.

Reducing employee turnover ensures skillsets within long-term employees are retained, reducing overall training costs associated with new employee training. Employee turnover costs typically include the realized cost of new employee training and hinder organizational productivity (Lee, 2018). Leaders knowledgeable in reducing employee turnover strategies could result in increased employee productivity and materialize into cost savings and cost earning for the organization (Thoma, Ganger, Peterson, & Channell, 2017). Realized cost savings equal increased profit margins and could equal improve employee benefits, enhance product quality, and an overall positive social impact alignment. An organization able to strengthen its employees' commitment also enhances its reputation with the surrounding community and provides building blocks for reduced employee turnover.

Implications for Social Change

Pay, promotion, and social interaction are roles in employee satisfaction (Grönroos, 2017). An employee negatively impacted by job dissatisfaction, which includes poor working conditions, lousy company policies, negligible leaders, and uncompetitive pay, has the potential for voluntary turnover (Thoma et al., 2017). Restaurants provide a service for people within a community, and providing quality service equals positive social implications. When employee turnover is high, food and catering services provided by a restaurant are hindered. Specified implications for social change, related to reduced employee turnover, included but are not limited to intellectual capital, community awareness, and job satisfaction.

Study participants disclosed during interview sessions that employees are the most valuable intellectual and financial capital of a company. When employees prematurely leave an organization, knowledge, skills, and best practices linked to productivity are lost until new employees are trained to standard. The cost to a restaurant to continually train new employees might become unsustainable due to lost intellectual capital and increased cost of conducting business. A company could invest upwards of $1M indirect costs due to recruitment, interviewing, and employee training (Memon et al., 2016). Reducing employee turnover by improving employee retention strategies may contribute to the local economy by reducing unemployment and providing additional financial resources to the community.

The findings of this study may help positive social change by identifying employee retention strategies, which improves a community outlook. When employee retention is improved, restaurant employees' skill set is retained, which yields an increased quality of service to the consumer, enhanced productivity, and an improved community perception (Grönroos, 2017). A company's profit margins are positively impacted by reduced employee turnover, and employees may benefit by having greater development opportunities, increased compensation, directly increasing personal value, and positively contributing to society.

Recommendations for Action

Employee turnover can be mitigated through employee retention strategies which focus on leadership, financial benefits, and a higher purpose aligned to employer and employee relationships. Some leaders are better prepared to lead-based on training and life experiences. Companies are responsible for ensuring leaders in place have the depth and understanding to effectively lead a team with an application of leadership traits, financial benefits, and a mission statement aligned to a higher purpose. Failure to ensure the right leader is employed may result in missteps between the employer and employee relationship resulting in employee turnover.

The right leader in place to lead employees is the first step. The next step is the understanding of employee turnover and the negative effect on organizations. Losing top-achieving personnel adversely affects both efficiency and resources of an organization (Guha, & Chakrabarti, 2016). Employee turnover rates negatively impact an organization's sustainability and could negatively impact the local community (Bothma & Roodt, 2012). The accomplishment of an establishment centers on a leader's ability to promote sustainable business practices, productivity, and employee retention (McManus & Mosca, 2015). As captured in Herzberg's two-factor theory, findings from this study and leader involvement support employees who desire an equitable partnership resulting in job satisfaction, engagement, and reduced risk of turnover.

Based on emerged themes indicating the importance of fair compensation, engaged leadership, and cultivating a sense of higher purpose, the key recommendations are establishing an ongoing process to ensure fair and competitive wages, advancing an organizational culture of leadership engagement, and creating organizational initiatives to contribute to positive social change in their community. Findings from this study are beneficial for all managers, employers, leaders, and restaurant professionals. Dissemination of the findings from this research study will first be published through the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for academia for others. I also pursued opportunities to speak of employee retention strategies highlighted throughout this study to colleagues, career managers, forums, and leadership groups.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this qualitative study on the strategies used by restaurant leaders to reduce employee turnover underscore there are opportunities to expand on the employee turnover phenomenon to gain a greater appreciation of the employer and employee link within an organization. Although it was revealed throughout this study that leadership, financial benefits, and higher purpose are building blocks to reducing employee turnover, a lack of understanding of best practices to employ these strategies exists. An area for additional study on the employee turnover phenomenon could be to conduct observational interviews with restaurant leaders, where employee turnover is high versus restaurant leaders where employee turnover is low to compare retention strategies. Research with a comparison scope may determine additional criteria such as personality traits, leadership training, benefits comparison, and community differences to apricate leadership, financial benefits, and higher purpose themes against other factors within the restaurant industry.

