2021

Leadership Strategies And Retention In Government Agencies

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MA, Webster University, 2017

BA, Norfolk State University, 2010

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Low retention creates a loss of talent, and an unstable workforce harms employee performance and productivity, significantly decreasing internal proficiency. Grounded in the transformational leadership theory, the purpose of this single case study was to explore strategies government leaders use to enhance employee retention. The participants consisted of four supervisory government employees in a single agency in Washington D.C. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and follow-up member checking, direct observations, and a review of organizational documents. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis; four themes emerged: idiosyncratic employee engagement, specific relational transmissions, promotion of diversity, and stimulating psychological incentives. A recommendation for supervisory government leaders is to create a sense of collectiveness to motivate and influence subordinate behaviors. Implications for positive social change include the potential for supervisory government leaders to enhance low retention rates, decrease organizational costs associated with recruitment and hiring, enhance job sustainment, and improve surrounding communities' social conditions.

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Dedication

I dedicate this body of work to my two children, Onye’ and Keifer Jr. You two have always been my motivation. I am thankful for your continued patience, understanding, support, and, most of all, unconditional love. Thank you for inspiring me.

Acknowledgments

I thank God for giving me the courage and strength to complete this journey.

This body of work would not be possible without the dedicated guidance and support from my Chairs, Dr. Gene Fusch and Dr. Jean Perlman. I am forever grateful for your mentorship and guidance. To my other committee members, Dr. Susan Fan, Dr. Janet Booker, and my University Research Reviewer, Dr. Patsy Kasen, thank you!

To MG(R) Barrye L. Price, Sir, thank you for believing in me and for providing consistent mentorship throughout this journey. I appreciate you.

To Dr. Robert L. Steinrauf, Sir, you are a true leader and someone I will always admire. Thank you for your guidance and support throughout this journey.

To LTG Leslie C. Smith, Sir, I appreciate your assistance during a tough time in this journey. I am forever grateful.

To Ms. Daisy Hernandez-Lausell, I truly appreciate your assistance and kindness during the most stressful moments of completing this journey. Thank you.

To Blake D. Green, Tanisha L. Smith, Amber S. Jackson-Allen, Ashley B. Wilson, Sean Underdue, Raphael E. ChicoLugo, Hensuli Kennedy, Dr. Derrick Blythe, Dr. Dalinda Milne, and Dr. Roderick French, thank you all for the support and guidance. I appreciate you all and am forever grateful for your unconditional love and friendship.

To Poppa Wilson, Sir, you have been a dedicated sounding board throughout this journey and in life events. I cannot thank you enough for being who you are.

Lastly, I must acknowledge my Father for his continued support and for always motivating me to never give up. I love you dearly.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Retention is a vital factor that leadership in organizations should properly manage. Although turnover is expected, the issue is of higher concern in public sector organizations because of extensive hiring requirements, specific knowledge, proficiencies, and capabilities (Wadsworth et al., 2018). My qualitative single case study included government leaders from one organization who implemented successful retention strategies that decreased employee retention.

Background of the Problem

Employee turnover among U.S. federal employees has been an ongoing concern (Moon, 2017a). Employees who intend to depart an organization add to the creation of an unstable workforce. In 2019, 3.5 million people quit their job (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). When an organization fails to retain employees, there is not only a loss of talent but also an increase in associated recruitment and training costs. Retention is of great importance to supervisors because high turnover affects employee performance and productivity. Employees are less proficient during high turnover, and organizational costs increase (Shepherd, 2017). Managers may use organizational performance to predict competitive advantage and employee retention (Yamin, 2020). Retaining employees assists with improving organizational results when conducting business (Covella et al., 2017) and therefore continues to be an applied business problem.

