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Employee Retention Strategies within Information Technology Small Businesses

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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2020

Abstract

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by

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MBA, Cuttington University Graduate School, 2010

BA, AME University, 2007

BBA, University of Liberia, 1998

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The retention of high talent employees is vital to the success of any organization. Organization leaders who lack effective strategies to retain high talent employees are at risk for business performance failure. A lack of managerial strategies to motivate employees and a lack of understanding of employees' needs lead to increased employee turnover rate in organizations. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies information technology (IT) small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. Data were collected from phone semistructured interviews and review of the organizations' employee handbook, policies, and internal records relating to employee retention strategies. Data were analyzed by using coding techniques to identify keywords, phrases, and concepts. The process led to the following 3 themes: compensation and benefits, conducive work environment, and training and development. Member checking and methodological triangulation increased the validity and reliability of the study. A key recommendation includes communicating compensation strategy with employees in alignment with productivity, organizational goals, and performance. The implications for social change include the potential to reduce turnover by improving the employee work experience and retaining talent by building a positive work environment. The retention rates among IT employees affect individuals, families, communities, organizations, and the economy. Implementing retention strategies may result in improving employee-employer relationships and organizational profitability.

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Dedication

I contribute this study to my relatives, friends, and loved ones for their moral and spiritual support; and for the confidence bestowed upon me. Thank you for praying for me and with me. Most of all, I am grateful to the Almighty God for his continuous faithfulness in making this day a reality. Life without him will be meaningless. My husband Arthur M.S. Washington, Sr. and children Eleanor and Arthur, I salute you for your unwavering support. You are my inspiration.

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I wish to thank the many family members, friends, and well-wishers for their unwavering support towards this incredible journey. Your faith in me gave me hope to conclude my study. I must first acknowledge God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit for keeping the torch burning to have me pursue a doctorate degree. Through his intervention, I acquired some financial assistance for this study. The AME University family, under the able leadership of Dr. Joseph T. Isaac, must also be remembered. You believed in me and trusted my ability to succeed in this program. I ascribe my success to you. I also thank you, Dr. Isaac, for your mentorship. You instilled in me some qualities that are going to live on. I salute you! To Bishop George D. Harris and the Philadelphia Church family, thank you for your prayers that sustained me through this journey. God is faithful to me.

I am grateful to the Walden University family for this tremendous transformation in my life. Indeed, you have helped me in bringing pride to my family's name. Also, I acknowledge the faculty and administrators for their impartations. Your tolerance, patience, and guidance have made me succeed through this doctoral journey.

To my beloved family, Arthur and the children you are my inspiration. You are my heroes. Without your support, my dream would not have been realized.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employee turnover influences various aspects of an organization. Retaining talented employees is one of the most critical issues organization leaders face. Employee turnover is a major concern because turnover is costly, it affects a business's performance, and employee turnover may become increasingly difficult to manage (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). The overall cost associated with employee turnover can vary from 90% to 200% of an employee's annual salary due to recruitment, selection, and training expenses (Reina, Rogers, Peterson, Byron, & Hom, 2017). IT employees' turnover is a persistent challenge for organizations' leaders (Bernard, Godard, & Zouaoui, 2018). In this qualitative study, I explored strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. The findings of this study have the potential to contribute an additional perspective on how to implement strategies for reducing employee turnover.

Background of the Problem

One goal of an organization's leaders is to reduce employee turnover, thereby reducing training costs, recruitment costs, and loss of talent and organizational knowledge; hence, most organizations leaders' concern is to keep the high performers (Voigt & Hirst, 2015). Turnover has a negative influence on organizations and employees (Rothausen, Henderson, & Arnold, 2015). Also, high employee turnover can have negative consequences for organizations in terms of their sustainability (Tremblay, Haines, & Joly, 2016). Employee turnover is a problem for organizational leaders because they incur high costs in replacement, hiring, training, and the loss of institutional knowledge (Lyons & Bandura, 2019). Understanding the factors that contribute to employee turnover is crucial because a stable workforce is necessary to operate a business efficiently and effectively (Reed, Goolsby, & Johnston, 2016). Retaining talented employees may increase organizational efficiency and decrease costs (Mazurkiewicz, 2017).

With the increasing outcome of technology on an organization's financial and operational accomplishments, retention of IT employees is critical (Wang & Kaarst-Brown, 2014). When IT employees leave their jobs, they might take system knowledge and specific work talents that are hard to substitute (Firdose, 2017). Training newly hired employees to be as competent as those who quit, might be an expensive and time-consuming process (Tlaiss, Martin, & Hofaidhllaoui, 2017). Nolan (2015) stated that organizations expend about 50% of an employee's yearly salary per the staffing of new employs. Once managers have a clear perception of employee retention strategies, they can meet the goal of increasing profitability (Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursière, & Raymond, 2016). The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees.

Problem Statement

High employee turnover increases business costs and may be harmful to organizational profitability (Sender, Rutishauser, & Staffelbach, 2018). The overall cost associated with employee turnover can vary from 90% to 200% of an employee's annual salary due to recruitment, selection, and training expenses to replace an employee who has left an organization (Reina et al., 2017). The general business problem is that the voluntary employee turnover of high talent employees threatens organization sustainability and profitability. The specific business problem is that some IT small business leaders lack strategies to retain high talent employees.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. The targeted population comprised IT small business leaders from three organizations in Monrovia, Liberia, who have demonstrated effective strategies for employee retention. Improved employee retention strategies could contribute to social change by helping people to have job steadiness in communities, as well as contribute to economic stability by creating job security, more personal income, and more expenditure on goods and services. Furthermore, as organization leaders implement retention strategies, they might enhance efficiency and improve the quality of both organizational and community associations.

Nature of the Study

The research methods envisaged for this study comprise qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Yin (2018) clarified that researchers usually select research methods grounded on the research questions. A quantitative researcher underscores mathematical data and quantifiable variables with a quantitative approach (Park & Park, 2016); which was not suitable for demonstrating improvements in retention rates. Researchers use a mixed-method approach to amalgamate qualitative and quantitative approaches (French, Luo, & Bose, 2017; McKim, 2017), which was also not appropriate for exploring this phenomenon. A qualitative research method is a diverse collection of strategies involving nonnumeric data that extends from an interpretative written exploration

(Chandra & Shang, 2017). The qualitative research method was appropriate to explore the employee retention strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. The qualitative method was suitable for the study because using a qualitative method is a measure of a participant-oriented research study, which is important in addressing the problem and purpose statements of a study.

I considered four qualitative research designs for this study, which involve the case study, ethnography, narrative inquiry, and phenomenological. According to Bamkin, Maynard, and Goulding (2016), a researcher uses the ethnography design to collect data by observing people in their environment or by socializing with them to understand their world (Bamkin, Maynard, & Goulding, 2016), which was not the purpose of the study. Narrative researchers gather data based on the participants' life stories that may invoke a shared narrative context (Shapiro, 2016), which was not the goal for this study. A phenomenological design is appropriate when categorizing phenomena and concentrating on the meanings of personal lived experiences (Alfakhri, Harness, Nicholson, & Harness, 2018); hence, not suitable for the study. Multiple case study design involves replication, by the use of more than one case, to objectively prove evolving concepts and recognize corresponding features of the phenomenon under investigation by exploring within and across settings (Anderson, Leahy, DelValle, Sherman, & Tansey, 2014). Hence, a multiple case study design was suitable for this study because a multiple case study design is appropriate when collecting data from interviews and organizations' documentation from several participants and organizations to explore the employee retention strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees.

Research Question

What strategies do IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees?

Interview Questions

1. What retention strategies have you used to retain your high talent employees?
2. What steps did you employ to design retention strategies for your employees?
3. What strategies appeared to be least successful in retaining your high talent employees?
4. What were the employees’ responses to the different retention strategies?
5. What challenges did you encounter when you implemented the strategies, and how did you overcome the challenges?
6. How did you determine the effectiveness of retention strategies?
7. What specific procedures or business practices have you implemented to ensure the retention of your high talent employees?
8. What additional information would you like to share about strategies used to retain high talent employees?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Herzberg’s two-factor theory. In 1959, Herzberg (1959) developed the theory from interviews with engineers and accountants in the Pittsburgh area. Herzberg identified the following key constructs underlying the theory (a) intent to remain, (b) job satisfaction, (c) job dissatisfaction, (d) retention, and (e) turnover (Matei & Abrudan, 2016). Herzberg differentiated between motivators and hygiene factors. The motivators include challenging tasks, performance appreciation, employee engagement, purposeful opportunities, and worker empowerment. The hygiene factors comprise administration, working conditions, pay, job safety, and interpersonal relationships. The presence of hygiene factors does not make people happy but keeps them from being unhappy. The main idea of the two-factor theory is that motivational factors influence employee job satisfaction whereas hygiene factors influence employees' job dissatisfaction. Based on these findings, Herzberg's two-factor theory may help to explain how the use of strategies implemented by the leaders in this study may have reduced turnover.

Operational Definitions

The following list contains terms specific to this study.

Employee retention: Employee retention refers to steps that business leaders use to inspire employees to continue employment with the organization for a protracted period (Huang & Zhang, 2016).

Employee turnover: Employee turnover occurs when an employee completely separates from an entity and another competent person hired into the same position within an organization (Becton, Carr, Mossholder, & Walker, 2017).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction is an employee's state of mind about his or her work (Lee, Yang, & Li, 2017).

Motivation: Motivation is the processes that account for a person's strength, focus, and dedication of attempt toward reaching a goal (Prasad Kotni, & Karumuri, 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are features or parts of a study the researcher believes to be true without validation or substantiation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Two assumptions related to the study. First, IT small business leaders in Monrovia, Liberia, would be willing to participate in the seminstructured interviews during their leisure time. Employees may want to use their free time to focus on the interview and respond adequately to the interview questions without work related interruptions. Second, the participants would answer the interview questions sincerely, and that their responses would reflect their actual experiences. Employees may want to respond truthfully because of an established good rapport between the interviewee and interviewer.

Limitations

Limitations are potential drawbacks that are beyond the researcher's control or are the outcome of constraints inflicted by the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The findings from the study are the experiences of only those leaders whom I gathered data from and not necessarily the views of other leaders within the organization. The population was leaders in the IT industry from three organizations in Monrovia, Liberia. Limited transferability of the findings to other settings by future researchers would exist because of the limited scope of this study. Another limitation was that the sample size might be too small to generalize about reducing the application of findings to this one agency as opposed to an entire industry or geographic area.

Delimitations

Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that delimitations are those features that bound the scope and define the borders of the study. The first delimitation was the geographical location of the organizations. I selected organizations located in Monrovia, Liberia. The second delimitation was the type of industry. I collected data from IT small business leaders from three organizations. A third delimitation was focusing my interview questions on employee retention strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees to answer the research question. Finally, I restricted my inquiry to the research topic.

Significance of the Study

The study findings may be of value to businesses in that they could enable organization leaders to develop and implement strategies to retain employees. Employee turnover is a worldwide phenomenon that organization leaders experience and can challenge any organization (Nelissen, Forrier, & Verbruggen, 2017). Hence, my findings may enable significant and positive changes in business practice by creating employment steadiness, economic stability leading to family unification, enhance efficiencies, and improve the quality of both organizational and community associations.

Contribution to Business Practice

The result of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study could contribute to effective business practice because business leaders may gain a better understanding of strategies to retain high talent employees and create job stability. Employee turnover is expensive and increasing employee retention can help small businesses increase profitability. Organizational leaders could also use the findings to invest further in the knowledge of their high talent employees via training to advance employees' capabilities and increase profitability.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change include the potential for business leaders to use retention strategies useful for reducing employee turnover rates. Reduced employee turnover rates could contribute to social change by reducing unemployment rates, stabilizing communities, and enhancing the human and social conditions outside the workplace. Similarly, improved employee retention strategies could contribute to social change by helping people to have continuing or increasing employment in communities, as well as contribute to economic stability by creating job security, more personal income, and more expenditure on goods and services, which would increase communities' tax revenues.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. The aim was to answer the research question that directed this study. This review of the relevant professional and academic literature provided a foundation for this study.

I offered an in-depth summary of the conceptual framework followed by an extensive review of the literature. In planning for the review of the literature, I used resources from Walden University Library databases, comprising Science Direct, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and Business Source Complete. Additional information for this literature review included supplementary data from resource volumes, journal articles, and current periodicals from numerous university libraries and Internet sites. I used search terms comprising *IT employees, IT professionals, employee retention, work-life balances, employee turnover, job dissatisfaction, job satisfaction, leave intentions, intention to remain, compensation, organizational commitment, quality of work, retention, turnover, company policy, quality of supervision, job security, working conditions, recognition, the opportunity for advancement,* and *promotion.* I gave preference to articles published in or after 2016 to ensure that the literature gathered is current and relevant. I also gave preference to articles accessible in the Walden University Library. I used Crossref and Ulrich's Periodicals Directory to authenticate that the literature I obtained is peer-reviewed. The literature review consisted of 280 distinctive sources, 247 of which are current, peer-reviewed research articles (88.21%) published from 2016 to 2019.

Table 1
Review of Sources Used for the Study

Sources	Full document		Literature Review
Peer-reviewed research	346		247
Not peer-reviewed articles	57		33
Sources 2016 or newer		343	
Sources prior to 2016		60	
Total (% of total)	403 (85.9%)	403 (85.1%)	280 (88.2%)

Organization of the Review

I organized the literature review by themes. Themes included conceptual framework consideration, Herzberg's two-factor theory, intrinsic factors, compensation, reward and recognition, training and development, employee turnover, abusive supervision, lack of organizational support, job insecurity, employee retention, job satisfaction, work-life balance, organizational commitment, working environment, employee engagement, and information technology employee retention. Also, I organized the review of the professional and academic literature by identifying the conceptual framework followed by an account of various motivational theories. In this literature review, I used Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation as the conceptual framework to explore how motivation is essential to employees' intention to leave an organization. I mentioned the two-factor theory of motivation as Herzberg's two-factor theory throughout this literature review. Other motivational theories such as (a) Hackman's job characteristics theory, b) Bass's leadership theory, and c) Maslow's hierarchy of needs were the supporting and contrasting theories reviewed to understand the aspects influencing employee turnover. My intention was to explore themes that serve as a foundation for exploring strategies IT small business use to retain high talent employees.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

In this qualitative multiple case study, I explored, illustrated, distinguished, and analyzed strategies that leaders employed to increase high talent employees' retention. Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory confirmed key precepts as (a) overall working conditions, (b) remunerations, (c) compensation and promotional potential, (d) work relationships, (e) facilities, (f) training and personal advancement, (g) appreciation, (h) opportunities to use essential skill, (i) work-related activities, and (j) family and work-life balance.

Employee satisfaction in the workplace positively influences employee productivity. Individuals associate themselves with their jobs and, consequently, the workplace is an essential area in the life of individuals' reference (Herzberg et al., 1959). There are five intrinsic motivating factors that might produce satisfaction and five extrinsic hygiene factors that concern dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). The motivating factors consist of recognition, achievement, the work itself, the opportunity for advancement, and responsibility, whereas the hygiene factors comprise salary, relationships with supervisors, supervision quality, company policies, and administrative practices, and relationships with peers (Atalic, Can, & Canturk, 2016).

Organization leaders must concentrate on making the work environment viable. Herzberg (1959) argued that the factors that cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not contraries. They operate in a range where individuals who reported feeling satisfied do not certainly indicate feelings of dissatisfaction do not occur. The lack of motivating factors does not necessarily result in job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). Although employee satisfaction does not directly lead to high turnover rates, as confirmed by Jarupathirun and De Gennaro (2018), it is a contributor to employee turnover. Using Herzberg's two-factor theory, Jarupathirun and De Gennaro (2018) examined the intrinsic and extrinsic factors relative to job satisfaction. The study participants comprised 100 office workers in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region. The findings indicated that employee is a contributor to employee turnover. Organization leaders should rework their processes to fulfill the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the employees. Also, organization leaders can use the insights and information gained from the knowledge of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction to understand why employees leave their place of employment. Leaders who build employee satisfaction build the organization.

Herzberg (1959) established that one group of elements influences job happiness and another group of elements influences job unhappiness. Herzberg described the elements that cause job satisfaction as intrinsic motivators and the elements that cause unhappiness in the workplace as extrinsic motivators. The motivator factors, which Herzberg described as complex factors, increase job satisfaction and productivity. Conversely, Herzberg's theory is a departure from the traditional method that measured job happiness and unhappiness as being on contrary ends of the same domain (Vroom, 1964). In a research, to explore the elements of Herzberg's theory that caused job happiness, Singh (2016) suggested that motivation factors affect the actual job tasks that employees perform; hence, the jobs should consist of intrinsic and extrinsic factors to encourage motivation within the workforce. To enhance job attitudes, increase efficiency, and prolong employee's commitment, managers must recognize and apply intrinsic and extrinsic elements of Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation. Nyambegera and Gicheru (2016) found that developing and implementing strategies that incorporate a balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors based on the needs and characteristics of employees could help managers alleviate turnover and improve workplace retention. Organization leaders' actions in response to the hygiene factors are critical to maintaining a satisfied workforce.

Employee retention is critical. Extreme competition to locate and keep employee demands managers and human resource professionals to make a better decision on what inspires their employees to prevent the high costs related to turnover (Renard & Snelgar, 2016). Renard and Snelgar (2016) conducted a study with 25 paid nonprofit employees working on either a full-time or a part-time basis within Belgium and South Africa. The aim of the study was to gather in-depth qualitative data relating to the factors that promote work engagement and retention amongst nonprofit employees working within Belgium and South Africa. In Kundu and Lata's (2017) study to investigate the mediating effect of organizational engagement in the relationship between supportive work environment and employee retention, Kundu and Lata found that a supportive work environment plays a critical role in predicting employee retention. The primary data used was 211 respondents from 67 organizations. Organization leaders lose their human resources, which creates an opportunity for competitors to employ the human capital asset. The extrinsic elements involve supervision, working conditions, coworkers, salary, rules and systems, rank, and job safety (Herzberg, 1959). Herzberg asserted that these elements do not assist as satisfiers, but their lack could be a basis of unhappiness. Organization leaders should create positive work environments for their employees to support their levels of work engagement, as well as place importance on intrinsic rewards to retain employees.

Earlier research employing Herzberg's two-factor theory. Numerous researchers employed Herzberg's two-factor theory in their investigations. Chen, Ko, and Yeh (2016) employed Herzberg's two-factor theory in their study to increase customer satisfaction. Liu (2016) employed Herzberg's two-factor to study job satisfaction and total quality management (TQM) amid land authority workers. Liu discovered that TQM certainly influenced job satisfaction amid the land authority workers when present and their lack adversely influenced job satisfaction. Similarly, Mahzan and Abidin (2017) used Herzberg's theory to explore how leaders reduce employee turnover intentions (TIs) by decreasing job dissatisfaction and increasing job satisfaction. Mahzan and Abidin found that Herzberg's theory is a valuable foundation for understanding the effects of employees' motivation and job satisfaction on employee TIs. The results of Chen et al.'s, and Mahzan and Abidin's studies are consistent with Liu's study. From these studies, motivation influences employee job satisfaction.

Leaders apply the two-factor theory to verify the appropriateness of hygiene factors to avoid dissatisfaction, thereby focusing on the nature of work to confirm that it is inspiring and fulfilling to increase retention of IT workforce (Ziar, Momtazmanesh, & Ahmadi, 2017). Prasad Kotni and Karumuri (2018) tested the Herzberg two-factor theory of motivation for retail sales representatives employing data from 150 salespersons working in the 15 prominent retail markets in Visakhapatnam. Prasad Kotni and Karumuri discovered that social security measures, working conditions, sales incentives, and welfare facilities are hygiene factors that inspire salespeople of the retail area. Consistent with Prasad Kotni and Karumuri's findings, Pandža, Đeri, Galamboš, and

Galamboš (2015) indicated that leaders need to know employees' needs and motivating factors to achieve the highest level of motivation. The findings of Prasad Kotni and Karumuri and Pandža et al. indicated that satisfied employees are likely to show a greater organizational commitment and higher intention to remain with the organization.

Employee satisfaction is a reliable predictor of employee retention. Pacheco and Webber (2016) found that satisfied employees will remain with the organization. Shinde (2015) employed Herzberg's two-factor theory as a conceptual framework to characterize the numerous motivating factors and how they relate to job satisfaction and employee retention. Shinde discovered that employee job satisfaction affects employee retention. There are other factors influencing employee retention. These other retention factors include training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, job characteristics (which included skill variety, job autonomy, and job challenge), work-life balance, and compensation (De Sousa Sabbagha, Ledimo, & Martins, 2018). Organization leaders should seek to identify employee motivation and job satisfaction interventions that might help to retain talented employees.

There are numerous theories accessible to describe the motivational substances and cognitive procedures that represent the subjects of job satisfaction in any organization (Park & Kim, 2018). Dawis (2007) theory of work adjustment is one of such theories. Bayl-Smith and Griffin (2015) employed Dawis (2007) theory of work adjustment to explore job happiness. Bayl-Smith and Griffin found that employees experience job happiness when their work setting meets either their intrinsic or extrinsic requirements. The abilities and needs of employees could support the essentials of an employer, creating a combined useful connection. Dawis suggested that when managers encourage employees to use their talents and insight into the work setting, employees will control their work to realize their physical needs (Velez & Moradi, 2012). If organizational leaders improve job satisfaction and morale, they can improve job performance as well.