Additional ideas for further research include a study on higher practices. Employers seeking the right person for the right job might prove to be a factor toward employee retention. The benefit of aligned company mission to personal values potential, uncovered during the interview process, is emphasized in this study, suggesting improved employee retention may be a result of aligned values enhancing job satisfaction. Further, research may provide an understanding of employee hiring practices and a correlation to employee retention.

Finally, I would recommend a similar study on employee retention, conducted in the same manner as this study, by other industries to identify and appreciate any correlations to employee retention strategies between industries. All industries experience employee turnover, and understanding retention strategies between different industries may prove enlightening, which could benefit others based on correlated findings.

Reflections

Personal Bias. Before conducting this research study, I worked professionally in the restaurant industry for years before embarking on a military career spanning nearly three decades. I considered opening a restaurant franchise based on early adult experiences and desired a better understanding of restaurant profitability. I realized through research, many restaurant leaders contend with increased employee turnover, which affects the organization and the surrounding community. I initially considered employee turnover a normal part of everyday life, and I failed to understand the negative impact or the cost associated with increased employee turnover.

I anticipated multiple strategies referenced throughout this study; however, I did not expect the alignment to business profitability or the social impact. Within the restaurant industry, both employers and employees want to do the best they can in their chosen profession, and they want to be a positive impact on their community. Through the interview questions, and the responses provided by participants, I realized people, in general, want to be valued, and they want to make a difference.

Changes in My Thinking. The classes offered by Walden University enriched the pursuit of my doctoral degree and fostered a greater understanding of the overall business objectives aligned to decisions made by business leaders. Further, I have a renewed appreciation of positive and negative examples business leaders can have on a greater social function. As a senior manager in the military today, I neglected to understand the magnitude of how leadership actions contribute to organizational profitability within the civilian sector. Leaders must invest in employees within their organization for multiple reasons, including but not limited to working conditions, coworker relations, policy updates, competitive wages, recognizing employees for their accomplishments, work itself, advancement, and personal growth.

The process of getting to this point in my doctoral journey gives new meaning to the word marathon versus the word sprinting, and my dedication to personal, educational goals was tested routinely. Balancing family, work, life events, and educational goals requires disciplined attributes aligned to a structured schedule. Initially starting my educational journey with Walden University began in 2016. During this time, I deployed to the Middle East twice with the military, for a collective time of twenty-four months, increasing the challenge to stay engaged with educational goals. Time zone differences, internet connectivity issues, and long work hours enhanced the challenge of achieving my educational goals.

Though the doctoral process is lengthy, I would argue the process is worth the time invested. Through study, I learned a new appreciation for many things associated with employee turnover previously unknown. Notably, I met amazing people on the same journey struggling through similar challenges, determined to stay on track and determined to achieve their educational goals. The information I learned through peer review information on employee turnover strategies is vast. The interview process aligned with the coding process proved enlightening, giving me a greater understanding of employee retention strategies. I now apricate what restaurant leaders sometimes leverage to improve employee longevity within their organization. I do not anticipate being a doctoral researcher; however, I will continue as an independent investigator with an appreciation for the entire research process.

Conclusion

A personal goal throughout this qualitative study was to explore the strategies successful restaurant managers used to mitigate restaurant employee turnover intentions. Based on my own leadership experiences, and student research, evidence emerged, highlighting restaurant leaders endure unnecessary hardship associated with employee turnover. Increased financial burden aligned to hiring new employees, training to ensure a similar quality of performance might be reduced by following business practices outlined in this study. The main goal of this study was to explore the strategies restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover. The results from six participant interviews provided robust strategies other restaurant leaders can leverage, providing opportunities, and positively influencing company profitability and long-term sustainability.

The dynamic challenges restaurant leaders face in today's competitive restaurant scene demands collective efforts to maintain a motivated, engaged, and fulfilled workforce (Grönroos, 2017). Joint efforts to reduce employee turnover can be achieved by restaurant leadership adhering to best business practices strategies mapped out in this study, which could lead to sustainable employee retention. The foundational principle of Herzberg's two-factor theory emphasizes on an employer to employee relationship transcending to sustained organizational profitability by realized job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction criteria within an organization.