Problem Statement

High turnover rates increase expenditures for employers and significantly reduce employee efficiency (Shepherd, 2017). There was an average turnover rate of 14.7% in

2018 within the federal government, which was the highest between 2014 and 2018 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). The general business problem was that dissatisfied employees may increase organizational turnover rates by terminating employment. The specific business problem was that some government leaders lack strategies to enhance employee retention.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. The targeted population was government leaders within a government agency in Washington, D. C. who have implemented successful strategies to enhance retention. Government leaders who read the study findings might contribute to social change by implementing strategies to retain government workers, which may benefit citizens through improving government services.

Nature of the Study

The three research methods are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. Quantitative researchers use close ended questions and focus on testing hypotheses about variables' characteristics or relationships (Apuke, 2017), which was not the optimal choice for my study. Researchers use the qualitative method to seek in-depth understanding of social phenomenon through detailed observational evidence and open-ended questions (Yin, 2018). In addition to using detailed observational evidence, I asked open-ended questions to identify and explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention, making qualitative methodology the appropriate choice for my study.

Researchers use the mixed method to collect and analyze data from quantitative and qualitative research (Yin, 2018). The mixed methods approach was inappropriate because I did not use or integrate portions of quantitative methodology. Therefore, I selected a qualitative methodology to identify and explore strategies government leaders use to enhance retention.

I considered four research designs for the study: focus group, narrative, ethnography, and case study. Focus group design requires interviewees to share personal perceptions in small groups (Yin, 2018). Although focus groups can allow an understanding of interviewees personal account of events, confidentiality is not promised and may impact the responses to focus group questions. Therefore, focus groups were not the optimal choice for my study. Narrative research design allows the participants to incorporate personal accounts through storytelling (McAlpine, 2016). I opted against narrative research design because descriptive storytelling may not provide accurate accounts about strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. Ethnography is an in-depth study of daily participant behaviors and cultural interactions among people (Fusch et al., 2017). Although ethnography can interpret participant behaviors in cultural interactions, I did not study sharing among a particular culture group, so ethnography was not the optimal choice for my study. Case study researchers explore a contemporary phenomenon through empirical methods for a defined population within the unit of analysis for bounded studies (Yin, 2018). I selected case study design to explore the strategies that government leaders use to enhance retention within the scope of the population in the selected government agency.

Research Question

What strategies do government leaders use to enhance employee retention?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you have in place to enhance employee retention?

2. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of strategies you use to enhance employee retention?

3. What method did you find to work best to increase employee retention?

4. What were the principal barriers to implementing your strategies for increasing employee retention?

5. How did you address the principal barriers to increase employee retention?

6. How did your employees respond to your techniques?

7. What additional information would you add regarding strategies used to enhance employee retention?

Conceptual Framework

Transformational leadership theory was the conceptual framework for the study. Burns, a political sociologist, created the transformational leadership theory in 1978. Burns (1978) concluded that leaders who exhibit these traits are more concerned with end values, including liberty, impartiality, and parity. According to Burns, the key concepts of transformational leadership theory are (a) intellectual incentive, including a critical concern for values and practical necessities; (b) idealized encouragement, including moral power through disciplined vision; (c) inspirational motivation, including increased morality and ethical aspirations; and (d) individualized consideration, including an uncompromising commitment to individual liberty. Burns concluded that linking the roles of leadership and employees ensures an increase in motivation and performance, which are key propositions. Burns argued that if leaders exhibit a transformational leadership style, employees may perform with increased productivity and support the greater good of the organizational mission.

This study directly relates to leadership fields, job satisfaction, and retention. A transformational leader may increase employee well-being while decreasing burnout (Burns, 2003). As applied to the study, the transformational leadership theory aligned with this study's findings from exploring the strategies that government leaders use to enhance retention.

Operational Definitions

To ensure comprehension of content within the study among readers, clarification of reoccurring terms is below:

Retention: Refers to retaining key employees with adequate performance and institutional knowledge within an organization. (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2014).