Majority of the disputes concerning theories of job satisfaction commence with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory (Park & Kim, 2018). Herzberg two-factor theory is appropriate for exploring retention strategies in the IT industry because it contends with motivation and job satisfaction as connected to intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Matei & Abrudan, 2016). Managers may concentrate on two sets of job factors (Herzberg, 1959). One set of job factors link to improving satisfaction on the job. Managers wanting to improve job satisfaction need to focus on offering employees with prospects for growth within the organization. Another set of factors is responsible for reducing or removing job dissatisfaction. Giving the same attention to both sets of job factors allowed managers to improve job satisfaction and reduce dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). To reduce job dissatisfaction, managers must create opportunities for employees to take on additional tasks and accomplishments. Also, managers must develop strategies, techniques, organization, and working conditions to reduce dissatisfaction.

Job satisfaction and employee retention have direct relationship. Fareed and Jan (2016), Shinde (2015), and Zhang and Liu (2017) employed Herzberg two-factor theory to demonstrate the connection that occurs between job satisfaction and workplace retention or employee attrition, and several researchers have conducted studies that validated Herzberg's two-factor theory. For example, Fareed, and Jan evaluated the Herzberg's two-factor theory by investigating the relationship between different factors of motivation and job satisfaction enjoyed by the banks' officers in Khyber. The sample size was 418 bank officers. Fareed and Jan established that under given circumstances, hygiene factors such as relationship with supervisors, company policy, salary, social status, and working conditions have a substantial relationship with job satisfaction. Conversely, Herzberg's motivators have no significant relationship with job satisfaction. To establish a model to promote employee retention, Shinde used Herzberg's two-factor theory as a conceptual model to understand the nature of motivating factors and their relationship to job satisfaction and employee retention. Shinde discovered that employee job satisfaction could sway employee retention.

Motivating factors influence job satisfaction and employee retention. Issa Eid (2016) also employed Herzberg's two-factor theory to review motivational elements that influence employee retention. Issa Eid established that employees tend to commit themselves when managers afford motivational prospects such as achievement, growth, and acknowledgment. Other motivational factors influence job satisfaction. For example, Ahmed, Taskin, Pauleen, and Parker (2017) used the two-factor theory to determine what other factors can influence job satisfaction and agreed that positive working conditions, appreciation, organization policy, and pay are the most crucial factors. The conclusion was that an individual's desire for money assists to describe the link between salary and job satisfaction.

Motivational factors are key to retention. Bacea and Bordean (2016) used Herzberg's two-factor theory to examine which factors make the employee remain in business process outsourcing (BPO) companies and what keeps them involved. The sample size was 169 BPO's employees from three outsourcing companies in ClujNapoca, Romania. Bacea and Bordean found that one factor that contributes to employees' commitment to stay in an organization is the intrinsic factor. Bacea and Bordean described the intrinsic factors as those factors that control an individual to act without any influence of an external motivator. When organization leaders design strategies to motivate their employees, retention can improve. One way to retain the employees is to foster their engagement by giving them freedom, trust, and a sense of participation (Kundu & Lata, 2017). If the employees get satisfaction, the performance will enhance, the behavior will be counterproductive, and the turnover rate will reduce.

Job satisfaction is a motivational element. Maloni, Campbell, Gligor, Scherrer, and Boyd (2017) applied Herzberg's two-factor theory to confirm that factors such as organizational position, education, accomplishment, and appreciation influence job satisfaction. The two-factor theory used by Maloni et al. was to create a worker job satisfaction level and establish that motivational factors such as education level and organizational position had a positive outcome on employees' job satisfaction level. Other researchers discovered other motivational factors that increase employees' level of job satisfaction. In their study involving job satisfaction, Son, Lu, and Kim (2015) used the two-factor theory and found that motivational factors such as accomplishments, recognition, work, responsibility, and individual growth influenced job satisfaction.

Kushta (2017) also employed Herzberg's two-factor theory to explore how employees' motivation, job satisfaction, and employee turnover relate to each other; and found a positive relationship between these variables.

Satisfied employees are more industrious, innovative, and enthusiastic to stay in the workplace. Kumar and Jauhari (2016) noted that satisfied employees display the most organizational commitment, which results in higher employee retention. Hsiao, Ma, and Auld (2017) adapted Herzberg's two-factor theory to investigate factors affecting employee job satisfaction and their effect on employee retention, and acknowledged that both motivational factors and hygiene factors that influence employee job satisfaction and employee turnover. In the study, Hsiao et al. examined factors influencing employee satisfaction by drawing on Hertzberg's two factors and applying them to organizational diversity characteristics.

Intrinsic factors. Motivation is a critical factor influencing human actions and performance. The level of motivation employees apply in their job can influence all aspects of organizational performance. Deci and Ryan (1985), the forerunners of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation theory, indicated that the actions that provide incentive and amiable are intrinsic motivation; while the actions that give an instant incentive or prevent a punishment are extrinsic motivation. Herzberg (1959) described intrinsic factors as those job situations intrinsic to the work itself that are necessary for the presence of motivation at a workplace. Intrinsic factors influence employee job dissatisfaction. According to Jones (2017), intrinsic factors that influence job dissatisfaction include (a) remunerations, (b) organization policy and supervision, (c) good interpersonal relationships, (d) quality of supervision, (e) job security, (f) working conditions, and (g) work-life balance. While these factors do not lead to established assured satisfaction, their lack in the workplace leads to dissatisfaction (Jones, 2017). Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors are essential in the workplace.

Job satisfaction is a key retention factor. Ogbonnaya and Valizade (2018) indicated that job satisfaction and employee engagement are vital for the successful operation of an organization. Gevrek, Spencer, Hudgins, and Chambers (2017) found that monetary pay is a significant intrinsic factor influencing employee retention. Similarly, pay is an influential tool for retaining talented employees (Khalid & Nawab, 2018). Another retention factor, as Rathi and Lee (2017) mentioned, is successful communications, which can enhance employees’ relationship with their organization and can build openness and trust. Conversely, MsenOni-Ojo, Salau, Dirisu, and Waribo (2015) evaluated the views of employees toward work incentives and job satisfaction. One hundred and twenty-one non managerial and managerial employees participated in the study. MsenOni-Ojo et al. found that financial incentives encourage employees externally, while other incentives can inspire workers internally by causing them to feel valued by the organization.

Employees desire more from their jobs than only compensation. Thakur and Bhatnagar (2017) proposed keeping valuable employees by giving attention to each employee’s pay. This process comprises management, training, career or visibility, specific placing systems tied to motivations, and identification of exceptional cultures when present. One reason for a possible null relationship between perceived employability and turnover intentions could be that people oppose loss and tend to weigh losses higher than gains (Acikgoz, Canan, & Sumer, 2016). Although hygiene factors are crucial to the retention of valued employees, managers perform a major role in handling these factors.

Employee’s performance is influential to organizational growth and productivity. Abdirahman, Najeemdeen, Abidemi, and Ahmad (2018) examined the relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment on employee performance and found that the sustainability and efficiency of an organization link to the viability and productivity of employee's performance. Cho, Rutherford, Friend, Hamwi, and Park (2017) investigated the role of worker’s emotions as inducers of job happiness, emotional organizational commitment, and voluntary turnover within a frontline worker environment using a sample of 126 retail workers. Hidden operating emotions and emotional enervation meaningfully influence job satisfaction, while both hidden operating emotions and job satisfaction predict emotional organizational commitment (Cho et al., 2017).

Work engagement influences employees performance. For example, Cesário and Chambel (2017) hypothesized that work engagement and organizational commitment have a positive relationship and influence on employee’s performance. According to Cesário and Chambel, work engagement is the best predictor of employees’ performance. Cesário and Chambel’s work supports the findings of Merry and Syarief (2017) who studied the influence of empowerment, employee engagement, and organizational commitment on the performance of financial management employees and found that organizational commitment positively influences employee's performance. These studies together confirmed that organizational commitment highly relates to organizational performance.

Employee's commitment positively influences an organization to grow and succeed. Employees who have high levels of job satisfaction have a high drive of commitment to their organization (Mensah, Agyapong, & Nuertey, 2017). Similarly, employees with a strong commitment have a strong bond with the organization and think positively about the organization (Hendri, 2019). Committed employees work towards achieving organizational goals. Committed employees consider themselves accountable to the organization and desire success for the organization. Ramalho Luz, de Paula, and de Oliveira (2018) noted a negative correlation between turnover intention and organizational commitment, stating the more elevated an employee's turnover intention is, the less that employee possesses organizational commitment. From these studies, it is clear that a satisfied employee creates a positive outcome and work ethics that lead to enhanced competence and efficiency towards the achievement of organizational goals. Exploring and recognizing extrinsic factors including IT professionals' value perception will also encourage leaders to foster and advance a work-life setting that helps realize high-levels of employee job satisfaction.

Motivation is a crucial element influencing individual actions and performance (Herzberg, 1959). The level of motivation employees attach to their job can influence all components of organizational performance. Herzberg described intrinsic factors as those job circumstances key to the work itself that are critical for motivation to occur at a workplace. Jones (2017) also identified intrinsic factors that shape job dissatisfaction including salaries, company policy and administration, good interpersonal relationships, quality of supervision, job security, working conditions, and work-life balance. Also, their absence in the workplace leads to dissatisfaction. Increasing the employee’s job satisfaction is an important technique for reducing employee turnover.

Compensation. Organizations need individuals who perform well and choose to remain as their employees. Compensation is strategic to the organization’s goals and critical to employee satisfaction, employee retention, employee development, and better organizational performance (Katsikea, Theodosiou, & Morgan, 2015). As Singh and Mishra (2017) mentioned, organization leaders may use compensation as a strategy to acknowledge employees’ efforts. Organization leaders who provide a compensation package are likely to retain their employees. Bonuses are one of such compensation. Organizational leaders who offer bonuses to their employees may encourage them to work harder to accomplish organizational objectives (Syahreza, Lumbanraja, Dalimunthe, & Absah, 2017). Compensation is an influencing factor leading to employee retention.

Compensation is an element of job satisfaction. Khalid and Nawab (2018) explored the effect of compensation package on employee retention and established whether there is a relationship between compensation package and job satisfaction, and the relationship between job satisfaction and employee retention. The sample size was 71 Kollam employees. Khalid and Nawab found that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee retention and that satisfied employees remain longer in an organization. Also, Cui, Khan, and Tarba (2018) conducted a case study to investigate how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) understood strategic talent management in the service sector of China; and how SMEs managers understood talent retention despite their limited resources and small size. The sample size was four Chinese SMEs. The work environment, career advancement opportunities, and a good compensation package were the best strategies found for retaining talent. The findings of Khalid and Nawab, and Cui et al. indicated that employees' willingness to stay on the job largely depends on the compensation packages of the organization.

Employees are likely to be happy with a workplace that has proper compensation. Compensation is a significant factor influencing employee effectiveness and compensation decision is among the critical decisions that a company makes (Zaharee, Lipkie, Mehlman, & Neylon, 2018). Compensation is a strategy for attracting, retaining, and motivating high talent employees (Syahreza et al., 2017). Syahreza et al's (2017) findings are consistent with Schlechter, Syce, and Bussin's (2016) evaluation that high talent employees leave organizations when they become dissatisfied, believe their compensations do not commensurate with their skill or experience or become unmotivated. Compensation is an important factor influencing employees' decision to remain with an organization.

When the employees demonstrate satisfaction with an equitable compensation plan, they perform better and are willing to remain with the organization. Although managers often provide incentives such as salary increases, ensuring employee security, and good working conditions, as well as opportunities for development and advancement, Pandža et al. (2015) questioned whether these incentives equally motivate and satisfy all employees. Similarly, when the employees perceive a discrepancy in pay, they are less willing to perform and more apt to consider voluntary termination.

Appropriate reward and recognition. Employee's expertise, talents, and abilities are critical for organizations. Korsakienė, Stankevičienė, Šimelytė, and Talačkienė (2015) argued that professionals would remain with an organization that acknowledges and values their performance, including work effort and competence. Similarly supported by the findings associated with employee retention was the work of Mngomezulu, Challenor, Munapo, Mashau, and Chikandiwa (2015), which revealed that generally, employees leave organizations due to the absence of professional challenges, having recognized modest or no recognition. The need for recognition, self-respect, growth, meaningful work, social activities are important as monetary incentives in increasing the employees' morale and motivation (Syahreza et al., 2017). Langove and Isha (2017) conducted a study to develop a conceptual framework that described rewards and recognition on turnover intention, where the well-being of the employee ensued as a mediator. Using Malaysian IT executives as the sample, Langove and Isha discovered that rewards and recognition are motivational tools that maximized psychological well-being and reduced the turnover intention among IT executives. The results of Langove and Isha's study support the motivational factors found in Herzberg's two-factor theory. The findings of Korsakienė et al., Mngomezulu et al., and Langove and Isha indicated that the financial incentives are important but also non-financial incentives are essential in improving motivation among employees. Hence, organization leaders should consider the use of helpful management, affirmative response, and rewards for achievements to increase employee retention.

Rewards and recognition influence leave intention. For organizations to increase employee retention, they need to invest in recruitment, development, and rewards to retain high talent employees for long-term success (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016). In the absence of rewards and recognition, researchers found in some studies that the more employees feel dissatisfied with their financial rewards, the greater the risk they leave the organization (De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018; Schlechter & Bussin, 2015). Similarly, Rombaut and Guerry (2018) confirmed how companies' treatments towards employees have an impact on voluntary turnover. From these studies, it is clear that a lack of fair rewards and recognition system may create an unsatisfactory workforce within the organization. Failure to provide employees with adequate rewards can be detrimental to an organization.

Effective training and development. Employees feel valued when the organization recognizes their works and talents. Training and development are a human resources management practice that leads organizations to gain a competitive advantage (Bibi, Ahmad, & Majid, 2018). Through training and development, employees acquire job-related skills and competencies for supervisory positions and career advancement (Ambrosius, 2018). Also, through training and development, the employees' levels of dedication and allegiance can improve, thus, triggering them to stay longer with the organization (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). Consistent with Letchmiah and Thomas' and Ambrosius' findings, Fletcher, Alfes, and Robinson (2018) identified other benefits of training and development as opportunities for employees to obtain and acquire skills, talents, and expertise.

Training and development influences job performance. Chen, Wang, and Tang (2016) suggested that organization leaders should support training and other means to their employees to allow them to enhance their job performance, which enhances motivation and overall morale because employees feel that their leaders' interest is in their accomplishment. Failure to provide adequate training opportunities sends a message to employees that their employer does not care about them (Wang, 2018). Hence, organizational leaders should establish an effective employee retention strategy to ensure that key employees remain within the organization.

Employees are likely to remain with an organization that provides training and development opportunities. According to Jehanzeb and Mohanty (2018), focusing on the training and development of high talent employees can prevent employee turnover and increase organizational commitment. Similarly, Fogarty, Reinstein, Heath, and Sinason (2017) revealed that training and development influences employees' levels of job satisfaction, which in turn, may shape their decision to remain with the organization. As Chowdhury and Nazmul (2017) mentioned, organization leaders can reduce employee turnover when they use strategies that involve employee training to increase multiplicity.

There is a link between training and job satisfaction. Researchers suggest a link between employee training and the level of employee job satisfaction (Nguyen, & Shao, 2019)). In their research to explore why employees would want to leave their job, Chowdhury and Nazmul (2017) suggested strategies to retain employees and reduce turnover. Chowdhury and Nazmul found that offering training and development opportunities, fair pay, a harmonious work environment, and career counseling and opportunities could positively influence an employee's intent to stay with an organization. In addition to employee's intention to remain with the organization, human capital philosophers maintained that training programs are a means to enhance employees' job-related talents and productivity (Ranganathan, 2018). As Santhanam, Kamalanabhan, Dyaram, and Ziegler (2017) indicated, the lack of training, development, and career opportunities are major reasons for employees' change jobs.

Supporting and Contrasting Theories

Researchers have employed additional theories, along with Herzberg's two-factor theory, to study the outcomes of employee turnover. To provide a comprehensive analysis, in the following subsection, I presented additional theories such as Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Bass's transformational leadership theory to explain factors that influence turnover intentions.

Supporting theory. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was the supporting theory in the current study. Maslow's (1943) theory is a supporting theory that has been a useful tool to assess employee retention (Clegg, Kornberger, & Pitsis, 2016). In 1943, Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs theory to identify how leaders could influence employees and reduce employee turnover. Maslow established the hierarchy of needs theory founded on how people fulfill individual needs in the workplace. Maslow suggested that people have five types of needs including physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (see Figure 1). There are three assumptions in

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory (a) arranging a person’s needs in order of importance, (b) individuals will not have the motivation to satisfy higher-level needs until they satisfy lower-level needs, and (c) people have five need classifications (Rahman & Nurullah, 2014).

The first need is the physiological found at the bottom of the hierarchy. The physiological need involves essential needs, such as food, air, water, and housing (Maslow, 1943). Leaders can accomplish the physiological need by offering fundamental needs such as food, water, and shelter (Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). The safety need involves an individual’s freedom to harm or threats (Maslow, 1943). Organizational leaders can accomplish the safety need by offering medical assistances, housing remunerations, appropriate salaries, job security, and safe working conditions (Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). The love and belonging need include the feelings associated with belonging, friendship, and affection (Maslow, 1943). Leaders can fulfil the love and belonging need of employees by fostering social contacts, affirmative employee-supervisor associations, and a group atmosphere (Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). After attaining the love and belonging need, individuals must satisfy the esteem need through appreciation, respect, and approval from others (Maslow, 1943). Leaders can fulfill the self-esteem need by promoting employee participation in workplace functions, providing ample training, and rewarding and recognizing employees (Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). The fifth and highest need is self-actualization. Maslow described self-actualization as the ability of an individual to develop his or her fullest potential. Employees achieving self-actualization reach the highest level of job satisfaction (Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016), and might increase their individual and overall organizational performance (Kumar & Jauhari, 2016). Maslow stated that individuals reach the basic goal of self-actualization after satisfying all other needs.

Maslow (1943) considered the drive toward self-actualization as valuable to society because it leads to unity, compassion, attention, problem solving, and humanity. Maslow suggested that satisfaction of lower-order needs results in the development of higher-order needs, ending in the need for self-actualization (Winston, 2016). Although the satisfaction of lower-order needs ensues in the growth of the higher-order needs, however, that is not always the case. Winston (2016) argued that the satisfaction of lower-order needs does not always trigger higher-order needs and noted that social disparities in self-actualization scores indicate disparities in socioeconomic development. Other reviewers of Maslow’s theory opposed that self-actualizing individuals have repeatedly relinquished their basic needs (Winston, 2016).

Maslow (1943) stated that motivators involved each stage of the hierarchy (physiological, safety, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization). When an individual reaches the next level of the hierarchy, that person achieves the next stage of satisfaction (Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). For instance, if an employee experiences job safety, the individual will then strive for employee friendships and connections with others at work.

Employees get satisfied, motivated, productive, and committed to the organization when leaders meet their subordinates’ physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943), which leads to a reduced employee turnover intention. Motivation causes satisfaction. For motivation to arise, Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, and Courtright (2015) stated that a person must achieve psychological stability, safety, belongingness or love, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Organization leaders must put in place a system to address employees' needs. As Najjar and Fares (2017) argued, organization leaders can use the tenets of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a valuable tool to design and implement an effective system to respond to employees' needs. Using Maslow's theory, Najjar and Fares investigated the motivational practices of management and the differences of motivational factors between blue- and white-collar employees in Lebanon. Najjar and Fares used semi-structured interviews to collect the empirical data. Understanding the needs of employees may assist organization leaders to implement different strategies to improve retention. Najjar and Fares found that a single motivational strategy may not suit the diverse needs and motivational factors of all employees because individuals are different and have various needs and aspirations. Hence, organization leaders should tailor job attributes to fit the needs of employees which could lead to effective motivational results and attainment of organization goals.

Alignment between Herzberg's theory and Maslow's theory. Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory supports Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory regarding safety, security, and a sense of belonging. Maslow's hierarchy of needs model described human motivation founded on meeting needs at various levels and proposed five stages such as physiological needs, safety, social (belongingness), esteem, and self-actualization. According to Maslow, the satisfaction of basic needs, such as physical and safety needs, takes preference over higher-level interests such as personal development. Singh's (2016) perception of the physical and safety needs is that the physiological, safety, and existence needs might occur by extrinsic sources such as wages; while belongingness, association, affection, self-actualization, growth, and learning needs are intrinsic emotions that may occur by creating opportunities for personal and social contact, self-sufficiency, achievement, and growth.

Maslow described the physiological needs as requirements for essential factors of life, such as food and water; the safety needs containing the need for protection. Potra, Izvercian, Pugna, and Dahlgaard (2017) described the social (belongingness) as love and feeling of companionship; the self-esteem needs as the needs for appreciation, and esteem; and the self-actualization needs as the needs for self-realization and making use of one's exclusive talents.