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Appendix A: CITI Training Certificate

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 15-Dec-2019
Expiration Date N/A
Record ID 34558826

This is to certify that:

Steven Dewey

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Student Researchers (Curriculum Group)
Student Researchers (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Walden University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w4137ab7e-dfd7-4c75-ad5a-495a1a2a1c24-34558826

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interviewee code name: Time of Interview: Date:

Position of Interviewee:

The purpose of this qualitative single case study is to explore the strategies healthcare leaders use to improve profitability. The interviewees will consist of restaurant employers that develop strategies to mitigate employee turnover.

The questions I will ask include:

1. What are the successful employee retention strategies in the organization?
2. What strategies, if any, are used to provide job-based feedback to employees?
3. What strategies, if any, have been most successful for motivating the organization's employees?
4. What strategies, if any, are focused on promoting employee advancement in the organization?
5. Based on your experiences, how does leadership play a role in employee retention?
6. For my understanding, what additional information on your organization's strategies for employee retention?

After each interview, I will thank the participants for their participation in this study and remind them that there is no incentive associated with participating in this study. However, each participant received a summary of the findings at the first interpretational stage. A few weeks after the initial interview, I will contact each of the participants with the findings of the interview after my analysis. The plan will consist of allowing each participant to comment on the analysis and then provide input on the accuracy of the analysis. The participants will have the option of clarifying any information they deem as misinterpreted.

During member checking, I will ask the participants about adding any further information to help with clarity, accuracy, and relevance to the analysis of the interviews. The questions I will ask include:

1. Based on the interpretation from the analysis, is everything correct?
2. Based on the interpretation from the analysis, do you see any errors or misinterpretations?
3. Would you challenge any of the interpretations from the analysis?
4. What aspects of the interpretation of the analysis do you believe are more adequate or accurate?
5. What additional information might clarity to the interpretations from the analysis?

I will thank each of the participants and remind them once again that there is no incentive with this study on small business subcontracting; however, all participants of this study will receive a summary of the final published findings.

Appendix C: Invitation to Participate in the Study

<Date>

<Address Block>

Dear <Invitee Name>

I am Steven Dewey. I am presently a student at Walden University's Doctoral Business Administration (DBA) program. To fulfill the requirements of the program, I need to conduct a research study. My research topic is *strategies for reducing restaurant employee turnover rates*. I am inviting you because you are a leader within the restaurant industry with responsibilities in strategy and employment. The purpose of this study will be to explore the strategies restaurant managers use to reduce employee turnover rates. The interviews will take place, on location.

The assessment of the potential significance of the study is based on the accuracy of findings for supporting increasing business performance and positive social change. Research from this study may be the catalyst for current and future strategic leaders to define, nurture, and lead profitable restaurants.

I have attached the consent form for your review and signing. Please confirm participation directly to the researchers' email address with the words "I consent" to confirm your participation in the doctoral study.

Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have before accepting the invitation once you receive the consent form. The interview will include six open-ended questions that you can provide your opinions and suggestions.

I appreciate your valuable time, and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Steven Dewey, M.B.A

Doctoral Student

Walden University

Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner
On letterhead of the organization

Date: TBD

Dear Steven Dewey,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *Strategies for Reducing Restaurant Employee Turnover Rates* at a local restaurant. As part of this study, I authorize you to (i) obtain email addresses of the company's senior executives from my office assistant, (ii) email recruitment material to them, (iii) conduct interviews at the Organization in the participants' private offices at a time that suits the Organization and participants, and (iv) send a copy of the results to each of the participants as well as to be the owner of the Organization. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: (i) providing the email addresses of the senior executives of the Organization, (ii) allow the interview to be conducted in the senior executive's office at a time convenient to the Organization, and senior executive. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that Steven Dewey will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Authorization Official
Contact Information

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix E: Recruitment Flyer

Research participants needed for a research study to explore the strategies restaurant employers use to mitigate employee turnover.

You may participate if you:

(a) are an adult over the age of 18 years; (b) have worked as a restaurant employer; (c); are willing to participate in audio-recorded interviews; (e) are proficient in English, and (f) live in or near New York.

Activities include:

Talking to me on the telephone to check if you may take part in the study (10 minutes)
Reading and signing the informed consent form (about 20 minutes)
Partake in an audio-recorded interview (about 30-60 minutes) in your office at work
At a later stage check if the researcher captured the information correctly (member checking) lasting about 20-30 minutes

Participation is strictly voluntary, and no compensation will be given to participants.
All information will be confidential.

Interested? Any Questions?

Please email the researcher at
Please email your private telephone number for the researcher to use
Please use your private email address to protect your privacy.

I am looking forward to hearing from you!