Herzberg's (1959) finding of motivation also supported Maslow's (1943) influence by identifying motivation as a function of growth when knowledge creates individual improvement. Herzberg explained seven values that add to a motivating work environment for employees. Herzberg described the values as the function of managers extended beyond the wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment, which comprised restricting authorities, improving accountability, fulfilling work tasks, job enablement, directing communications, challenging work, and tasking to build expertise. Herzberg distinguished the values from the usual job-filling procedures such as job replacement, improving production opportunities, and continuing small functions. Self-improvement is vital to obtaining an organization's long-term business goals.

Maslow’s theory and Herzberg’s theory have similar attributes and cohesions. Herzberg proposed a theory about job factors that motivate employees, and Maslow developed a theory about the rank and satisfaction of human needs and how people pursue those needs. Both theories focused on employee satisfaction, workplace environment, and physiological needs of the employee. Kumar and Jauhari (2016) affirmed Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory and noted a positive correlation with satisfaction and Maslow’s needs. Organizational leaders must understand the needs of the individual to motivate and retain their employees.

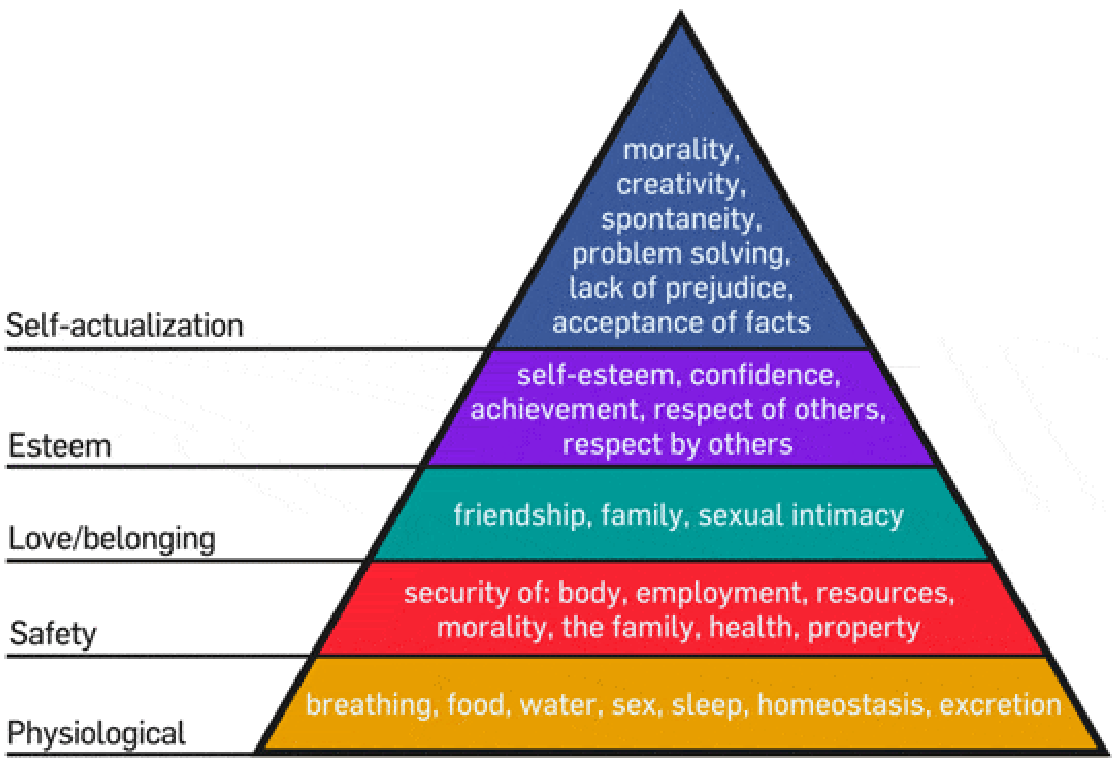

Figure 1. Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs theory model.

Contrasting theories. The job characteristics theory differs from Herzberg’s two-factor theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The job characteristics theory outlines the relationship between the varying characteristics of the job and the personal feelings of employees toward their job (Ghosh, Rai, Chauhan, Gupta, & Singh, 2015). Hackman and Oldham (1976) recommended the job characteristics model (JCM) as a basis to study how job characteristics influence job outcomes, involving job satisfaction.

The job characteristics theory stipulates the task condition in which individuals are foreseen to prosper in their work (Faturochman, 2016). While Faturochman (2016) mentioned the task condition, Hackman and Oldham (1976) recognized five basic job characteristics such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, which influence three crucial psychological conditions: experienced importance, experienced accountability for outcomes and knowledge of the real outcomes. These psychological states in turn influence work outcomes such as job satisfaction, absenteeism, and work motivation (Singh, Singh, & Khan, 2016). The job characteristics theory stipulates the task condition and assesses commitment of work, responsibility for work results, and knowledge of results, whereas skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback are the basic features (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Employees’ perceptions of the characteristics of their jobs play a major role in their turnover intentions.

Job characteristics theory can assist leaders to distinguish what job characteristics need enhancement, what job characteristics may motivate employees, and what main job components work (Chaudhry, Maurice, & Haneefuddin, 2015). When organizational leaders achieve positive personal and work results, such as high internal motivation, high work satisfaction, or excellent performance, the organization attains low absenteeism and low employee turnover (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Organizational leaders use the job characteristics theory for identifying existing jobs to establish if and how reshaping existing jobs would enhance employee productivity and satisfaction, for evaluating the effect of job changes on employees, and for evaluating whether the changes originated from planned job enrichment projects increases employee motivation and retention (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) also mentioned employees' approaches to jobs as job-attitude factors. Like Hackman and Oldham's (1976) evaluation, Herzberg et al. argued that a supervisor who effectively runs a department and a supervisor who condemns employees' work are both factors leading to exceptional employee feelings about a job.

Bass's transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership was also a contrasting theory in this current study. Transformational leadership introduced by Burns (1978) and operationalized by Bass (1985) is one of the most often studied leadership styles in organizational behavior over the past three decades. Bass (1985) applied the theoretical framework of transformational leadership in organizational behavioral research to study managers' leadership behaviors. The main concepts fundamental to the transformational leadership theory are (a) personalized consideration, (b) intellectual inspiration, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) idealized influence. The framework of transformational leadership rests on the assumption that certain leaders are more proactive than reactive in their thinking, and are more radical than conservative in ideology (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership is a leadership style focused on inspiring followers by aligning the goals of the individuals to the goals of the organization (Bass, 1985). By aligning goals, top leadership, and the individual employee work towards the same goal. Also, transformational leaders offer employees support, mentoring, and coaching (Mekraz & Gundala, 2016). Mencl, Wefald, and van Ittersum (2016) mentioned that many researchers have established that transformational leadership improves an employee's work endeavor, work improvement, and organizational citizenship behavior.

Transformational leaders have a clear vision for their organization and have the skills to stimulate employees' thinking in a way that motivates them to produce outcomes outside their anticipated levels (Bass, 1985). Bass stated that transformational leaders are visionary, confident, and have the power to motivate employees' performance for the advancement of the organization. Transformational leaders also have other attributes. As Faupel and Süß (2019) mentioned, transformational leaders create a positive vision of change that is worth pursuing and inspire their followers through their charismatic nature. Particularly, Zhang and Inness (2019) found that training managers to demonstrate more transformational leadership behavior, enhancing employees' proactive motivation, and hiring proactive individuals are strategies to facilitate employee voice. Leaders may reduce turnover intentions and increase additional responsibility behaviors by enhancing the agency's mission (Caillier, 2016).

In support of Bass's leadership theory, Gyensare, Anku-Tsede, Mohammed-Aminu, and Okpoti (2016) confirmed that organizational commitment is a significant factor that resolves the dynamics of transformational leadership and employees' turnover intentions. Khalili (2016) investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' creativity, innovation, and innovation supportive climates by collecting data from 1,172 employees working in various types of industries in Iran. Khalili found positive and significant relationships between transformational leadership and employees' creativity and innovation. Khalili stated that leaders who demonstrate transformational behavior encourage their subordinates to take risks and responsibility for the results of the subordinates' actions.

Transformational leadership theory is more about a change that motivates followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for a unit or an organization. Transformational leadership theory differs from Herzberg's concept that job satisfaction not only involves leadership but other factors, which are critical in motivating employees to remain committed to the organization (Amankwaa & Anku-Tsede, 2015).

The similarity of the strengths of each theory. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs emphasizes on what inspires people to meet specific needs. Organization leaders who desire to engage, develop, and motivate their employees can use Maslow's theory to understand employees' needs and increase their job satisfaction. Recognizing employees' needs could assist organization leaders to reduce their turnover rate. Ismail and El Nakkache (2014) studied motivation and satisfaction among Lebanese employees employing the hierarchy of needs. The extrinsic job factors were more important to employees in the country; conversely, intrinsic job factors were critical regarding job satisfaction (Ismail & El Nakkache, 2014). Ismail and El Nakkache determined that the presence of growth factors has a positive relationship with employee motivation.

Similarly, individuals will commence pursuing satisfaction of higher needs after their lower needs fulfill (Maslow, 1943). Ismail and Nakkache established that motivation is more contingent on growth factors than on unacceptable hygiene factors.

Scholars considered transformational leadership as one of the most effective approaches to manage employees' behaviors (Pradhan, 2017). Transformational leadership enhances employees' commitment to a well-articulated vision and inspires employees' creativity by appealing to their principles and beliefs (Bass, 1985). Therefore, transformational leadership behaviors are beneficial to stimulate followers to develop new ways of thinking about challenges (Bass, 1985; Schneider & Jones, 2017).

Explanations for not choosing the comparative theories and models. The researcher did not choose Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, or Bass's transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this study since these theories have distinct attributes that deviate from the aim of tackling the research question. Maslow's hierarchy of needs largely focuses on individual needs. Greater needs do not inspire people until the lower needs fill (Maslow, 1943). The job characteristics theory also centers on personal needs because it stresses behavioral results ensuing from psychological states prompted by the main job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Transformational leaders focus on intrinsic motivation and the personal development of their followers (Bass, 1985). While researchers considered the same topics involving satisfaction employing these theories, the concepts for the job characteristics theory, the hierarchy of needs theory, and the transformational leadership theory are distinct from the two-factor theory. The intent of my research is to explore strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. Hence, the two-factor theory is most appropriate for my research.

Conceptual Framework Consideration

To determine an appropriate conceptual framework for the study, I considered several theories including Herzberg's two-factor theory, Hackman's job characteristics theory, Bass's leadership theory, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Researchers exploring subjects linked to job satisfaction generally use these theories (Chiles, 2015).

The job characteristics theory explains how job effects, comprising job satisfaction, influence job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Johari and Yahya (2016) considered Hackman and Oldham (1976) job characteristics theory from a different perspective. Johari and Yahya described the job characteristics theory as improved and motivating job characteristics that would bring positive perceptive, mental, and responsive conditions to the job incumbent. Johari and Yahya explained that a positive perceptive state would result in a positive emotional or attitudinal condition, such as job satisfaction, motivation, and affective commitment.

The assumption suggested in the job characteristics theory is that the job characteristics influence the employees to willfully think and feel accountable for their work, which leads to job satisfaction and job performance (Park, 2017). Conversely, Pentareddy and Suganthi (2015) used the job characteristics theory to study how organizational commitment relates to enablement, administration, and job features. Pentareddy and Suganthi studied the role of empowerment in the relationship between job characteristics and affective commitment with a sample of 605 taken from Australia, India, Singapore, and the United States while controlling the variables gender, age, and country. The data collection technique used was an online survey. The major theoretical contribution of their study was the finding that the behavioral involvedness of the immediate leaders and psychological empowerment of employees improve the influence of job characteristics on affective commitment.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory is one of the leading motivation theories in management and organizational behavior (Acevedo, 2018). The dissatisfier in Herzberg’s theory corresponds to the lower level human needs specified in Maslow’s theory, whereas the satisfier corresponds to the higher order human needs (Wong & Heng, 2016). Maslow’s hierarchy of needs originates from the statement that greater needs do not inspire people until the lower needs fill (Maslow, 1943).

Alderfer (1969) contended in contrast to Maslow’s theory that the individual does not have to satisfy a lower need to activate the higher needs. Alderfer argued that Maslow’s theory is problematic for three reasons: (a) Maslow assumed that every individual within a network was identical, (b) Maslow’s model did not account for the fact that individual needs were simultaneous rather than hierarchical, for example, the need for food and shelter never goes away, even while pursuing self-actualization, and (c) the theory did not account for how or why workers failed to follow the logical ascent to the highest level of motivation. Bass (1985) also had an opposing view. Bass argued that transformational leaders can change the order of those hierarchies of needs; therefore, leaders can raise subordinates into becoming self-actualizer, self-regulators, and self-controllers. In Acevedo’s (2018) analysis and assessments of the anthropological and moral foundations of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory concluded that the hierarchy of needs is logical, but it is a flawed model of human needs and motivations. Hence, leaders could bring changes and differences in groups and organizations.

Followers will perform better when managers establish patterns of transactional leadership: logical, established methods for rewarding and punishing follower performance (Bass, 1985). Conversely, transactional leadership has limited ability. To reach higher levels of accomplishment, leaders must assume transformational leadership that motivates followers and produces high levels of commitment to organization goals (Bass, 1985). Oberfield (2014) conducted a longitudinal analysis of Bass's (1985) complete extent of leadership theory. Bass's theory, which has robust theoretical and practical support, is a helpful argument for investigating how transformations in leadership count across a large group of organizations (Oberfield, 2014). Although Bass's model has gotten extensive awareness from researchers in the general management literature, it has been slower to gain fame in public administration study (Oberfield, 2014).

After considering these theories and the influence of job satisfaction on employees' retention, I chose Herzberg's two-factor theory as the conceptual framework for this study. In the following sections, I discussed the intrinsic and extrinsic factors associated with the employee as well as organizational factors to IT employees and job satisfaction.

Employee Turnover

One of the most critical issues organization leaders experience is about how to retain talented employees. Employment turnovers introduced by the employees can mean a significant loss of beneficial human capital. The challenge with employees leaving an organization is that they carry their wealth of knowledge and competencies to another organization (Buttner & Lowe, 2017). Turnover is important in any organization, as the loss of productive employees can damage the workplace and influence job satisfaction, morale, and quality of work for the remaining employees (Lee, Hom, Eberly, & Li, 2018). Turnover can be expensive for organizations in terms of costs. Buttner and Lowe's (2017) and Hom et al.'s (2017) assertions are in line with the findings of Guha and Chakrabarti (2016) that employee turnover is a major concern for organization leaders because it is costly, it affects a business's performance, and it may become increasingly difficult to manage. Therefore, organization leaders should institute appropriate retention strategies to retain high talent employees.

Voluntary employee turnover can impede organizational performance and profits. Employee turnover is costly and can adversely affect the profitability of an organization (Zylka & Fischbach, 2017). Similarly, employee turnover has an adverse influence on productivity (Seyrek & Turan, 2017). When employees choose to depart, organizations suffer financial shortfall (Frederiksen, 2017). Other substantial costs organizations incurred due to voluntary employee turnover include loss of human capital, organizational knowledge, recruitment, selection, and training, which can range from 90% to over 200% of the employee's annual salary (Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2017). Turnover has a detrimental effect; therefore, organization leaders should design strategies to retain high talent employees. The costs of voluntary employee turnover are a worldwide investigation, and the result of most studies is that organizations should avoid the expenses of voluntary turnover (Cho et al., 2017). In conclusion, losing an employee means wasting money and time on training.

Organization leaders experience severe consequences due to high employee turnover concerning the organization's cost of employee turnover. Employee turnover is a problem for organizational leaders because they incur high costs in replacement, hiring, training, and the loss of institutional knowledge (Kurnat-thoma, Ganger, Peterson, & Channell, 2017). The following negative consequences relate to the organization: financial cost, productivity fall, impact on social networks and communication, loss of expertise, and moral fall (Ramalho Luz, de Paula, & de Oliveira, 2018). Organization leaders should avoid employee turnover. The reason Arekar, Jain, Desphande, and Sherin (2016) mentioned is because employees who leave voluntarily are often those with whom the organization leaders have no problems regarding the quality of work and productivity. Hence, organization leaders should develop effective strategies to reduce employee turnover and reduce turnover costs.

Employee departure costs an organization time, money, and other resources. The concept of employees' management states that it will be cost effective for organizations to retain their current employees than substituting them or employing new ones (Hadi & Ahmed, 2018). According to Carter, Dudley, Lyle, and Smith (2019), employee turnover can cost around 20% of salary in terms of recruiting, training, and lost productivity.

Turnover can also disrupt the direct and indirect costs of the organization. Replacement, recruitment, and training of new employees are direct costs whereas indirect costs harm the morale of employees (Della Torre, Zatzick, Sikora, & Solari, 2018). According to Martinson and Leon (2018), costs in hiring and recruiting employees are substantial; therefore, employee retention is a critical goal for strategic human resource management. Employee turnover is a concern for organizations because turnover is costly and adversely affects profitability (Carter et al., 2019; Della Torre et al., 2018). Successful retention strategies positively influence work performance.

Employee turnover can have a positive effect on business. Employee turnover has a positive influence on the organization because eliminating low performers and those who do not fit within the culture can lead to better organization performance after their dismissal (Ceyda, Hakan, & Gaye, 2016). Lee (2017) discovered that moderate employee turnover could increase organization performance. The process of recruiting, selecting, and training new employees is necessary when employees leave their organizations. According to Lee, when employees who perform poorly resign, organizational productivity can improve. Similarly, Kang, Pan, and Ha (2018) found that the replacement of poorly performing employees with needed applicants is valuable to both organizations and employees. Hence, organization leaders must design strategies to reduce voluntary employee turnover and reduce the cost of sustainability.

Dissatisfied employees tend to leave the organization. Organization leaders' failure to hire workers who are a fit for the organization leads to job dissatisfaction and increased employee turnover (Wnuk, 2017). Also, when employees cannot find relevance in the organization, the shock may lead them to quit and seek other job opportunities (Carnahan, Kryscynski, & Olson, 2017). The process of recruiting, selecting, and training new employees is necessary when employees leave their organizations. Pereira, Malik, and Sharma (2016) recognized dissatisfaction with pay (47%), lack of job opportunities (45%), the pursuit of higher education (29%), poor health (28%), and physical stress (22%) as reasons for employee turnover in the organization. Similarly, Jarupathirun and De Gennaro (2018) identified poor working conditions, long working hours, and bad relationships with peers as reasons employees quit an organization. Organizational leaders who are sensitive to employees' needs are likely to prevent employees' turnover.

Employee turnover is a matter of concern and a subject of research globally. Employees are the most valuable asset of IT companies; hence, their high turnover rate influences the performance of the organization meaningfully leading to a reduction in the service quality accessible to their businesses (Mittal, 2016). High employee turnover can disturb the smooth operation of the organization and adversely influences its achievement. Employee dissatisfaction correlates considerably and adversely to the commitment to work, causing employees' aspiration to leave the organization or to lose attention during work hours (Ceyda et al., 2016). Organizational leaders must find ways to reduce high turnover and motive employees to meet commitments.

Employee turnover has a detrimental effect on an organization. Employee turnover has substantial negative influences on the organizations particularly costs, possible loss of valuable knowledge, skills, and organizational knowledge (Lee, 2017). Apostel, Syrek, and Antoni (2018) found that employee turnover is not only time consuming and costly for organizations, but also detrimental to an organization's efficiency because losing a high talent employee leads to high costs associated with recruiting and reskilling new employees. Employee turnover is costly for organizations, especially for the Hi-Tech sector, where the cost of their IT workforce is costly (Lee, 2017). Consistent with Lee's findings, Kuypers, Guenter, and van Emmerik (2018) mentioned that employee turnover can challenge team performance, reduce customer service (Kashif, Zarkada, & Thurasamy, 2017), and lead to lost job knowledge (Mai, Ellis, Christian, & Porter, 2016). Organization leaders should institute effective strategies to reduce employee turnover and thereby avoid turnover costs. As Memon, Salleh, and Baharom (2016) indicated, a leader who does not use appropriate strategies to reduce employee turnover will build a wall that may adversely influence attaining organizational goals.

Employee turnover can have an adverse effect on the organization. Employee turnover is a major issue and a continued challenge that organizations face (Li, Lee, Mitchell, Hom, & Griffeth, 2016). Employee turnover can influence all facets of the organization. Lee and Jeong (2017) affirmed that employee turnover can reduce revenues and sales, and the prospect of organization existence. Also, employee turnover has negative influences on the financial performance of the business and employees' morale and can reduce an organization's ability to sustain employment (Malhotra, Majchrzak, Kesebi, & Looram, 2017). The absence of turnover may unintentionally create higher retention budgets as the organization endeavors to pay high talent employees from leaving the organization (Siyanbola & Gilman, 2017). Hence, organization leaders should avoid employee turnover and increase employee retention.

Abusive supervision. Abusive supervision can influence an employee's behavior. Abusive supervision as a hostile and non-physical behavior directed against subordinates (Ju et al., 2019). Similarly, Pradhan and Jena (2017) described abusive supervision as a form of destructive leadership having a positive influence on individual behaviors, which undermines organizational performance.

Abusive supervision can influence employees and the organization. Abusive supervision has detrimental side effects on subordinates and organizations (Tariq & Ding, 2018). According to Peltokorpi (2017), supervisor's demonstration of negative workplace conduct may prove detrimental when subordinates are highly dependent on their supervisors. Similarly, employees under abusive supervision may suffer psychologically due to internal resources loss, which may lead to employees' perceptions of job tension and job insecurity (Feng & Wang, 2019). Employees under abusive supervision may become aggressive and counterproductive. Khalid, Bashir, Khan, and Abbas (2018) found that employees tend to refuse knowledge exchange when their organization or supervisor does not handle them fairly. Organization leaders' failure to treat employees fairly may lead to employees leaving the organization.

Abusive supervision has a detrimental effect on employees. Low subordinate citizenship behavior (Kernan, Racicot, & Fisher, 2016), reduced commitment (Mackey, Frieder, Brees, & Martinko, 2017), increased deviance (Mawritz, Greenbaum, Butts, & Graham, 2017), and higher turnover (Mackey et al., 2017) are detrimental effects of abusive supervision. Poor supervision can cause dissatisfaction in the workplace. When supervisors abuse subordinates through disrespect, promise breach, and lying, employees feel prejudiced (Klotz & Bolino, 2016). Employees experiencing disrespect from supervisors are more likely to retaliate if they experienced negative sentiments (Atwater et al., 2016). Conversely, employees with abusive supervision are more likely to apply coping prevention methods to moderate the adverse actions of the supervisor (Peltokorpi, 2017). As Rahman and Hasan (2017) stated, associations between supervisors and employees play a critical role in motivating employees. Hence, supervisors should create a conducive working environment to avoid employee TIs.

Poor supervision has influences on employee intention to remain with the organization. Haar, de Fluiter, and Brougham (2016) found that poor supervision might cause employee job dissatisfaction. Mathieu et al. (2016) performed a study involving 763 participants from several organizations to measure job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee turnover intention and found that management's action towards employees influences employee turnover intention. Similarly, Pradhan and Jena (2017) explored the effects of abusive supervision on employee turnover intention with 227 software IT professionals working in several Indian IT companies through self-report questionnaires. Pradhan and Jena found that abusive supervision relates to an employee leave intention. Consistent with Mathieu et al.'s and Pradhan and Jena's findings, Vogel and Mitchell (2017) proposed that abusive supervision relates to high turnover intentions. The results of these studies are an indication that abusive supervision is a leading factor influencing employee turnover intention.

Abusive supervision has consequences. Abusive supervision is a disrupting force for subordinates' positive behavior (Xu, Zhang, & Chan, 2019). According to Park, Carter, DeFrank, and Deng (2019), employees perform poorly when they experience abusive supervision. Pan and Lin (2018) found that abusive supervision leads to higher turnover, less favorable attitudes towards job, life, and organization, a greater conflict between work and family life, and greater emotional stress. Likewise, when employees have high intentions to quit, they are likely to commit acts of nonconformity (Tariq & Ding, 2018). On the contrary, employees' noncooperative actions could result in abusive supervision. Frustration over employees' low performance could initiate the desire to abuse subordinates and employees' engagement in supervisor directed deviance may also lead to abusive supervision (Mawritz et al., 2017). From the analyses of these studies, it is a clear indication that abusive supervision has negative consequences and may lead to employee TIs.

Lack of organizational support. Reduced emotional fatigue influences turnover intentions. Le and Lei (2019) considered perceived organizational support (POS) as the organization's contribution to a positive exchange with employees, as they tend to perform better to pay back the organization's positive results. Improved POS influences employees' behavior. Increased POS may cause employees to feel obligated to care about the organization's well-being and to assist the organization to achieve its objectives (Jung & Takeuchi, 2018; Marchand & Vandenberghe, 2016). Wei, Cordery, and Gamble (2016) found that when employees feel organization support for growth, they tend to produce higher levels of performance and reduced turnover intention. Also, improved POS affects job satisfaction. Sharma (2017) indicated that organization leaders who encourage personal and professional development may certainly influence employees' job satisfaction. Choi, Kim, Ullah, and Kang (2016) argued that if employees perceive fair treatment, they will reciprocate with high job performance and positive attitudes toward job and organization. According to Choi et al., when employees perceived that their organization values and supports them, they tend to believe in the organization's values and attempt their best for an organization's success.

POS and job satisfaction can have a relationship. Paillé, Grima, and Dufour (2015) established a positive association between POS and job satisfaction. Conversely, human resource management practices influence employees' POS, which in turn influences work-related approaches and actions (Ekrot, Rank, Kock, & Gemunden, 2018). Using a sample of 541 project managers and 135 project portfolio coordinators in 135 firms, Ekrot et al. (2018) conducted a study to examine how predictors of project managers' POS relate to their job satisfaction and intention to leave their project manager's position. In their research, Ekrot et al. (2018) found that POS related positively to project managers' job satisfaction and negatively to their turnover intention. Organizations that recognize employees' efforts and seek their wellbeing are more likely to reduce employee TIs.

Satisfied employees are likely to work more to meet organizational goals. When employees sense that the organization cares about them, they are likely to consider that the organization is willing to acknowledge their works and meet their socioemotional needs such as the need for respect, approval, and consideration (Ekrot et al., 2018). Rathi and Lee (2017) examined the relationship of organizational support with organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction, while also investigating the moderating role of the quality of work-life (QWL) in these relationships. The sample size was 244 employees of organizations within the structured retail area in India. Rathi and Lee established that organizational support is a major predictor of QWL, and QWL mediated the relationship of organizational support with organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction. Organizations that recognize employees' efforts and seek their wellbeing are more likely to reduce employee TIs.

Job insecurity. Job insecurity has consequences. Ma, Liu, Lassleben, and Ma (2019) defined job insecurity as an individual's perception of doubt about future job steadiness in an organization. Organizations with a high level of employee turnover influence job insecurity, which, in turn, negatively influences the impression of that organization (Abolade, 2018). Abolade (2018) investigated the relationship between job insecurity and organization performance, and the relationship between job insecurity and employee turnover. Abolade used a structured questionnaire to collect data from 120 randomly selected respondents from financial institutions in Akure and the state secretariat in Ibadan, Nigeria. Abolade found that job insecurity negatively influences organization performance and stimulates employee turnover. Organization leaders should address the factors that contribute to job insecurity to avoid employee turnover. According to Abolade, high employee turnover contributes to job insecurity and negatively influences the image of the organization. Similarly, Ismail (2015) examined the impact of job insecurity on leave intention among 172 Syrian private banks' employees. Ismail found that job insecurity significantly influences intention to leave the organization. However, an employee who feels safe and secured gets a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment (Abolade, 2018). The results of Ma et al.'s (2019), Abolade's (2018), and Ismail's studies are indications that job insecurity is a contributing factor to employee leave intention. Organization leaders that tackle the factors that contribute to job insecurity are likely to prevent employee intention to leave the organization.

Job insecurity influences an employee's behavior. Job insecurity is an important demand on job satisfaction for the majority employees (Wilczynka, Batorski, & Sellens, 2016). Employees faced with job insecurity are likely to demonstrate lower job satisfaction (Sender, Arnold, & Staffelbach, 2017). Organization leaders must create a friendly work environment that focuses on employee job security. Abolade (2018) established that job insecurity leads to poor organizational performance and employee turnover. Sender et al.'s (2017) and Abolade,s findings are consistent with Nanjamari's (2013) evaluation of IT employees. Nanjamari stated that IT employees often have extended working hours, complicated work, continuous pressure, and continual deadlines, which together challenge their work-life balance on a consistent basis. To enable employees to perform effectively leading to improved overall organization performance, leaders must consider a conducive working environment.

Employee Retention

One of the most critical issues facing organizations is how to retain talented employees. De Sousa Sabbagha et al. (2018) defined employee retention as the strategy required by an organization to retain talented and skilled employees, by understanding the factors associated with employee retention to control unnecessary turnover. Retaining talent professionals is a serious concern for organization leaders because employee turnover can influence the quality of service offered by the organization and produce large expense (Harden, Boakye, & Ryan, 2018). Organization leaders should inspire employees to enhance their level of job satisfaction. Like Coetzee, Oosthuizen, and Stoltz (2016) maintained, high talent employees who realized their assets and scarce talents are the most difficult employees to retain. Therefore, organization leaders need to recognize that the lack of an effective retention strategy may result in the loss of valued employees, a decrease in profits, a negative impact reputation, and loss of valuable organizational knowledge (Kraemer, Gouthier, & Heidenreich, 2016). Also, organization leaders should institute effective retention strategies to retain high talent employees.

Retaining talented employees can be a challenge for organizations. Continual employee turnover is a challenge for organization leaders due to the recurring recruitment and training of new employees (Ellingson, Tews, & Dachner, 2016). Organization leaders' ability to reduce continual employee turnover and retain more valuable employees could help sustain the knowledge within the organization and control resources more efficiently (Naidoo, 2016). Retaining talented employees positively influences the organization.

Talent retention is critical for organizations. Talent retention is the basic tool that prompts organizational growth existence and performance (Ibidunni, Osibanjo, Adeniji, Salau, & Falola, 2016). Also, acquiring and maintaining high talent employees can provide organizations with a competitive advantage (Martinson & Leon, 2018). In a study conducted to demonstrate employees' insight on organizational and job-related features influencing the decisions to quit and to remain with their present organization, Korsakienė et al. (2015) used a sample of 143 employees working in Lithuanian IT businesses. Base pay and challenging work content were the key employment features Korsakienė et al. identified, while better relationships with co-workers, an opportunity to sustain work-life balance, and reasonable financial rewards were the main factors influencing employee retention. Conversely, there are other job-related elements influencing employees' decisions to remain with their organizations. Pay, promotions, working conditions, relationship with coworkers and superiors, and recognition are factors Ibidunni et al. (2016) identified that contributed to employee's intention to remain with their organizations.

Key employees' departure from an organization has consequences. The departure of employees from an organization could have a substantial negative influence on organizational processes and outcomes, particularly, when such departure is voluntarily motivated (Engelbrecht & Samuel, 2019). According to Engelbrecht and Samuel (2019), the consequences of employee turnover for organizations are multidimensional and include loss of employees who possess valuable competencies and, most often, organizational memory that is difficult to replace. The departure of key employees also influences other aspects of employees and the organization. When key employees leave an organization, it has a negative impact not only on the morale of the employees who stayed behind but also on revenues (Pandita & Ray, 2018; Seyrek & Turan, 2017). Also, when employees leave an organization, their contributions to the team leave as well and human capital resources reduce (Kuypers et al., 2018). Worku (2018) found that retention improves when organization leaders make better recruitment efforts by selecting the right person for the job. Hence, organization leaders can examine the factors that affect employee retention and turnover rates when they understand the reasons employees leave.

The lack of appropriate employee retention strategies could reduce an organization's net profit. Employee turnover leads to higher operational costs and reduces the overall productivity and service quality of organizations (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Katsikea et al., 2015). Similarly, a high rate of turnover has a negative outcome for the level of organizational productivity, customer service delivery, and, ultimately, the organization's profitability (Engelbrecht & Samuel, 2019). Siyanbola and Gilman (2017) contended that turnover might unintentionally cause higher employee retention costs for the organization while attempting to reward high talent employees from leaving the organization. It is detrimental for organizations that lack appropriate retention strategies. As Aliyu and Nyadzayo (2018) mentioned, an organization that lacks appropriate retention strategies may realize higher turnover rates. The findings of these studies indicated that employee turnover is detrimental to organizational productivity.

There are several reasons an employee departs the organization or has the plan to leave. The factors related to employee turnover comprise lack of training, poor working conditions, and unproductive leadership (Ramalho Luz et al., 2018). Other factors related to employee turnover as identified by Pereira et al. (2016) include low salaries, lack of job opportunities, the pursuit of higher education, illness, and physical stress as a precursor of employee turnover. When employees feel dissatisfied with their professional experiences, employee TIs can gradually develop before job resignation, translating into actions, such as behaviors (e.g., being sick, late, or absent), looking for other job opportunities, evaluating and comparing other jobs, and deciding to quit (Katsikea et al., 2015). Singh and Sharma (2015) studied strategies to reduce turnover from an employee's perspective to enable organization leaders to manage human capital efficiently to gain a competitive edge. The sample size comprised of 225 participants. Singh and Sharma found that organizations use long-term and short-term strategies to reduce turnover. The long-term strategies include the growth of business for job security, training, and mentoring and coaching programs, while the short-term strategies identified were monetary benefits for performance and competitive salaries. Employee turnover is expensive; therefore, organizations should advance effective strategies to reduce employee turnover and enhance employee retention.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the attitude that people have concerning their jobs. Job satisfaction comes from employees' happiness with their work experiences (Maleka et al., 2019), working conditions, supervisors, and coworkers (De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018). McGrandle (2019) defined job satisfaction as an attitude based on employees' perceptions of their jobs or work environments.

There are other views on job satisfaction. Ukil's (2016) assertion of job satisfaction reflects in a study conducted to identify the influence of employee empowerment on employee satisfaction and service quality, and the impact of employee satisfaction on service quality. Data collection was through a quantitative survey from

240 employees working in 20 private financial enterprises in Bangladesh. Ukil recognized communication, training, employment satisfaction, pay, and benefits as key components of job satisfaction. Ukil discovered that commitment is a intervening factor in relation to job satisfaction and voluntary turnover intention. The findings of Ukil support the assertion by Nelissen, Forrier, and Verbruggen (2017) that job satisfaction is a strong predictor of turnover intentions. Ukil's study has implications for organization leaders attempting to develop a way to retain high talent employees and reduce employee turnover.

Job satisfaction influences employee retention. High job satisfaction affects employee retention, thus reducing employee turnover (Yu, Mai, Tsau, & Dai, 2018). Similarly, improving job satisfaction can lead to higher levels of organizational performance and lower costs (McGrandle, 2019; Naidoo, 2018). A satisfied employee is a committed employee. According to Fazio, Gong, Sims, and Yurova (2017), job satisfaction can result to high organizational commitment, which may reduce employee intention to leave.

Employee job satisfaction is a concern for organization. In literature, a large emphasis has been put on job satisfaction because of its positive relationship with job performance (Garg, Dar, & Mishra, 2018). In the study of turnover intention, scholars emphasized the relationship between turnover intention and its predictive variables, such as job satisfaction, organizational trust, managerial support, and organizational justice (Lee, Hom, Eberly, Li, & Mitchell, 2017). Satisfied employee produces a positive result and work values, which according to Reed et al. (2016), lead to improved proficiency and productivity, low absenteeism, and low employee turnover, including reduced hiring costs. Jha and Kumar's (2016) findings was in consistent with the findings of Reed et al. (2016). Jha and Kumar confirmed that satisfied employees work more and present higher degrees of efficiency. Conversely, employees with low satisfaction tend to consume bad perceptions toward their job (Abdirahman et al., 2018). In conclusion, employee job satisfaction affects job performance.

Employees encounter positive emotions whenever they feel satisfied with their jobs. Employee job satisfaction is critical to organizational success (Alfayad & Mohd Arif, 2017). When employees receive positive feedback or have a rewarding encounter, employees experience positive emotions and job satisfaction. De Sousa Sabbagha et al. (2018) investigated the role of employee motivation and job satisfaction as predictors of employee retention in a South African foreign exchange bank. Participants were 341 employees (214 female and 127 male) of a South African foreign exchange bank division. De Sousa Sabbagha et al. found employees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to predict employee retention and found job satisfaction to have a positive relationship with employee retention. Consistent with De Sousa Sabbagha et al.'s findings, Allison, Flaherty, Jung, and Washburn (2016) stated that organization leaders should place extra time and resources in inspiring employees to attain job satisfaction. As Andel, Pindek, and Spector (2019) confirmed, employee dissatisfaction leads to greater verbal aggression exposure on the job. Hence, motivating employees may serve as a strategy to increase employee retention and job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction and employee motivation are crucial to employee retention. While an employee might have the intellectual proficiency to perform the job, that employee may lack the means or support required to complete the task well (Yi-Feng, 2016). Bozionelos (2016) mentioned that leaders increase employees’ job performance by using managerial strategies to improve job motivation and satisfaction. There are several managerial strategies organization leaders can use to improve employees’ job satisfaction levels. Supporting employee work-related training and development and enhancing employee engagement are strategies to increase the effectiveness of the organization when managed at both the employee and organizational levels (Barrick et al, 2015). Job satisfaction influences employee leave intention.

The employees whose supervisors used positive feedback have better job satisfaction. Lu, Guo, Luo, and Chen (2015) discovered a positive association between employees' organizational commitment and employers' organizational support that influences job performance positively. Organization leaders improve employees’ job satisfaction level when contemplating the employees’ needs, comprising acknowledgment of their competences and abilities to promote the organization (Bozionelos, 2016). Employees experience positive reactions whenever they feel satisfied with their jobs; specifically when employees obtain positive feedback or have a satisfying encounter.

Other researchers linked job satisfaction with job performance and organizational commitment. For example, Johnson and Friend (2015) confirmed that job satisfaction has a positive influence on job performance and organizational commitment. Similarly, Jorgensen and Becker (2015) discovered a positive association between employees' organizational commitment and job performance. As Ingold, Kleinmann, König, Melchers, and Van Iddekinge (2015) confirmed employees with high organizational commitment are less likely to leave.

Job satisfaction is the attitude one has regarding his or her job. Job satisfaction is a positive attitude resulting from the evaluation of one's job experiences (Feyerabend, Herd, & Choi, 2018). An employee who has positive experiences with diverse components of the job is likely to provide greater job satisfaction (Acikgoz et al., 2016). Conversely, an employee who has adverse experiences with diverse components of the job, such as pay, physical conditions, supervisor relationships, or qualities of the task, is likely to have a low level of job satisfaction. According to Shafique, Kalyar, and Ahmad (2018), dissatisfied employees show a behavioral intention to leave their jobs and try to find a substitute. When employees feel supported, their job satisfaction improves along with their socio-emotional needs (Teoh, Coyne, Devonish, Leather, & Zarola, 2016). Increased job satisfaction could lead to reduced turnover (Lu, Tu, Li, & Ho, 2016). Satisfied employees are likely to have less turnover intentions.

Employee job satisfaction is a factor of motivation. Satisfied employees exhibit motivation in their organization (De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018). A satisfied employee puts his or her energy to enhance work-related performances (Shafique et al., 2018). Moreover, satisfied employees perform better and prefer to stay associated with the organization. Conversely, a satisfied employee builds a positive result and work values that lead to improved talent and proficiency, little absenteeism, and employee turnover, including decreased employment expenses (Reed et al., 2016). Shafique et al.'s and Reed et al.'s findings indicated that a high level of job satisfaction causes high commitment levels and low turnover intentions.

Employee retention is a critical issue in any organization. Mishra and Mishra (2017) stated that organizations need to focus on the retention factors as it leads to the growth and success of the organization. Organization leaders should create appropriate retention strategies gear towards employee job satisfaction. According to Mishra and Mishra, retention strategies should orient towards the satisfying need of the employees and organizational change as it enhances employee productivity and excellence. Rathi and Lee (2017) merged that retention factors must include employees' needs and wants at any age as it leads to job satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment. Organization leaders should ensure employee job satisfaction.

Managing work-life balance. Many factors influence employees to change their jobs and there is a need to understand those factors that motivate the retention of talented employees. Braun and Peus (2018) defined work-life balance (WLB) as the perceived accord between the arrangement of different areas, roles, and goals in life that one focuses on and its actual accomplishment. WLB is critical to successful employee retention. WLB is critical especially when organizations must manage technical professionals for their high loyalty and commitment to achieve organizational goals (Abdirahman et al., 2018). Similarly, Friedman and Westring (2015) noted that the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment positively influences employee turnover among professionals. Implementation of retention strategies based on work flexibility can lead to reduced employee turnover in the workplace.

Attracting and retaining key employees is a challenging task for organizations. Baeza, Gonzalez, and Wang (2018) described successful WLB as employees having high self-esteem, job satisfaction, and an overall sense of harmony in life. WLB can promote work-family enrichment (Chan et al., 2016), and can help organizations to attract and retain high-quality employees (Chen, Zhang, Sanders, & Xu, 2018). Also, organizations use flexible working arrangements to meet the firm's demand for flexibility instead of the direct policy goal of being family-friendly (Buchheit, Dalton, Harp, & Hollingsworth, 2016). WLB is a retention factor.

Successful WLB is critical. There are benefits in flexible work schedules. Ierodiakonou and Stavrou (2017), in their review of work flexibility literature, found that the benefits in flexible work schedules include less stress, more job enrichment, lower tardiness and absenteeism, greater job satisfaction, and higher productivity. Similarly, Kraak, Lunardo, Herrbach, and Durrieu (2017) found that employees will be less resolute to leave the organization when they have a fulfillment of WLB commitments. From these studies, there are indications that the lack of WLB for employees can have devastating effects on the organization and the employee.

Work-life balance practices can influence a firm's performance. Work-life support practices can influence an organization's operation by influencing the joint and shared behaviors of an organization's workforce and can influence employees' attitudes and behaviors (Cogin, Sanders, & Williamson, 2018; Park, Joaquin, Min, & Ugaddan, 2018). Employees feel that their private and professional life domains are in balance when they perceive themselves to be effective and satisfied in the multiple roles that they face (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). Adisa, Mordi, and Osabutey (2017) demonstrated that strategic human resource practices, such as flexible working, leads to organizations building greater knowledge management capabilities, which in turn enhances their innovation performance. Little knowledge is available on how older employees will react to WLB inducements since few studies are on the psychological contracts of this group of employees (Kraak et al., 2017).

Organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is important for both employers and employees. Organizational commitment is attitude reflecting employees' loyalty to their organization (Hendri, 2019). Glazer, Mahoney, and Randall (2019) defined commitment as an affective attachment to an organization, commitment as a perceived cost associated with leaving the organization, and commitment as an obligation to remain in the organization. Organizational commitment is an approach toward the overall organization instead of the job as such (Lee et al., 2018). Organizational commitment is important and may lead employees to perform efficiently. Consistent with the definitions by Glazer et al. and Lee et al., Han, Shim, and Choi (2018) described employees with strong organizational commitment as one who acknowledges the goals of the organization as their goals and contributes to the growth of the organization.

Organizational commitment is crucial for organizations, which have a desire to retain talented employees. Organizational commitment is an important variable that influences how committed employees are to their organizations (de la Torre-Ruiz, Vidal-Salazar, Dolores, & Cordón-Pozo, 2019). According to Sastre Castillo and Danvila Del Valle (2017), organizational commitment is an important individual measurement for predicting work. Haque, Fernando, and Caputi, (2019) also emphasized on the importance of organizational commitment and stated that organizational commitment is a key employee outcome that leads to employees' effective performance.

Several factors can lead to reduced employee turnover. Chordiya, Sabharwal, and Goodman (2017) identified job satisfaction as the most important precursor of affective organizational commitment, and organizational commitment influences job satisfaction positively (Hung & Wu, 2016). Besides job satisfaction, organizational commitment reduces turnover intentions (Lee et al., 2018). Consistent with Lee et al.'s findings, Chapman et al. (2016) and Tummers and Knies (2016) confirmed that although job satisfaction positively influences organizational commitment, other organizational factors such as high-performance human resource practices, supportive management, ethical climates, ethical behaviors of peers and leaders, and leadership styles, have a positive influence on organizational commitment. Other leading variables of organizational commitment like Han et al. (2018) mentioned are rewards, the length of continuous service, goal identity, positions, age, job satisfaction, job stress, education levels, and job environment.

Employee turnover has several influential factors. The main reason for high turnover rates is due to the lack of organizational commitment (Deng, 2018). Also, the reason for an organization's high turnover rate might be an indication of unproductive organizational or grievance settlement practices (Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016). While existing literature has suggestions on employee turnover regarding a range of predictors, namely job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job search, comparison of alternatives, withdrawal cognitions, and quit intentions, Huang (2017) identified organizational commitment as a critical factor predicting employee turnover. Cicekli and Kabasakal (2017) found that opportunities for development and recognition are predictors of organizational commitment, and that promotion opportunity does not predict organizational commitment.

To understand better the antecedents of organizational commitment, Choi and Colbert (2015) examined the personality bases of organizational commitment by using the FFM traits (one of the most frequently examined trait taxonomies in previous research on dispositional antecedents of job attitudes). Although Choi and Colbert argued that personality traits play a critical role in influencing organizational commitment, Mesa, Llopis-Córcoles, García-Granero, Olmos-Peñuela, and Martínez-Sanchis (2017) explained that people with high levels of responsibility develop a high level of commitment to their organization because they feel the moral imperative to act with diligence for their employer.

Working environment. Working environment influences employee TIs. The work environment has positive or negative influences on engagement, commitment, and intention to remain with the organization (Bibi et al., 2018). Bibi et al. (2018) described a good working environment is an inspiration to employees to complete their work more efficiently and have a positive influence on the retention and commitment of the employees. However, if employees' anticipations regarding the organization are not achievable, Arnoux-Nicolas, Sovet, Lhotellier, Di Fabio, and Bernaud (2016) mentioned that the result may lead to employees' intention to quit the organization. Organization leaders should create a good working environment for employee retention.

A conducive working environment influences an employee's intention to remain with an organization. Kundu and Lata (2017) conducted a study to investigate the mediating effect of organizational engagement in the relationship between supportive work environment and employee retention. There were 211 respondents from 67 organizations. Kundu and Lata found that a supportive work environment plays a critical role in predicting employee retention. When organization leaders fail to guarantee satisfactory working conditions, employee's job dissatisfaction, and voluntary turnover increase, which affects organizational performance (Velasco, 2017). Bibi et al.'s, Kundu and Lata's, Arnoux-Nicolas et al.'s (2016), and Velasco's (2017 studies are indications that organization leaders' failure to create a conducive working environment and institute appropriate employee retention strategies will result in an employee's intention to quit the organization.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a valuable tool to assist every organization as it strives to gain a competitive advantage over its competitors because human capital is an organization's most valuable asset (Pandita & Ray, 2018). Schneider, Yost, Kropp, Kind, and Lam (2018) defined employee engagement as the aggregate of the work engagement experiences of individual employees in an organization. Scholars provide other descriptions of employee engagement. For example, Consiglio, Borgogni, Di Tecco, and Schaufeli (2016) described work engagement as an affirmative, satisfying, work-related approach, distinguishing employees who work hard and persevere regardless of impediments, and strongly engaged in what they accomplish and feel cheerfully engaged in their work. L. Lu et al.'s (2016) description of work engagement is that it involves specific factors, and job satisfaction is the outcome of these factors. The findings of Lu et al.'s study is in line with the research of Sulistyo and Suhartini (2019) indicating that work engagement has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.

Employees are valuable assets to an organization. Organizations rely on their employees to provide high quality service as a strategy for sustaining a competitive advantage (Walumbwa, Hsu, Wu, Misati, & Christensen-Salem, 2019). Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their organization (Pandita & Singhal, 2017). Maden, Ozcelik, and Karacay (2014) conducted a study that described the concept of employee engagement distinguishing it from the concept of employee job satisfaction. The objective of the study was to analyze and compare the dissimilarities between employee satisfaction and employee engagement and developed a relationship between employee engagement and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. From the findings, all employees want from their job is appreciation and respect for their contributions to the organization.

Employee feels engaged in a good working environment. Kundu and Lata (2017) estimated that 80% of employees search for a favorable work environment. A favorable work environment is a recipe for employee retention. Plaskoff's (2017) and Kundu and Lata (2017) established that it is important to create a favorable work environment in the light of organizational support to retain high talent employees. However, employee engagement is not a straightforward process, and the process of engagement involves a give and take between management and employees through communication activities (Lemon & Palenchar, 2018). Organization leaders who create a caring and clean work environment could help to reduce employee dissatisfaction and reduce employee turnover.

Information Technology Employee Turnover

High talent employees' retention is critical. One of the major challenges that IT organizations face is the failure to attract and retain talented employees (Hegarty, 2018). When organization leaders cannot match employees' anticipation, employees choose to quit jobs (Naim & Lenka, 2018). Also, when IT professionals think that their talents are no longer relevant in their existing environment, they may pursue employment opportunities where they can acquire additional or more needed skills (Windeler & Riemenschneider, 2016). However, Kundu and Lata (2017) found that due to gaps in the workforce demand and supply, organizations want to retain their high talent employees.

Dissatisfied employees are likely to leave an organization. While researchers have revealed that the major source of high employee TI rates in the IT industry has been due to lack of dedication and job dissatisfaction (Mittal, 2016), not much work has been ready that describes the primary procedure that leads to TIs. Hence, organization leaders need to retain talented employees because when knowledgeable and skilled technology professionals depart from the organization, they tend to take valuable knowledge and expertise with them.

Employee turnover is detrimental to an organization's effectiveness. According to Steffens, Yang, Jetten, Haslam, and Lipponen (2018), employee turnover negatively affects organizations in many ways including (a) disruption of the functioning of existing teams, (b) signaling an organization’s unattractiveness in ways that can compromise its capacity to recruit talented employee, and (c) involving recruitment and training costs. From meta-analytic evidence, organizational turnover is damaging because it contributes to lower productivity (Massingham, 2018). Therefore, employee retention is vital.

Employee turnover is expensive. Just as Harden et al. (2018) found that organization leaders face the associated cost of recruitment, selection, onboarding, and training of new personnel, Hegarty (2018) discovered that generally, direct substitution expenses can be as high as 50%-60% of the position’s annual salary. Retaining IT employees is a necessity for achievement. When expenses link with training, short-term coverage, interruptions in productivity, including additional distractions and other attempts, the total expense ranges from 90-200% for the position’s annual salary (Hegarty, 2018). Therefore, organization leaders should make every effort to keep talented employees and avoid significant losses.

As talent employees have robust learning orientation, organization leaders need a suitable progressive strategy to keep talented employees. Losing talented employees leads to a negative outcome in organizational performance (Lee, 2018). Similarly, losing talent employees leads to a decline in output, work quality, economic costs in terms of replacement, training, and management time, including the loss of social capital (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). Employee turnover has negative outcomes. As Firdose (2017) noted, a high turnover rate is detrimental to employees' productivity as well as to the quality and quantity of production; therefore, organization leaders should orient retention strategies towards satisfying employees' needs and organizational change as it increases employees' productivity and excellence (Mishra & Mishra, 2017). Organizations gain a strategic advantage by retaining the most valuable, skilled employees.

Transition

Section 1 of the study is a discussion on research demonstrating that retaining a high talent employee is essential to organization profitability. Employee turnover is a major concern because turnover is expensive, it influences a business's operation, and employee turnover may become increasingly challenging to handle (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). The specific business problem is that some IT small business leaders lack strategies to retain high talent employees. This is a qualitative multiple case study to explore employee retention strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. There are eight interview questions to provide an answer to the research question: What employee retention strategies do IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees? Herzberg's two-factor theory is the conceptual framework for this study. I deliberated on the possible assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, including a presentation on the significance of the study, its contribution to business practice, and its implications for social change. Finally, the discussions of the available literature review on job satisfaction, employee retention, reward and recognition, compensation, and training and development provided an amalgamation of what researchers have written on each subject.

Section 2 includes (a) the restatement of the purpose, (b) the Role of the Researcher, (c) Research Participants, (d) Research Method and Design, (e) Population and Sampling, (f) Ethical Research, (g) Data Collection Instruments, (h) Data Collection Techniques, (i) Data Organization Techniques, and (j) Reliability and Validity of the Study. More essentially, Section 2 comprises a validation of the research method and design, the sampling method and size, and methods to moderate fears to reliability and validity. Section 3 comprises the findings and recommendations of the study.

Section 2: The Project

The lack of appropriate employee retention strategies could reduce an organization’s net profit. An organization with an inaccurate retention strategy can experience higher employee turnover rates (Aliyu & Nyadzayo, 2018). Siyanbola and Gilman (2017) argued that a lack of employee turnover might inadvertently cause higher employee retention costs as the organization’s leadership tries to reward high talent employees to keep them from leaving the organization. Similarly, the lack of effective strategies for reducing employee turnover could prevent leaders from experiencing high retention rates. According to Herzberg (1959), the lack of job satisfaction causes employees to leave the organization and seek new employment. Losing employees reduces the organization’s performance and leads to a high turnover rate (Voigt & Hirst, 2015).

This study is an exploration of strategies IT small business leaders used to retain high talent employees. Section 2 is justification and narrative of the role of the researcher, the participant selection process, the chosen research method, and the research design. I also provided specifics regarding the population and sampling, ethics in qualitative research, planned data collection techniques, the preferred data analysis technique, and the reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. The targeted population comprised IT small business leaders from three organizations in Monrovia, Liberia, who have demonstrated effective strategies for employee retention. Improved employee retention strategies could contribute to social change by helping people to have job steadiness in communities, as well as contribute to economic stability by creating job security, more personal income, and more expenditure on goods and services. Furthermore, as organization leaders implement retention strategies, they might enhance efficiency and improve the quality of both organizational and community associations.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the data collection instrument in qualitative research (Orange, 2016; Yin, 2015). The researcher's role is to access the study participants, communicate with the study participants, arrange the research process, conduct the research, and gather and analyze the data (Ibrahim & Edgley, 2015; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Berger (2015) found that the researcher's role is also to mitigate personal bias.

Yin (2018) proposed the use of additional sources of data, such as analyses of company documents, which was one means of data collection in this study. Hamid (2018) used semistructured interviews, direct observation, and company documentation to investigate the factor analysis for a balanced scorecard as measuring the competitive advantage of infrastructure assets of owned state ports in Indonesia. In qualitative research, data collection instruments include semistructured interviews, focus groups, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials (Wilson, Onwuegbuzie, & Manning, 2016). Hence, collecting data using additional sources, such as a review of company documents was one of the means of data collection in this study. Berger (2015) indicated that researchers included in all aspects of a research study create an in-depth perception of the study. Voluntary employee turnover is a familiar phenomenon because of my work environment and the different positions I have held including vice president for finance in an academic setting.

My role as a researcher was also to present the interview questions to participants and to ask follow-up questions. Following an interview protocol is important to a reliable qualitative case study (Yin, 2018). Yeong, Ismail, Ismail, and Hamzah (2018) also stressed the importance of researchers using an interview protocol to enhance the quality of data obtained, the validity, and the reliability of the study. Hilton (2017) indicated that the rationale for using an interview protocol is that it contributes to dependability and trustworthiness by ensuring the interviewee ask participants the same questions. I followed an interview protocol (see Appendix A) by communicating with the participants efficiently and establishing the trust to assist participants in sharing their experiences. Also, the researcher is responsible to collect and interpret the data (Hoeber & Shaw, 2017).

My relationship with the research topic of employee retention involved my work experience as a senior administrator in an academic environment. Working in an academic environment has shown me the importance of having engaged employees and encouraging positive attitudes in the workplace. There were no prior relationships with the participants of this study or any experiences within the geographic area. To mitigate bias, I listened and understood the participants' viewpoints.

I selected participants for this study in person and collected data by interviewing participants in a private and neutral setting, using semistructured interview questions (see

Appendix B). Having a bond between the researcher and the participants is vital to the success of this nature of study (O. Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2015). For researchers to describe a phenomenon in detail to reflect reality, transferable, and confirmable, they need to have enough data. Data collection involved interviewing six leaders to obtain adequate data saturation. The purpose of data saturation was to ensure that the data collected were sufficient for the required detailed descriptions (Constantinou, Georquiou, & Perdikogianni, 2017).

The validity and rigor are vital in qualitative research. Without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility (Simpson & Quigley, 2016). Qualitative researchers use member checking as a means of enhancing reliability and validity in the data collection process (Simpson & Quigley, 2016). Researchers that use member checking utilize techniques to engage participants during the data analysis and data interpretation process (Iivari, 2018). Therefore, I used member checking to ensure all participants had the opportunity to contribute to the interview results to prevent distorted results by supervisors while staying neutral throughout to reduce bias and to avoid the participants establishing developing themes.

My role as a researcher was to ensure that my actions were ethical by conducting and protecting all research, storing the data away in a safe location, and upholding all ethical standards throughout this study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the reduction of ethical problems (Yin, 2015). To get started on this project, Walden University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this research. I followed the ethical principles of the Belmont Report, which include (a) respect for the participants,

(b) beneficence, and (c) justice (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). I treated all participants fairly, reminded participants that participation was voluntary, informed participants that they could withdraw at any stage of the study, and ensured participants' confidentiality of information. If an interview had already taken place, I did not use the information provided by the participant in the research study. The protection of research participants is the bedrock of all well-conducted research projects (Bradbury-Jones, Taylor, & Herber, 2014). Therefore, researchers should follow the ethical guidance from the Belmont Report to protect the rights of the participants.

To prevent personal biases from interfering with the research and to collect data successfully, I took field notes during the data collection process. Personal bias can occur when the researcher relies on personal judgment rather than relying solely on data collected to present the findings (Silverman, 2015). The researcher's perception and knowledge have the potential to bias the data (Mügge, 2016). Also, prior knowledge can present potential bias and leave the researcher unsure during data collection processes (Davis, Demby, Jenner, Gregory, & Broussard, 2016).

Avoiding bias is ethical and is a part of conducting a quality case study (Yin, 2018). One method to reduce the potential for bias and help reach data saturation is triangulation through the use of multiple sources of data (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). Also, researchers can alleviate potential researcher bias by following an interview protocol for each interview and by using multiple coding, which can also enhance the credibility of a study (Jorgensen, Dybå, Liestøl, & Sjøberg, 2016). Using data collection techniques established in previous studies assisted me in mitigation of researcher bias, as I relied solely on data material such as participant interviews and company documents as a basis for conclusions (see Yin, 2015).

Participants

For a case study, study participants need to have positive real-world experiences linked to the phenomenon under study to provide meaningful information when answering interview questions (Yin, 2015). Participants eligible for this study were individuals who have worked for the organization for at least 2-3 years and who provided a valuable discussion of the strategies they use to retain high talent employees. Eligible participants were IT small business leaders who have experience with employee retention and the formation and implementation of strategies for retaining high talent employees, including having hiring responsibilities that yielded successful retention strategies in retaining high talent employees, to respond to the interview questions, and who expressed a willingness to participate. I selected IT small business leaders for this study to ensure that participants' qualities aligned with my research question.

Researchers face challenges in gaining access to study participants. The aim of the researcher is to have access to information and to gather rich data, which allows in-depth analysis and provides an opportunity to learn about the phenomena under study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). However, gaining access to participants and organizations to participate in a research study presents challenges (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016); therefore, researchers should devise a strategy for gaining access to participants. To overcome the challenge of gaining access to participants, researchers should consider collaborating with gatekeepers, using additional recruitment tools, and understanding the target population (Haines, 2017).

Upon gaining IRB approval and securing organizational permissions to conduct interviews, the stages of obtaining access to participants included identifying participants, contacting participants, and gaining commitment (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). Accessibility may depend on the researcher’s knowledge of the study context and the gatekeepers (Haines, 2017). According to Haines (2017), a researcher may reflect on how to negotiate access to participants to collect data because the quality of the social interaction between the researcher and the participant may facilitate or inhibit access to information.

To conduct initial exchanges with study participants, I searched the internet to identify potential organizations in Monrovia, Liberia to find consenting participants who are small business leaders and who have successfully implemented strategies to retain high talent employees. I selected the organizations for the study based on my professional affiliation to gain immediate access to the participants. Conduct of initial exchanges with study participants was by emails and phone calls.

Gaining access to the participants was through the leaders of each organization (see Appendix C) to the human resources (HR) managers who assisted in providing the contact information of potential participants. Individual voluntarily participated and at their discretion. There was an arrangement in which the leaders contacted the HR managers of their respective organizations informing them of the official approval of the research, which included recruitment, review of relevant documents, data collection, member checking, and results from dissemination activities.

A researcher should establish a working relationship with participants. Building rapport with the participants is essential to gaining the desired information from the interviewing process (Harvey, 2015). Similarly, fostering a working relationship with participants is critical to successful qualitative research (White & Hind, 2015). Newton (2017) explored the complications of participant-researcher relationships when conducting sensitive research. Newton argued that the researcher’s sensitivity to the complex features of the researcher-participant relationship is a central pillar to feminist sociological inquiry. Hart-Johnson (2017) mentioned that a researcher must strategize to avoid unintentionally offending research participants when conducting qualitative research. My strategy for establishing a working relationship with the participants included communicating via e-mail, phone calls, and WhatsApp exchanges to arrange interview appointments with potential participants for this qualitative multiple case study. I established a working relationship with participants by being flexible, reassuring, and supportive, and sensitive to gain the desired information from the interviewing process.

Establishing trust by honestly communicating the purpose of the study to participants is a way to build rapport (Yin, 2018). Ways of creating relationships with participants involved being straightforward and honest about the goals, the reasons for the study, and the anticipated outcomes (Mandava & Millum, 2013). To establish trust and credibility, I obtained participants’ verbal and written informed consent, communicated to participants the nature of the study, and informed participants that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Each participant received a copy of the consent form before the initiation of the interview process (Walden, 2016).

Research Method and Design

The quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods are the three common research methodologies (Yin, 2015). The qualitative method was the research method for this study alongside a case study design. The selection of the appropriate research design increases the reliability and validity of the study design (Yavan, Güleşen, & Bebiş, 2018).

Research Method

The researcher used a qualitative research methodology for this study. A qualitative approach is about the designing of participant-adapted research, which is vital when addressing the problem and purpose statements of the study (Bansal, Smith, & Vaara, 2018). Park and Park (2016) stated that qualitative research methodology is suitable for gaining a better understanding of the underlying meaning of a situation. A qualitative researchers explore themes and experiences in a phenomenon including factors that relate to practices, a case, culture, or theory (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Also, researchers employ the qualitative method because it is more authentic than other methods for exploring strategic management (Gaya & Smith, 2016). The qualitative research methodology is appropriate because the goal of the study is to collect, analyze, and interpret comprehensive narrative and visual data to gain insights into strategies leaders use to retain high talent employees. I selected the qualitative method to explore the successful strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees.

Quantitative methods use hypothesis testing to achieve the research goals in controlled and unspontaneous studies (Park & Park, 2016). According to Park and Park (2016), quantitative researchers measure, evaluate, and generalize the findings to a population and encourage replication of the findings. Researchers use quantitative methods to evaluate correlations and disparities among variables using statistical testing and statistical model to address research questions (Counsell, Cribbie, & Harlow, 2016). Quantitative researchers pursue numerical data and analyze them to help conclude a study (Albers, 2017). A quantitative method was not suitable for this study because examining and evaluating a hypothesis or assembling numerical data for inferential statistical analyses was not the aim of the study.

Mixed methods research is an approach where researchers explicitly integrate quantitative and qualitative research approaches to understand best a research problem by capitalizing on their complementary strengths and differences (McKim, 2017). Researchers may also choose to use a mixed methods approach, mixing quantitative and qualitative investigation in their attempts to tackle their research questions (Turner, Cardinal, & Burton, 2017). Schoonenboom (2018) described a mixed methodology as a combination of two or more research elements, each fitting to a diverse methodology, within one study. Researchers use the mixed methods research methodology to bring importance to complicated social experiences; but, the mixed methods research methodology has challenges for beginner researchers because of the high level of complication in its design, combination, and accuracy (Skalidou & Oya, 2018). The mixed methods research methodology was not appropriate for this study because it requires a high level of complexity in the design, combination, and rigor.

Research Design

The researcher used a multiple case study design for this study, rather than choosing phenomenology, ethnography, or narrative inquiry designs. A case study research involves an in-depth scientific investigation into a real-life phenomenon within its environmental setting (Ridder, 2017). Researchers using a case study design explore a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life setting (Yin, 2015). Also, in a case study, researchers participate in exploratory research by asking *how, what or why* questions (Yin, 2015).

The multiple case study design involves replication, by the use of more than one case, to objectively prove evolving concepts and recognize corresponding features of the phenomenon under investigation by exploring within and across settings (Anderson et al., 2014). The multiple case study is an excellent design choice for researchers wanting to explore several instances of the same phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers usually use the multiple case study approach with a positivist epistemology because researchers use this design to seek competing explanations and falsify hypotheses (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). Hence, a multiple case study design is appropriate when collecting data from interviews and organizations' documentation from several participants and organizations to explore the employee retention strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees.

In phenomenological research, the aim of the study is to use qualitative data collection techniques to obtain a greater understanding of the meanings of participants' everyday experiences (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). The phenomenological design consists of the collection of data about the human experience where the researcher emphasizes subjectivity and discovery of essences of experience (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological researchers focus on exploring the meaning of human experience from views of those living the phenomenon (Miettinen, 2015). Employing a phenomenological research design was not appropriate to address the business problem and research question in this study because my goal was to explore a bounded case phenomenon in a specific location.

An ethnographic researcher concentrates on individuals within a cultural setting to explore the morals, principles, and communications among that population (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). In ethnographic research, researchers explore the culture of a distinctive group in the natural surroundings of the group over time to offer understanding from the perspective of the members of that culture (Yin, 2015). Ethnographic researchers explore the culture of individuals in the field (Baskerville & Myers, 2015). According to Bamkin, Maynard, and Goulding (2016), ethnographic researchers collect data by observing people in their environment or by socializing with them to understand their world. In ethnographic research, researchers exemplify the cultural group being studied (Knowles, 2015). The emphasis of ethnographic research is generally to produce an in-depth study and the analysis of data includes the interpretation of meanings and their relation to a local and global framework

(Mannay & Morgan, 2015). An ethnography research design was not applicable for my study because the purpose of the research was not to explore the beliefs and languages of a specific culture.

Researchers use the narrative research design to collect stories about a phenomenon to describe past experiences (Paschen & Ison, 2014). Narrative researchers gather data based on the participants' life stories that may invoke a shared narrative context (Shapiro, 2016). The narrative research design is best for social cultural research (Paschen & Ison, 2014). The narrative research design was not suitable since this study was not about taking a personal position in linking relationally with the participants' social and private world via their personal stories.

A case study is an exploratory study explaining an in-depth of a social phenomenon within its real-life perspective (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) mentioned that case studies may be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. A multiple case study design was the most appropriate design for this study on strategies leaders use to retain high talent employees because I conducted an in-depth investigation of an existing phenomenon within the real-life context of the phenomenon under study. In using a multiple case study design, the researcher can evaluate the data within each situation and across different situations, contrasting to a single case study design where researchers conduct an in-depth analysis of a contemporary phenomenon within the phenomenon's real-life context (Yin, 2018). Also, researchers engage in exploratory research by asking *why*, *how*, or *what* questions (Yin, 2018).

To ensure data saturation, data collection involved interviewing at least six leaders to gain sufficient data saturation. Data saturation is the point when there is sufficient information to replicate the study when the ability to obtain additional new information has been obtained, and when additional insights are no longer achievable (Lowe, Norris, & Farris, 2018). When data saturation was unattainable, where new insights emerge, I increased the sample size until data saturation was attainable. According to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), the number of participants required to attain data saturation in a qualitative case study ranges from five and 12 interviews. The researcher reaches data saturation through a thorough collection of data via interviews and organizational documentation resulting in no new insights and the data findings are reproducible in future research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Researcher's failure to reach data saturation influences the value of the research conducted and obstructs content validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Therefore, I continued to increase the sample size until data saturation was evident where no new information emerged.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study comprised IT small business leaders from three organizations in Monrovia, Liberia who have demonstrated effective strategies for employee retention. Purposeful sampling is a nonprobability method used to select participants based on their knowledge of, or experience with, the focus of academic investigation (R. Robinson, 2014). There are several reasons researchers employ a purposeful sampling. In qualitative research, the research purpose, questions, and study design drive the purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015). The purposeful sampling allows qualitative researchers to select participants who meet the eligibility criteria for the study (Patton, 2015). Similarly, researchers use purposeful sampling to ensure that the participants have the knowledge and experience to offer insights on the research topic (Reiser & Milne, 2016). Also, researchers make extensive use of purposeful sampling in qualitative research to obtain rich and meaningful data (Agyemang, Nyanyofio, & Gyamfi, 2014).

The purposeful sampling method is appropriate for qualitative studies because researchers select participants with specific knowledge about the research topic (Yin, 2015). Pacho (2015) used purposeful sampling to select individuals who had in-depth understanding of the topic under investigation. Therefore, I used a purposeful sampling to select participants for this multiple case study to understand participants' perceptions, get rich and meaningful data, and sample a group of leaders having thriving knowledge in retaining high talent employees. Participants for this study were IT small business leaders of three organizations based on their demonstrated successful retention strategies used to retain high talent employees. Standards for selecting participants involved selecting leaders who have worked with the organization for at least 2 to 3 years who provided a rich evaluation of the current job.

In qualitative research, the determination of sample size is appropriate and partly contingent upon the scientific pattern under which an investigation is taking place (Boddy, 2016). In qualitative studies, researchers use a small number of individuals (Sim, Saunders, Waterfield, & Kingstone, 2018) to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2015). Small samples are standard of qualitative research in which the goal is to obtain rich data beneficial for understanding the complexity, depth, variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). The sample size of six was appropriate for this study because sample sizes are smaller in qualitative studies due to the huge amount of data collected. Therefore, at least six participants were adequate to gather the data needed for my study.

Participants provide a source of evidence in a case study and play a primary role in the credibility of the study (Asiamah, Mensah, & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). Participants' selection must meet the eligibility criteria described in the study (Gentles & Vilches, 2017). Also, study participants who meet the eligibility criteria must have knowledge and experience related to the problem under investigation (Patton, 2015). The eligibility criteria for the study participants were contingent upon participants' successful experiences in retaining high talent employees.

The interviews were phone and semistructured and the review of organizational documents on employee retention from 2017-2020. According to Brannen (2017), researchers that conduct semistructured interviews can explore the experiences of the participant. Izvercian, Potra, and Ivascu (2016) used semistructured interviews with professionals from the Romanian public and private sector to determine the variables that influence the high and low job satisfaction elements of the Romanian labor market. Therefore, I used semistructured interviews to gather data to explore strategies leaders use to retain high talent employees.

The information collected from participants should be sufficient to reach data saturation, which means no new information emerges (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Nelson, 2017). Data saturation was unachievable with five participants, the number of participants increased until the achievement of data saturation. The purpose of increasing individual interviews is to obtain adequate data saturation, which is a point where there are no patterns or themes observed and where additional data collection is unnecessary (Guest, Namey, & McKenna, 2017). Also, a five participant margin allows for unexpected challenges in the study developmental process, allowing for an increase or decrease in the sample size (O. Robinson, 2014). I continued to interview participants until no additional information surfaced to ensure data saturation.

I also reviewed company documents. By using company documents, case study researchers can verify and corroborate the information from the interviews (Yin, 2018). Also, company documents are specific to the event or case, not generated for the case study, and reviewed repeatedly (Yin, 2018). The review of company documents helped me to analyze existing employee retention strategies.

Selecting locations are critical for obtaining valuable data. An appropriate interview setting is one that is accessible, comfortable, available, and private to avoid interruptions (Harrison & Rouse, 2014). The appropriate interview setting was applicable because the interview setting had a positive effect on the content that participants shared and on the overall direction of the interview.

The phone interviews began with an introduction and an explanation of the purpose of the call. The interview protocol served as a guide to ensure adherence to the procedures and general rules of conducting research. I followed the procedure to introduce participants with pseudonym/coded identifications and noted the date, time, and location of the interviews. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions or raise any concerns. I went over the basic components of the interview protocol and consent form, involving the importance on voluntary participation and withdrawal; after which, participants gave their permission to begin and record the interviews comprising of eight open-ended questions. At the end of the interview were an explanation of the member checking process and a thank you to the participants for their participation.

Ethical Research

Walden University doctoral students must demonstrate a steady observance to established research standards. It is mandatory that the University's Institutional Review Board provide consent for the conduct of the study before data collection (Walden, 2016). There are recognized safeguards, ethical codes, and standards having detail information about the requirements for voluntary consent of human subjects (Schofield, 2014). Researchers use an informed consent form to document the specifics about the study and to assure the ethical standards in protecting participants (Patten & Newhart, 2017). Before the research process began, potential participants were abreast of what the informed consent involved, including the nature and the purpose of the study to determine whether to participate in the study. Upon each participant expressing a willingness to participate in the study, participants received an invitation letter separately via email (see Appendix D).

Participants provided their consent before participating in the study through electronic means by responding to the invitation letter (see Appendix E) and consenting to the consent form. There was an assurance of confidentiality and detailed information on the intent of the study in the consent form (see Appendix F). Providing potential participants with an informed consent form before interviewing serves as a record that the researcher explained the study process and the participants agreed to participate in the study process (Bailey & Bailey, 2017; Yin, 2018). The withdrawal of participants was verbal. Withdrawing from the study had no consequences. Also, there was no offering of an incentive for participation in the study to avoid coercion.

Concealing the identity of participants may serve as an assurance of the validity of their statements (Taylor, 2015) and one of the conditions of a critical presentation of study results (Surmiak, 2018). In a study conducted by Surmiak (2018), interviewees had the opportunity to modify the transcripts by adding, removing, and changing the text, as well as indicating the issues that, in their opinion, required further anonymization. To ensure confidentiality, I protected the identities of the participants and the organizations by using unique fictitious organizations' names to conceal their identities; and marked the participants as *Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, and Participant 6*. According to Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2015), a researcher should protect their participants by disguising their identities. Also, the signed informed consent forms and interview recordings will be inaccessible in a storage cabinet on a flash drive for 5 years, and afterward destroy all consent forms, interview recordings, and transcribe data by cleaning and burning the flash drive.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument in this qualitative multiple case study research to collect and analyze data. The two primary sources for data collection were in-depth semistructured phone interviews with participants and company document review. Phone interviews and open-ended questions were the data collection strategy for this study. Each interview consisted of eight open-ended questions covering the participant's experience and perceptions of strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. The open-ended questions allowed the participants to elaborate and enable me to take notes. Yin (2015) stated that qualitative researchers using a case study design must collect data from at least two sources.

I used a qualitative research method to collect data from phone interviews with at least six IT small business leaders, located in Monrovia, Liberia. The researcher used methodological triangulation collecting data from company data, detail notes, and interview recordings. Methodological triangulation implicates the use of diverse methodological scripts to support the same phenomenon (Yin, 2018). The researcher audio-recorded all interviews with the permission of each participant. Anthony and Weide (2015) used in-depth semistructured interviews to study the relationship between career development training programs and the motivation of employees using 20 project managers and consultants from south-central Texas. To guide the structure of the interviews, I used the interview protocol. Researchers use a protocol to help keep a focus on the topic and assist in reliability (Yin, 2018). Open-ended interview questions provide a way to promote the knowledge sharing process, control the extent of the interview session, and reduce numerous sessions as a data management method (Tijdink et al., 2016). Therefore, I used interview questions to explore employee retention strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. I asked open-ended questions and documented, evaluated, and analyzed participants' responses to ensure validity and reliability from the data collected.

The second data source in this study was company documentation, which the researcher obtained from the human resources department and the organizational leaders. The researcher reviewed company documents and developed a deep understanding of the firms' values, procedures, and plans with regards to strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. Review of documents included employee handbook, policies, and internal records relating to employee retention strategies to understand the retention strategies.

Researchers may enhance the reliability and validity of a data collection instrument through various methods (Yin, 2018). Scholars can use member checking to improve the reliability and validity of data obtained from interviews (Harvey, 2015). Researchers who used member checking heightened the trustworthiness and academic rigor of their studies (Simpson & Quigley, 2016). I used NVivo 11 software to analyze data from the interviews, and used member checking to confirm the correctness of the interpretation, and that the participants' experiences accurately represent data given to ensure credibility, reliability, and validity.

Permitting participants to review the data summary creates trust and permits participants to verify for correctness of the data summary (Tijdink et al., 2016). The process for assessing validity and reliability included transcript review and member checking to allow participants to access the raw data and check the accuracy of the interpretations of the collective responses. Member checking is returning to the participant to ensure the participant recognizes interpretations of the researcher as accurate interpretations. I corrected all interpretation errors and repeated the conduct of member checking with the respective participants.

Data Collection Technique

Upon receiving approval from the Walden University IRB (#08-13-20-0676296), I gathered contact information, required organizational permissions to make initial contacts with potential study participants, and introduced the consent form. I contacted the appropriate executive on the leadership team of the partner organization and sought permission to perform my research and got approval via the letter of cooperation. After receiving final approval from IRB, I then contacted potential participants via email using the recruitment letter for study participants and provided the consent form. Participants provided consent by replying I consent to the email containing the informed consent form.

After securing organizational permissions and participants' consent to conduct interviews, data collection involved agreeing upon a date and time to conduct phone interviews. McGonagle, Brown, and Schoeni (2015) claimed interviews should occur at a site that is comfortable with few distractions, in a place that is quiet to ensure recording quality. The interview setting plays a part in the data collection process (Rimando et al., 2015).

Semistructured phone interviews was the primary data collection method for this study followed by company documentation source data. When conducting a case study, Yin (2018) stated that researchers collect data from two independent sources. Fusch and

Ness (2015) and Yin suggested qualitative researchers review documents as a method of data collection. Also, Ayab (2015) stated the principal data collection technique for qualitative research was semistructured interviews.

I used the semistructured interview technique to conduct phone interviews. I interviewed each participant separately and digitally recorded the interviews with an electronic audio recording device and ensured all participants consented to the audio recording before scheduling their interview sessions. Prior to the conduct of the interview, I emailed a copy of the interview questions to the participants and addressed any questions or concerns they may have. The interview process began with an introduction about the importance of the study, and the value the participants will provide by participating in the study. At the beginning of each interview, there was an overview of the consent form pointing out the purpose of the study, the procedures, risks, and benefits of study participation, nonpayment for participation, and the participants' option to withdraw from the study to ensure that the participants have a clear understanding of all aspects of the study. The length of the interview was between 35 and 45 minutes. I conducted the interviews comprising of open-ended questions to allow the participants to share their experiences. I restated the question for more precision for the participant if a participant did not quite understand one or more of the interview questions. Also, there was a review of company documents. I worked with the HRM to obtain employee handbook, policies, and internal records relevant to the study and performed data triangulation using data collected from semistructured interviews and analysis of company documents.

Using a semistructured interview has its advantages and disadvantages. Mason (2017) posited that in semistructured interviews, researchers can acquire a meaningful interpretation of the participant's experience. Another advantage of a semistructured is that participants can communicate their feelings and point of view (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018). Also, researchers have the skill to restate interview questions to improve the clarity of the participants' responses (Cole & Harbour, 2015). Semistructured interviews may provide reliable and comparable qualitative data.

There are several disadvantages of semistructured interviews. The disadvantage of conducting semistructured interviews is that it could be expensive and time consuming. (Pandey & Chawla, 2016). Interviews provide the interviewer with the opportunity to ask follow-up questions; however, they have the disadvantage of injecting researcher bias into the research process (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015). Another disadvantage of using semistructured interviews is that the analysis and interpretation phases are timelier and costlier compared to online questionnaires and surveys (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015). Semistructured interview is time intensive and can be quite expensive.

Using company documentation source data has advantages and disadvantages. Documents are a critical component for conducting methodological triangulation with other data, and researchers use documents to determine, validate themes, and identify areas for future research (Yin, 2018). One advantage of reviewing company documents is that data obtained can be valuable to researchers because it provides information that other forms of data collected cannot disclose; the data could be obsolete, inaccurate, and unavailable (Pacho, 2015). According to Owen (2014), interviews eventually become documents after the researcher converts them into written form. Another advantage of company documentation review is that, when scientists use documents and document analysis, they can gain a rich understanding of the studied matter (Owen, 2014). Conversely, a disadvantage of documentation is that gathering data through documents can be a cumbersome endeavor, as the researchers must expend additional efforts determining which documents are more relevant than the others (Owen, 2014). Moreover, Bruza and Chang (2014) mentioned another disadvantage of documents having various dimensions of relevance, which means increased complexity in the information environment.

The participants substantiate the correctness of the researcher's interpretations and the investigator confirms the accuracy of the data collected through member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). According to Marshall and Rossman, member checking is a quality control process that enhances the accuracy and credibility of the collected data by allowing the participant to verify a researcher's interpretation. Similarly, Member checking entails asking the participants to confirm that the researcher's interpretation of data is an accurate representation of their experiences (Madill & Sullivan, 2017). In qualitative research, a researcher may employ member checking or participant authentication to increase the validity of the study (Yin, 2015). Requesting the participants to review a synopsis of their responses to the interview questions and company documentation could enhance the trustworthiness of the completed analysis and inferences (Yin (2015). I conducted member checking, triangulated the data collected from the interviews and the company documents, to ensure that the results of the study were credible, and address the findings from the participant's perspectives. I discussed with participants my interpretations of their responses to account for the member checking process, which might have led to uncovering new data. The review process allowed participants to evaluate my interpretations and make any corrections before the coding process.

Data Organization Technique

Scholars use interview transcriptions and researcher notes taken during the interview in data collection and analysis (DeFelice & Janesick, 2015). It is important to keep the transcribed and recorded interviews, the audio-recorded prints of interviews, and backup prints of the recorded interviews as part of the data storage process (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015; Turner, Kim, & Anderson, 2015). According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), a computer is where researchers house data for the duration of transcribing the interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Hence, to confirm that there were no malposition or loss of data collected, I collected and filed data in a folder on my computer. The data collected and transcribed will remain on my personal computer in a secured file. Also, I used an EVISTR voice recorder to record the semistructured interviews. I downloaded the audio files from the digital recorder and transferred the recordings to a flash drive, which I will store for 5 years.

I created a folder of files and labeled them properly to indicate their contents to keep track of data and to attain a better data organization. It is critical for researchers to document the steps of the processes for reliability when involving case studies, which also include eliminating transcript errors and ensuring minimum coding errors (Yin, 2018). The name of the main folder was Employee Retention Strategies Within Information Technology Small Businesses, and the names of the subfolders were *Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, and Participant 6*. I kept a Word-Excel log and revised the research worksheet Word-Excel log as I collected data. There are two different locations for securely storing research data; in the event of one set of data being lost, there would be a backup file. I secured both print and electronic data in different locations, which acted as a backup file and helped me to protect participants' confidentiality. According to Ababneh and Al-Waqfi (2016), it is important to protect the privacy and integrity of the participants. Hence, all documents, transcriptions, and other information relevant to the study are in safekeeping on an external hard drive to protect participant privacy. Researchers should keep their datasets for at least of 5 years after publication (American Psychological Association, 2012). The data are under lock and key for 5 years after which time, I will destroy all papers, delete files from any removable or nonremovable media devices.

Data dependability and credibility are critical in research. Yin (2015) noted that a reflective journal is relevant to record observations and notes while conducting interviews. The reflective journal included handwritten notes from the interview, participant information, date of interview, location of the interview, and files name of research notes. I transcribed the handwritten reflective journal notes and stored them in the respective participant's electronic folder on my personal computer. I labeled each participant with a corresponding number rather than identifying names to safeguard confidentiality. Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2015) stated that a researcher should protect his or her participants by disguising their identities. Using pseudonyms is the recognized and anticipated ethical practice for maintaining participants’ confidentiality in qualitative research (Brear, 2018). Hence, I assigned an identification letter and number to each participant to maintain the participants' confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Researchers use methodological triangulation and reflexivity to enhance the understanding of the complex nature of the phenomenon while allowing researchers to explore the subjective experiences and conditions surrounding a phenomenon (Gabriel, 2015; Popa & Guillermin, 2015). Triangulation, as a part of the data analysis, refers to employing multiple data types and sources for ensuring richer data, confirming the results, and for increasing the validity of inference in research (Kern, 2016). Ang, Embi, and Yunus (2016) defined triangulation as a technique that researchers frequently used to establish confirmability, credibility, and dependability. Similarly, Daniel (2018) stated that triangulation relates to the convergence of data obtained using two or more data sources and is one of the techniques for establishing credibility.

The purpose of using triangulation is to reach a comprehensive understanding of the subject under study, including the contradictions and contrasts in the findings (Flick, 2016). Yin (2018) stated the purpose of triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data that will develop the converging lines of inquiry through multiple measures of the same phenomenon. To increase the validity of the study, I used methodological triangulation.

Triangulation is important in ensuring the credibility and validity of the data. Researchers use methodological triangulation to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of a case study (Yin, 2018). I used methodological triangulation by conducting semistructured interviews with IT small business leaders and collecting documents relevant to their employee retention strategies. I used methodological triangulation of multiple data sources and member checking to reduce bias, validate the themes, and improve reliability in the study. To review and analyze the interviews and the organization's documents, I also used methodological triangulation. The use of methodological triangulation aided me in recognizing and emphasizing any retention strategies expressed by the participants during the semistructured interviews and revealed in the organization's documents.

The process of data analysis is critical. In qualitative research, the data analysis phase is critical (Potestio et al., 2015). The researcher usually transcribes the data gathered from the interviews (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). The data analysis process involves analyzing the data in a way that makes an initial evaluation achievable to allow for considerable levels of review. Kowal and O'Connell (2014) stated that the same researcher should gather, record, and evaluate the data to ensure the accuracy of the information. Therefore, I collected, transcribed, and analyzed the clustered data.

I transcribed the interviews into a Microsoft Word document and analyze the developing themes using the NVivo 11 software. Paulus and Lester (2016) proposed identifying the name of the software and version used in research while the qualities of the software can change significantly with each new version. Kaefer, Roper, and Sinha

(2015) suggested the NVivo 11 software is useful in organizing the raw data for disclosing themes by organizing the material into masses, interpreting data, and then labeling the data into categories. Cao, Chen, and Song (2013) noted that software could assist researchers in uncovering and analyzing complex meanings that may emerge during the data collection, interview transcription, and member checking processes. Hence, the use of NVivo 11TM software helped me to organize, code, and conduct theme analysis, thereby facilitating the data collection, organization, and analysis processed. I organized the data and provided reliable data analysis using Microsoft Word software; and identified each participant in the study by a letter and a number using codes.

Researchers use coding technique to discover the themes contain within transcripts and involve data to reach saturation to confirm reliability, validity, and credibility (Yin, 2015). According to Yin (2018), data analysis includes a researcher working with research evidence to identify significant themes, patterns, and descriptions that explain the primary research. The coding process in qualitative studies focuses on the how or what of the phenomenon including the similarities and differences within and between classifications and transcripts (Yin, 2018). Woods, Paulus, Atkins, and Macklin (2015) stated that researchers should generate and refine codes continuously until no new unique codes in the proposed study are identifiable. For this study, the themes emerged from the individual interviews and company documentation. I used alphanumeric identifiers that distinctively identified six participants by a letter and a number. The alphanumeric identifier was “P” for participant and the number was 1 through 6 to identify key themes that emerged from the interview process.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability and the validity of the study are critical in determining the strength of a study. In quantitative research, reliability and validity are traditional measures of quality (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Validity in research is certifying that the data collected correctly reflect the phenomena under investigation, while reliability is the reproducibility of the data created by the research instruments involved (Jordan, 2018).

Reliability

Reliability is a concern in qualitative research. Reliability deals with accuracy in measurement (Elo et al., 2014). Using an interview protocol and conducting member checking improve the reliability and trustworthiness of the study. An interview protocol consists of procedures and rules that researchers use to conduct interviews (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) stated that researchers use an interview protocol as a guide to ensure adherence to the procedures and general rules of conducting research. Using an interview protocol promotes the ability of the researchers to acquire quality data in qualitative studies (Yeong et al., 2018). An interview protocol served as a guide to conduct each interview.

Member checking is important to ensure the dependability of a study and participants can use member checking to check the researcher's interpretations of the interview responses to verify its accuracy (Madill & Sullivan, 2017). Dependability refers to the consistency of the study results across researchers and time (Hays, 2016). To increase the reliability of the study, I conducted member checking with participants to confirm the accuracy of their interviews by requesting the participants to check the interpretation of the data.

Validity

The credibility of a study is important to confirm the validity of a study. The main objective of qualitative inquiry is to reduce researcher bias and bring out important information that improves the design concept (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015). Researchers describing the validity concept in qualitative research must critically distinguish between credibility and transferability, which are the quantitative equivalent of internal and external validity respectively. Credibility refers to the value of the research findings, along with the believability of the findings (Kornbluh, 2015). I ensured that the results of the research are credible by conducting member checking and triangulating the data from the interviews and the company documents. Performing member checking is a technique to ensure credibility and validity through participants' examination of the interviewer's summary and interpretation of the interview data (Simpson & Quigley, 2016); while when triangulating data, the researcher seeks to validate several sources of data through cross verification (Annansingh & Howell, 2016). Researchers use triangulation to establish credibility and confirmability (Ang et al., 2016).

Transferability is a critical step in determining the trustworthiness of the study. Transferability is whether the results of a study apply to other studies or settings (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). By providing adequately thick and detailed descriptions of the critical features of the research study, researchers allow readers to transfer the findings from one study to another (Sund, 2015). To show transferability, I provided detailed descriptions of the phenomenon under study.

Confirmability is a feature of trustworthiness that qualitative researchers must establish. Korstjens and Moser (2017) mentioned that confirmability concerns establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not fabrications of the researcher's imagination but derived from the data. According to Johnson and Rasulova (2017), the purpose of confirmability is to ensure that the participants produce the findings in a study free from the researcher's biases. Harvey (2015) suggested that researchers ensure that the participants verify their responses to the interview questions, which must align with the conceptual framework and literature to increase the confirmability of the study. I addressed the confirmability of this study by providing a rich description of the member checking and triangulation process. Member checking is where the participants review the transcript, evaluate the accuracy, and confirm the researcher's interpretation of their experiences (Madill & Sullivan, 2017). I requested each participant to review the initial interpretation of the data for accuracy to help fight biases in the data interpretation process.

Reaching data saturation is an important aspect of the validity of a study. When researchers fail to achieve data saturation, it can have an adverse effect on the validity of a study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The researcher reaches data saturation through a thorough collection of data via interviews and organizational documentation resulting in no new insights and the data findings are reproducible in future research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured data saturation by continuing to collect data until there was no new information emerging from the interviews. Also, enough information was available to duplicate the study, and no new codes were arising.

Transition and Summary

The researcher is the data collection instrument in qualitative research (Orange, 2016; Yin, 2015). The researcher's role is to get access to the study participants, communicate with the study participants, arrange the research process, conduct the research, and gather and analyze the data (Ibrahim & Edgley, 2015). As the researcher, I recruited participants, collected, and analyzed the data using a multiple case study design emphasizing two data collection instruments, including semistructured interviews and company documentation. In Section 2, the qualitative method and case study design are an expansion of information presented in Section 1, which includes the justifications for using the qualitative multiple case study design. Triangulation is one of the techniques for establishing the confirmability, credibility, and dependability of the study. Also, a commitment to ethical practices was imperative to accountability, reliability, and validity of a study. I also included data collection plans and analysis procedures. Section 3 is the Presentation of the Findings, Application to Professional Practice, Implication for Social Change, Recommendations for Action and Future Research, Reflections, and a Conclusion to the Study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. I conducted semistructured interviews with six IT small business leaders from three organizations in Monrovia, Liberia after I received Walden University IRB approval to collect data and acquired a letter of cooperation from each research partner. Participants provided their experiences with employee retention strategies within their organizations. In addition to the semistructured interviews, I reviewed company documents such as employee handbook, policies, and internal records relating to employee retention strategies to understand the retention strategies. I used the structured interview protocol for each participant as a guide and recorded, transcribed, and analyzed each interview by themes using Herzberg's two-factor theory. I analyzed the recorded interviews and transcripts using the NVivo Version 11 software.

The findings showed strategies that the IT small business leaders used to motivate their high talent employees to remain with the organization. From the data collected, three themes developed from the study. The major themes discovered were (a) compensation and benefits, (b) conducive work environment, and (c) training and development. Figure 2 shows components of Herzberg's two-factor theory and the relationship of the data collected for this study to the conceptual framework.

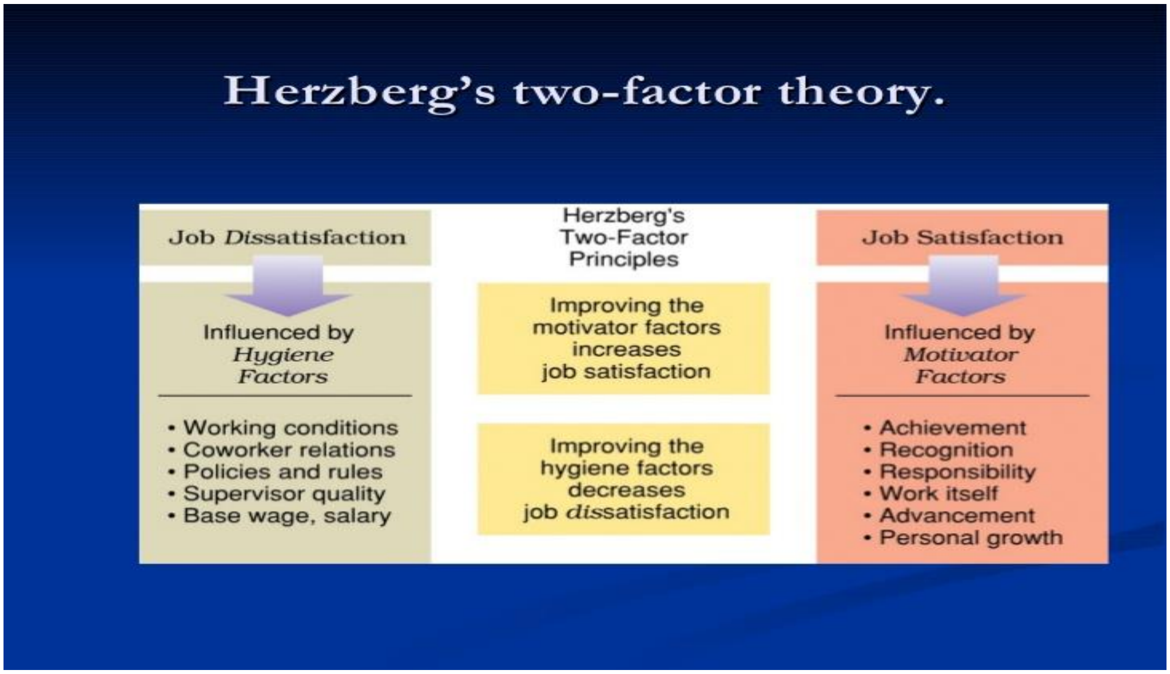

Figure 2. Herzberg's two-factor theory model

Presentation of the Findings

A qualitative exploratory multiple case study was the design for the study to explore strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. I also used semistructured interviews and reviewed company documents to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. The overarching research question of this study was: What strategies do IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees? The participants' responses to the interview questions offered insights into the strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. Interviews with the participants occurred at a date and time where participants felt comfortable to provide detailed responses to eight open-ended interview questions.

Herzberg’s two-factor theory was the conceptual framework for this study. I used Herzberg’s (1959) two-factor theory for this study to discover the strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. Herzberg’s two-factor theory involves two separate factors that either motivate employees or lead to their dissatisfaction within the workplace. The responses of the participants supported Herzberg’s motivators and hygiene factors. Herzberg tried to get to the root of motivation in the workplace by asking employees to describe situations where they felt satisfied and situations where they were dissatisfied (Gong, Greenwood, Hoyte, Ramkissoon, & He, 2018).

In the presentation of the findings, I discuss (a) the participants’ responses to the selected themes, (b) explain data in addressing the overarching research question, and (c) align the findings with existing research. Through phone interviews and a review of company documents, I gained an in-depth understanding of the employee retention strategies IT small business leaders used that could result in reduced turnover. After thorough research and analysis, I determined themes related to the overarching research question. Table 2 shows retention strategies used by organization leaders to retain high talent employees. The frequency of occurrence of core themes confirmed the effective strategies for retaining high talent employees.

Table 2
Strategies Used to Retain High Talent Employees

Main Themes	n	% of Frequencies
Compensation and Benefits	5	29.4
Conducive Work Environment	6	35.3
Training and Development	6	35.3
Total	17	100

Sample Description

The participants in this study were IT small business leaders located in Monrovia, Liberia. Six participants from three organizations participated in the study. The participants chose the date and time for the phone interviews. To ensure the privacy of the participants, I concealed the participants' identities using codes as identifiers. Each participant had a pseudonym ranging from *Participant 1 to Participant 6*. I conducted phone audio-recorded interviews and transcribed interview data from six participants. I also reviewed the company documents and used NVivo version 11 software to develop thematic codes for the data collected. After analyzing the data, three themes emerged. The most prominent themes that emerged from the data were (a) compensation and benefits, (b) conducive work environment, and (c) training and development. The IT small business leaders appreciated the findings addressed that confirmed the key tenants of Herzberg's two-factor theory.

All participants for the study met the eligibility criteria of a) being a leader who has demonstrated effective strategies for employee retention, and b) being in a leadership position for at least 2-3 years of successful experience in demonstrating effective strategies for employee retention. Participants freely and voluntarily shared their knowledge, ideas, strategies, and experience on the topic of employee retention within IT small businesses. Before the initial interviews, each participant received the interview questions. The interview lasted between 35-45 minutes in length, with each participant responding to eight questions. A follow-up member checking took place a week after the initial interview which lasted for 20 minutes. I used member checking and transcript review to ensure that I captured the meaning of each participant's responses. I went through the responses of the participants to the interview questions to confirm their interpretations to support the validity and reliability of the study.

I used the NVivo 11 software to input and store data for coding and exploration of themes. Before loading the interview transcripts into NVivo, I replaced participants' names with their assigned code to maintain confidentiality. Using NVivo 11 version software, I organized, sorted, categorized, and coded the data. Based on similarities, I analyzed each participant's transcription, recognized critical information from the data, marked the data, described, and categorized the codes.

Documents Reviewed

Upon completion of the data collection and data analysis processes, I reviewed the company's document on employee retention, policies, employee handbook and internal records to triangulate and confirm the phone interview data. I scrutinized the company's documents and records to validate the data from the interviews before developing the themes. The policies outlined employee retention guidelines in the business. The policy for each organization indicated that there was a 90-day probation period for new hires. New hires received the employee retention policy on their first day at work. One of the retention policies reflected that the organization recruit employees from within to fill a vacancy created from promotion, transfer, resignation, or employee TIs. Also, the company’s documents reflected there is mandatory training program for all employees and several benefits package for employee motivation. The company’s reports revealed less employee turnover over the years which confirmed the participants' responses. The interview question responses, along with the reviewed documents, raised my understanding of the business leaders' strategies used in retaining high talent employees in IT small businesses.

Theme 1: Compensation and Benefits

Compensation and benefits were the first theme that emerged for reducing employee turnover. Katsikea et al. (2015) describd compensation as strategic to the organization’s goals and critical to employee satisfaction, employee retention, employee development, and better organizational performance. Participant 1 stated, “Compensation and benefits are key to retention. If there is no sufficient compensation or benefits to motivate employees, attrition takes place. Employees will leave to go to other organizations where they can find grainer’s pastures.” This finding confirms the research of Cho, Rutherford, Friend, Hamwi, and Park (2016), who noted high talents are likely to leave their organization for the lack of compensation and career advancement. Organization leaders who provide a compensation package are likely to retain their employees. Participant 1 indicated that the organization provides compensation that is sufficient to alleviate employees’ financial problems to a certain extent and provides benefits that motivate them to remain with the institution. Participant 1 identified some of the benefits provided as a provident fund (a compulsory savings plan where there is a matching fund from management to what the employees contribute), a superannuation fund where management is the sole contributor of the fund, death and benefit funds, and education funds. Compensation is an important factor influencing employees' decision to remain with an organization.

Compensation is an important variable for improving job satisfaction, motivation, and employee retention in organizations (Herzberg et al., 1959). Participant 2 indicated that the organization provides compensation that commensurate with their qualifications and provides other benefits that meet employees' personal needs. According to Participant 2, when employees are happy, they overperformed. Participant 2 however, stated, "Compensations are not the only sources of employee satisfaction. A simple pat on the back and continuous praises, including recognition and reward, are what employees desire." This finding aligned with Schlechter et al.'s (2016) evaluation that high talent employees leave organizations when they become dissatisfied and believe their compensations do not commensurate with their skill or experience.

Offering a competitive salary can motivate employees to remain in the workplace. Participant 3's statement aligned with Participant 2 that employees desire other benefits in addition to compensation to retain high talent employees. According to Participant 3, one general question asked employees through a survey questionnaire was what would motivate employees to want to stay with an organization. Participant 3 indicated that the result of the survey reflected that though employees consider compensation as an important retention strategy, employees preferred adequate benefits to meet their personal needs. This finding confirms Thomas' (2018) research in that compensation strategy developed by organization leaders serve as a guideline on the appropriate pay scale for all employees. Offering a fair wage can contribute to retaining and attracting employees (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018). The literature and conceptual framework support the theme of compensation and benefits.

Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory confirmed that compensation is a hygiene factor that can increase or decrease job dissatisfaction. Participant 4 indicated that the organization provides competitive compensation and benefits packages for its employees. Participant 4 stated, "We provide the highest benefits for our employees compared to other organizations within the industry." Participant 5 mentioned that salaries and benefits were critical to high talent retention. Participant 5 stated, "We are thorough with our recruitment process including the interviews of high talent employees to get the right fit for the job. We make sure that salaries and benefits are competitive with others in the industry." This finding confirms Walden, Jung, and Westerman's (2017) research that fair compensation improves organizational retention. The participants' responses align with Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory in that compensation is a traditional driver of employee retention. Leaders use compensation as a significant role in altering employees' intent to stay with an organization (Pregnolato, Bussin, & Schlechter, 2017). The analysis of the participants' data was consistent with existing literature on effective business practice by confirming organization leaders' responses regarding compensation was a strategy that influenced employees' decision to remain or leave the organization (Ugoani, 2016).

Theme 2: Conducive Work Environment

A conducive work environment was the second theme that emerged for reducing employee turnover. An effective means of reducing employee turnover in small businesses is to improve the quality of the work environment (Ugoani, 2016). Participant 1 mentioned that the work environment should be conducive. Participant 1 stated, “Employees need to feel free to have a conversation with their supervisors on a free basis. Also, employees should not be bullied, and there should not be bossiness.” Participant 1 stated that when leaders put up bossy attitudes, it keeps employees at a distance, and employees become intimidated to pass on important information that is critical for the enhancement of the job. According to Participant 1, there must be a listening arm or a giver of information. “There must be feedback to know whether the organization is meeting employees’ expectations. Creating a conducive working environment where there is freedom of expression creates a sense of belonging.” Employees want a work environment where they can express dissatisfaction without retribution for standing up for their rights. The results of this study aligned with the literature, demonstrating that employees are most likely to stay with the organization when leaders create a conducive work environment of collaboration and are open to feedback. This finding confirms with the research of Zuliawati, Suhaimi, and Norlina (2018), who indicated that communication between employees and employee attitude has a tremendous influence on performance and productivity, and the happiness of each employee.

A conducive work environment enables employees to perform effectively leading to improved overall organization performance. Participant 2 stated, “Employees desire to remain in an organization where they feel comfortable at work and where they feel a part of the organization. When employees are happy, their leave intentions reduce." However, if employees' anticipations regarding the organization are not achievable, Arnoux-Nicolas et al. (2016) mentioned that the result may lead to employees' intention to leave the organization.

A conducive working environment is a condition that allows employees to feel comfortable and excel in the workplace. Participant 1 and Participant 2 expressed similar viewpoints that a conducive work environment means everything to employees. Participant 2 stated, "We put our employees first and seek employee welfare by meeting their personal needs." In addition to having a conducive work environment, Participant 2 explained that having a conducive work environment takes into account a flexible work schedule of the employees. Participant 2 indicated that flexibility leads to productivity and reduces employee turnover. The retention strategy on providing a flexible schedule aligns with Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory. Flexible conditions in the workplace is a motivating factor that leads to employee retention and job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Leaders need to communicate effectively clear objectives, provide a positive work culture, and have adaptable leadership methods to increase employee commitment and reduce employee turnover (Iordanoglou, 2018; Zhong, Wayne, & Liden, 2016).

A supportive work environment enhances affective commitment and strengthens employees' job interest and productivity. Participant 3 stated, "We provide an open policy that allows employees to express their views. Once employees have a work environment where their leaders listen and hear their views, they feel a part of the organization." Participant 3 indicated that organization leaders do not have to make all the decisions. "Once employees can contribute to the decision-making process, they can feel a part of the organization." The conceptual framework for this study supported the findings as shared by the participants. Herzberg (1959) tries to get to the root of motivation in the workplace stating the work environment should be safe, fit for purpose, and hygienic. This confirms with the research of Kundu and Lata (2017), who acknowledged that a conducive work environment influences employee job satisfaction and positively influence employee retention.

Organization leaders should create conducive work environments for their employees to support their levels of work engagement to retain high talent employees. Participant 4 mentioned a conducive work environment as an effective strategy to retain high talent employees. Participant 4 stated, "Organization leaders should make the work environment a friendly environment. Organization leaders should listen to employees' feedback and should not be dictators." According to Participant 4, employees need to be free and not to hide from their bosses or be afraid of them. Participant 4 stated, "Employees who leave the organization leave for reasons other than job dissatisfaction." This finding confirmed the research of Schaumberg and Flynn (2017), who noted that employees who like their work environment are more prone to have increased job satisfaction and less turnover intentions.

Ensuring a conducive and friendly work environment for employees is an important retention strategy. Participant 5 stated, "If the employees are not comfortable with the environment for which they work, they will leave to seek employment elsewhere." Participant 5 mentioned that no matter the compensation and benefits package, employees will leave the organization when the work environment is unfriendly and uncomfortable for them. Participant 5 indicated that the organization considers employees as colleagues rather than employees and leaders do not see themselves as bosses. Participant 5 stated, "We work together as a team and consider employees as colleagues rather than employees or subordinates." Participant 6 indicated, "If the work environment is not conducive, where employees do not feel valued in that job, they will leave the organization." Participant 6 identified employee satisfaction survey and exit interviews as a means through which the organization evaluates employees' leave intentions and helps leaders and the organization to formulate effective retention strategies. Participant 6 stated, "If you remove the human factor, the organization becomes a failure." The participants' responses aligned with Abdirahman et al.'s (2018) research that employees with higher commitment levels get motivated to increase their job performance.

Theme 3: Training and Development

Training and development are important retention strategies for organization leaders to reduce employee turnover. All six participants expressed that training and development were major strategies that reduced employee turnover. Jang, Kim, and Yoo (2017) supported the view that training opportunities for improvement not only make employees competitive but also helps to retain employees. The six participants indicated they used training and development to advance employee career growth and promotion to higher-level positions within the organizations.

Employee satisfaction is important for the success of the organization. Participant 1 indicated that once employees get hired, they probe them as to what their career interests are, and the organization provides the necessary training and development to enable them to provide the type of services that are readily needed. Participant 1 stated,

> Organizations go through attrition when there are job dissatisfactions particularly when employees do not see any clear goal regarding their career paths. Employees tend to remain with an organization when they have a clear career path, and when they have growths in their jobs.

An organization that invests in its human resources promotes productivity and profitability. This finding confirms with the research of Nelissen et. al. (2017), who noted that when employees feel that they are developing in their positions, they do not seek employment elsewhere.

Employee motivation is a way to make employees appreciate the job and take ownership because they feel a part of a team. Participants 1 and Participant 2 discussed the strategy used to attract and retain employees by providing an experience. Participant 1 stated,

> We solicit feedback from employees through a performance management scheme where we do mentor coaching of employees and evaluate their performance. What it does is that it provides an opportunity to see where to build on in terms of their training needs assessment.

Similarly, Participant 2 indicated that the organization constantly engaged employees by conducting quarterly surveys to know the employees' comfort levels and ascertain if there are issues that the organization can jointly find mitigating solutions. This finding confirms Anderson’s (2017) research that employees would remain with organizations when they receive proper training and development according to leaders’ expectations.

Achievement is one of the motivator factors that increase job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Participant 2 mentioned that the organization invests in employee training and development including mentorship. According to Participant 2, due to constant changes in technology, keeping employees current with prevailing technologies is productive. Participant 2 explained that the organization maintains a flexible schedule by allowing employees to set their schedules. According to Participant 2, flexibility leads to productivity and reduces employee turnover. Participant 3 stated,

> We provide training and manpower development to enable employees to explore and develop their potentials. We conduct a monthly performance review to evaluate employees’ performance and determine their training needs. Also, we use a questionnaire to determine employees’ comfort levels.

Participant 3 mentioned that the result of the survey reflects that employees’ concern is to have benefits, build their capacities through training and development, and how they can express their professional views. Employee training aligns with Herzberg’s two-factor theory as a motivational factor. Herzberg (1959) posited that real happiness seemed to need some achievement of psychological growth. Nguyen and Shao (2019) confirmed that training programs might increase organizational retention rates. Conversely, Al Mamun and Hasan (2017) confirmed that a lack of training and development opportunities influence employee turnover. Some organization leaders find that training and development is a way to keep their employees motivated to mitigate voluntary turnover.

Motivational factors are key elements in the workplace to improve employee job satisfaction. Participant 4 mentioned that the organization invests in employees' training and professional development including growth opportunities. Participant 4 stated, "We provide an ongoing education to advance employees' capabilities and offer free training for those who desired to take advance courses to earn certification." According to Participant 4, employees sign contracts with the organization to remain within its employ for at least five years upon completion of such training. Participant 5 mentioned that the organization provides the needed training and development to retain high talent employees. Participant 5 stated, "We make flexible schedules for employees to go back to school and encourage those who have professional exams to write including master's program to pursue them. Valued employees remain in the organization." This assertion statement is in alignment with Younge and Marx's (2016) inference that training supports employees' sense of value in the workplace, promotes their development, and enhances their engagement.

Training and development in any organization bring hope and job satisfaction to the employees. Participant 6 mentioned that training and development is critical to employee retention. According to Participant 6, training and development is one of the operational standards set by the organization. Participant 6 said self-actualization is what employees look for and employees need to know that they can move to the next level in their career. Participant 6 explained that employees leave the organization when their job is not challenging. Organization leaders should enrich employees' jobs and empower them. Participant 6 stated, "Organization leaders should empower employees by allowing them to make certain decisions in the organization and enrich them to give them a little more challenging responsibility and roles. People want to feel valued and feel challenged." This finding aligned with Mngomezulu et al.'s (2015) research that generally, employees leave organizations due to the absence of professional challenges. When employees cannot find relevance in the organization, the shock may lead them to quit and seek other job opportunities (Carnahan et al., 2017). If organization leaders understand the reasons employees remain or leave an organization, they are better equipped to address retention. Also, organization leaders could conduct an employee needs assessment to gain a perception of employee leave intention.

Least Effective Strategy: Poor Communication

Communication is a key instrument that helps organization leaders and employees to interact for the betterment of the organization. Ukil (2016) recognized communication, training, employment satisfaction, pay, and benefits as key components of job satisfaction. Three participants indicated communication as the least effective strategy for employee retention. Participant 1 indicated that communication plays a major role in any organization. Participant 1 stated, "There must be a listening arm or giver of information and there must be feedback on employees' performance. According to Participant 1, through communication, organization leaders get to understand how employees feel about their job. However, Participant 1 mentioned that sometimes communication is not effective to a certain level, but the organization has been considerate of this weakness. Also, Participant 1 indicated that the organization has developed effective communication channels. One means of communication Participant 1 mentioned was the solicitation of feedback from employees through a performance management scheme. Participant 1 stated, “The performance management scheme enabled organization leaders to conduct mentoring coaching of employees to evaluate their performance and find out whether employees were having problems along the road, including the feedback they give to their supervisors.” Participant 1 indicated that the evaluation process provided an opportunity to see where to build on in terms of their training needs assessment.

Inadequate supervision can cause employees to become dissatisfied with their jobs and result in employee turnover. Sharma (2016) found that poor supervision contributes to turnover intentions. Participant 4 mentioned communication as the least effective strategy. Participant 4 stated that organization leaders do not effectively communicate with their employees. For example, Participant 4 mentioned, “Organization leaders providing training are not following up on employees to ensure the effectiveness of training provided. However, the organization’s goal is to reach out to employees to identify their disputes.” Engaging employee through successful communication provides unity and enhances employees’ job satisfaction and retention rates (Motlou, Singh, & Karodia, 2016).

Poor supervision has influences on employee intention to remain with the organization. Poor supervision might cause employee job dissatisfaction (Haar et al., 2016). Participant 6 mentioned that there are many straightforward approaches to retaining high talent employees. One of the strategies identified was effective communication, which according to Participant 6 has been a challenge. Participant 6 noted that poor communication contributes to employee turnover. For example, Participant 6 stated, “You must communicate what salaries employees are entitled to and how you communicate that to them is critical. Organization leaders who communicate ineffectively are poor communicators and do not motivate employees.” Poor supervision can cause dissatisfaction in the workplace. Like Kang and Sung (2017) mentioned, employees receiving positive communication about their job performance are likely to have more motivation to uphold trustful connections with the organization, causing a high level of employee encounter.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of the study, including the analysis of the literature review and the conceptual framework of the study, offer a thorough academic basis for professional business practices. The findings of the study may apply to professional business practices within IT small businesses by providing a basis for organization leaders to reference effective retention strategies. Some small IT business leaders lack the strategies in retaining high talent employees in their businesses thereby creating a loss of human resources, productivity, and profitability.

Participants indicated the strategies IT small business leaders used to retain high talent employees. Organization leaders who have strived to sustain a stable workforce could refer to the identified themes to improve their business performance. According to Prince, Nagar, and Chacko (2017), there is more than one factor for employee retention to be successful. The participants in this study identified (a) compensation and benefits, (b) conducive work environment, and (c) training and development as effective retention strategies that could improve business practices.

The findings in this study could lead to a sustained employee retention rate and an improved relationship between the organization and employees. Also, organizational leaders could use the findings from this study to design and devise strategies to reduce employee turnover and maintain a conducive working environment that could increase production. Organization leaders may also use this study as a base for fostering the retention rate in other dimensions. Publishing the results of this study could provide business leaders with information on employee motivation and productivity. Also, the employee retention strategies that emerged from this study may contribute to employee job satisfaction, productivity, and profitability for the business at large.

Implications for Social Change

Business owners and organization leaders could use the findings of this study to develop and expand employee retention strategies to retain high talent employees in all operational areas of the IT industry. The implications for positive social change include the potential for improved employee retention strategies that could lead to improved organizational responsiveness, employee morale, and better working relationships between the organization and its local community.

The establishment and implementation of retention strategies may lead to reduced employee retention challenges, a sustainable workforce, a boost in employee morale, and organizational and economic success. Improved employee retention may lead to an improved organizational image among all employees and other stakeholders within the community, where the establishment contributes to the growth of the local economy. Also, reduced employee turnover rates and increased business profitability may lead to future organizational sustainability, provide jobs in local communities, and build up the economy. This study constituted an addition to the body of knowledge about strategies leaders use for developing, implementing, providing stable employment opportunities, and contributing to the welfare of the community through investment in the development of training programs.

Recommendations for Action

Organization leaders who develop retention strategies may provide comprehensive measures on how to improve employee retention. Organization leaders experiencing high turnover could use the results of this study to set up engagement activities, such as supervisory training sessions to help reduce employee turnover. Also, organization leaders should communicate compensation strategy with employees in alignment with productivity, organizational goals, and performance ensuring employees understand the compensation strategy to improve motivation. The information the participants shared could help organizations succeed by retaining their high talent employees and reducing turnover costs. The savings realized from reducing the costs associated with turnover could gear toward organization expansion through the establishment of new markets and other undertakings.

The findings from this study are relevant to organization leaders, IT professionals, and HRM. I will share my study findings through training and seminars on employee retention. My primary focus will be on helping to motivate organization leaders to improve employee retention in their organizations. Also, I will anticipate publishing this study in the ProQuest/UMI dissertations database for current and future researchers to access.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. One limitation was transferability due to the geographical location of this study, Monrovia, Liberia. The results cannot be transferable to IT small businesses across other geographical areas. I recommend researchers conduct further studies on effective employee retention strategies from several geographical locations. Researching one geographical location may not produce a variety of strategies to retain high talent employees and could adversely influence the generalization of the study. Another limitation of this study was that the sample size comprised of six IT small business leaders in Monrovia, Liberia, which may not reflect the views of all IT small business leaders. Also, I recommend further research on employee retention strategies with a larger sample size comprising participants from various IT small businesses, which could yield rich data resulting in a variety of strategies to improve business practices and reduce employee turnover. Future researchers may consider researching the effectiveness of the following retention strategies found in this study: offering employees fair compensation and benefits, providing a friendly and conducive work environment, and providing employees with training and development to reduce employee turnover. From my research, there has been limited research on employee retention strategies conducted in Liberia.

Reflections

Pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration degree at Walden University was a stimulating and rewarding encounter. I had persistent challenges with work-life balance, finances, and a poor health condition. At some point in the study, I legally separated from my husband, requested for early retirement at my job, and reduced church and other social activities to move forward with my study. Often, I felt overwhelmed and discouraged and wanted to give up. However, with the support and encouragement received from colleagues and family members, coupled with the investment made, I remained focused to complete the program.

I was the primary data collection instrument of this study. I ensured that the findings of this study were the perceptions of the study participants. I realized that interviews are effective for collecting qualitative data which led to valuable findings and an in-depth understanding of the research problem. As confirmed by the responses obtained from the interviews, the participants showed willingness and interest to share their perspectives and provided more information from the interview questions.

I acquired extensive knowledge throughout the doctoral journey. The completion of this study influenced my thinking on employee retention as a complex business problem that researchers need to explore further to implement effective strategies in retaining high talent employees. I desire that organization leaders and other practitioners seeking to reduce employee turnover will find the information in this study useful and apply the strategies to their business practice to create positive social change. Upon completion of my study, I plan to use the knowledge gained to assist other students and organization leaders.

Conclusion

Employee retention has become one of the major concerns because it influenced the organization. Retaining high talent employees is a serious concern for organization leaders because employee turnover can influence the quality of service offered by the organization and produce a large expense (Harden et al., 2018). The departure of IT employees from the organization might result to the lost of system knowledge and valuable work skills that are hard to substitute (Firdose, 2017). The purpose of this study was to explore strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. Using the qualitative method, I conducted semistructured phone interviews with six IT small business leaders from three organizations in Monrovia, Liberia. I used open-ended interview questions, asked in the same order, to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies IT small business leaders used to retain high talent employees.

Some organization leaders within IT small businesses have implemented strategies that have proven successful in retaining high talent employees through the conceptual framework of Herzberg’s two-factor theory. Organization leaders have successfully retained high talent employees by implementing effective retention strategies. Three themes developed from the study: (a) compensation and benefits, (b) conducive work environment, and (c) training and development. The themes aligned with the conceptual framework of this study and have suggestions for social change, future research, and application to professional practice.

The findings from the study could apply to other organizations located in different geographic locations that want to improve employee retention. Organization leaders could use the findings of this study to develop effective retention strategies that encourage employees to remain. The contribution to social change involves employees, their families, communities, organizations, and the economy extending from growth in retention rates among IT employees. Also, business leaders could become inspired to be more innovative in their approach to retaining employees and could be useful in enacting positive organizational change.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If at any time you need to stop, take a break, or return a page, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission, we will begin the interview.

1. Introduce self to participant(s).
2. Present consent form, go over contents, and answer questions and concerns of participant as presented.
3. Give participant(s) a copy of the consent form.
4. Turn on recording device.
5. Follow procedure to introduce participant(s) with pseudonym/coded identification; note the date, time, and location.
6. Commence interview with question #1; follow through to interview question #8.
7. If needed, follow-up with additional questions.
8. Close interview series; discuss member checking with participant(s).
9. Following transcript interpretation, inform participation of the opportunity to review specific aspects of the interpretation of the data they provided to ensure reliability and validity of the data.
10. Thank the participant(s) for their participation in the study. Repeat contact numbers for follow-up questions and concerns from participants

Appendix B: Interview Questions

The goal of each interview question is to obtain information leading to answering the research question. The interview questions are as follow:

1. What retention strategies have you used to retain your high talent employees?
2. What steps did you employ to design retention strategies for your employees?
3. What strategies have you found to be least effective in retaining your high talent employees?
4. What were the employees’ responses to the different retention strategies?
5. What challenges did you encounter when you implemented the strategies, and how did you overcome the challenges?
6. How did you determine the effectiveness of retention strategies?
7. What specific procedures or business practices have you implemented to ensure the retention of your high talent employees?
8. What other information would you like to disclose about strategies employed to retain high talent employees?

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation

Vice President, Human Resources
Monrovia, Liberia

September 2020

Dear Felicia,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled ‘Employee Retention Strategies within Information Technology Small Businesses within the organization. As part of this study, I authorize you to review relevant documents, recruitment, data collection, member checking, and results dissemination activities. Individuals’ participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization’s responsibilities include: The provision of access to relevant company documents to facilitate the recruiting process and authorization for employees to participate in interviews and member checking for this study. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student 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,

Vice President, Human Resources, Monrovia, Liberia

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 D: Recruitment Letter for Study Participants

Dear [Name]:

My name is Felicia Tetee Washington, a current graduate student at Walden University pursuing a doctoral degree in business administration (DBA). I am conducting research on “Employee Retention Strategies Within Information Technology Small Businesses.” I am interested in conducting a study to explore employee retention strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees. I am seeking to interview leaders of organizations who fit the following criteria:

- Be a leader who has demonstrated effective strategies for employee retention.
- Be in a leadership position for at least 2-3 years of successful experience in demonstrating effective strategies for employee retention.

I believe leaders meeting these criteria for this study could bring a unique perspective and understanding to this research. During the course of this study, I will conduct a phone interview with the participant and review company documents. I have included a consent form along with this email. The consent form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. If you are interested in my study, please read the consent form and if you would like to participate respond to this email with the words “I consent.” At the close of this study, I will share results and findings with the participant, other scholars, and the business organization with a 1-2 page summary. The individual who meets the above criteria and is interested in participating in this study will be please contact me at felicia.washington3@waldenu.edu. Please note that participation in this study is voluntary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Felicia Tetee Washington, Walden University DBA Student

Appendix E: Request to Schedule an Interview

[Date]

Re: Request to Schedule an Interview

Dear [Name]:

This is a follow-up letter to my request to participate in a research study regarding strategies leaders use to retain high talent employees. You did express interest in participating, therefore, I would like to seek this opportunity to schedule an interview with you and request a time and place for the interview. The interviews could be conducted at a date and time at your convenience. This will be a 35-45 minutes interview. Please note that the interviews will be recorded, and you will be provided a 1-2 page summary of the results and findings. As per Walden University's guidelines, all interviewees preserve the right to withdraw from this study at any time. Once you review your schedule and determine your availability to schedule the interview, please contact me via email: felicia.washington3@waldenu.edu.

Thank you.

Felicia Tetee Washington

Walden University DBA Student

Appendix F: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about "Employee Retention Strategies Within Information Technology Small Businesses." The researcher is inviting IT leaders in Monrovia, Liberia, who have demonstrated effective strategies for employee retention; and who have been in leadership positions for at least 2-3 years of successful experience in demonstrating effective strategies for employee retention. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Felicia Tetee Washington, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore strategies IT small business leaders use to retain high talent employees.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a semistructured phone interview, which will be between 35 and 45 minutes in length.
- Participate in a follow-up interview to review transcript, confirm my interpretation of your response, and provide any correction. This will be between 20-30 minutes.
- Provide organizations' personnel records, reports, and internal records relating to employee retention strategies.

Here are some sample questions to give you a reasonable idea of what to expect:

- What retention strategies have you used to retain your high talent employees?
- What steps did you employ to design retention strategies for your employees?
- What strategies have you found to be least effective in retaining your high talent employees?

Each of these interviews will be audio recorded solely for research purposes.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. No one at your organization will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw from this study at any time. If an interview has already taken place and you wish to withdraw your data, this is possible up until the research study is submitted to my university for final review. After that I will be unable to withdraw any data. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. Participants have the right to decline or discontinue participation at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue, stress or becoming upset. There will be no direct benefit to you, and you will not be provided any monetary incentive to take part in this research study. Also, you might already know me as a Vice President for Finance, but I have no conflict of interests as this research is strictly for academic purposes and I am not compensated by any organization or stakeholder. A reduction in IT employees' turnover can improve the employee work experience and retain talent by building a positive work environment. Implementing retention strategies may result in reducing unemployment rates, stabilizing communities, enhancing the human and social conditions outside the workplace, as well as contributing to economic stability by creating job security, more personal income and more expenditure on goods and services, which would increase communities' tax revenues.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secured. All names will be confidential and coded for extra protection. Also, all information will be de-identified, so that it cannot be connected back to you. Each of these interviews will be tape recorded solely for research purposes. Data will be stored electronically in the study database on a password-protected encrypted drive and cloud location. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via 231770292759, 231886535198. Email: Felicia.washington3@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 001612-312-1210. Please print or save a copy of this consent form for your records. The approval number for this study is 08-13-20-0676296 and it expires on August 12th, 2021.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by responding to this email with the words "I consent."

Appendix G: Request to Obtain Employees' Names and Email Addresses

[Date]

Re: Request to Obtain Employees' Names and Email Addresses

Dear [Name]:

This is a follow-up letter to our telephone conversation pertaining to employees' participating in a research study regarding strategies leaders use to retain high talent employees. Your employees did express interest in participating, therefore, I would like to seek this opportunity to obtain the employees' names and email addresses for those who meet the selection criteria. Please see attached a copy of the signed letter of consent, which detailed the criteria for participants' selection. As mentioned, this will be a 60-minute interview, which will be recorded. You will be provided a 1-2 page summary of the results and findings. As per Walden University's guidelines, all interviewees preserve the right to withdraw from this study at any time.

Thank you.

Felicia Tetee Washington

Walden University DBA Student