Turnover: Refers to the voluntary or involuntary separation of a member from an organization (Holtom, 2006).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Theoretical traditions and assumptions are philosophies in which an exploration project is grounded (Roulston, 2012). I assumed certain assumptions to assist in reaching data saturation. The assumptions within this study were as follows: (a) The participants would voluntarily partake in the interview process; (b) all responses to questions would support the study; (c) the participants would answer each question unbiasedly, truthful, and promptly; and (d) all semistructured interview questions would allow me to gather detailed data.

Limitations

All complications within a study that may cause any hinderances or potential weaknesses are limitations (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The study was limited to the parameters of qualitative research. Another limitation was the population and location, as the findings may only be applicable for the select group and location. There was also a potential limitation of bias responses from participants. Past participant experiences may alter replies, creating biased remarks during the interview process. Additionally, my presence during interviews may have had an impact on participant responses. The promise of confidentiality may have mitigated participant limitations.

Delimitations

Walker and Solvason (2014) indicated that boundaries with the potential to possess limits within a study refer to a delimitation. There are two delimitations in my study. The first was that participants were supervisory government employees with successful retention rates. The second delimitation was that all participants were from a single organization in Washington, D.C.

Significance of the Study

The study's findings are significant because of the potential to provide government agency leaders strategies that may engage employees for improving retention rates. Identifying effective strategies may create a substantial relevance for retention to increase organizational sustainment and improvement. There was an average turnover rate of 14.7% in 2018 within the federal government, which was the highest between 2016 and 2019 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). The study findings may provide government superiors a reference or guide for improving both the efficiency and retention of subordinate employees.

Contribution to Business Practice

Identification of effective retention strategies may add to what is known about the relationship of increased retention to organization sustainability. Job satisfaction, a retention factor, is impacted by organizational practices (Peterson, 2009). Government leaders who read the study findings may be able to better understand employee satisfaction, which can help them create successful strategies that may improve retention.

Implications for Social Change

The study findings may illuminate professional development strategies that government agency leadership might use to enhance leadership skills. Government agency leaders who read the study findings may catalyze social change within the organization by decreasing retention concerns, which may reduce unemployment. Reducing unemployment may also improve human and social conditions within the local community by assisting with job sustainment. The study findings may help government agency leaders with a practical guide to enhance retention concerns, thereby improving social conditions within the organization and local communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. The conceptual framework for this retention study was the transformational leadership theory, coined by Burns in 1978. The literature content provides a comprehensive and critical analysis of the literature review concerning the transformational leadership theory. In this theory, superiors who display the transformational leadership style seek to motivate subordinates by addressing their needs, while serving as an independent force to alter the internal motive base (Burns, 1978). A transformational leader produces more positive organizational results, including a decrease in poor retention rates, because of the specific emphasis on addressing subordinate needs (Northouse, 2016). When a leader adopts the transformational leadership style, subordinates generate an increased level of commitment to the organization (Oberfield, 2014). Additionally, inspirational leadership and motivation, prevalent traits in the transformational leadership theory, incite subordinates to have increased performance, higher job satisfaction, and a decrease in voluntary turnover intentions (Yamin, 2020).

For a thorough and critical analysis of the overall study and formulation of the problem statement, I used peer-reviewed journals, including Business Source Complete and ABI/INFORM from the Walden University library. The main keywords included *the transformational leadership theory, motivational theories, government employee,* and *retention.* Additional keywords were *employee motivation, job satisfaction, employee engagement, organizational change,* and *organizational performance*.

For the literature review subsection, I explored retention strategies and factors from a leader's perspective. The majority of the literature review subsection consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles published within 5 years of the original publication date. The remaining sources were within 10 years of their publication date, with the exception of the originator of the transformational leadership theory, including those that contributed to the expansion of the theory. There was a total of 93 sources, of which 97% were peer-reviewed.

My literature review subsection commences with a thorough synthesis of the transformational leadership theory. I follow the transformational leadership theory with an introduction to related conceptual frameworks, including Gilbert's behavioral engineering model, Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation, and Hertzberg's 1959 two-factor theory. Following the critical analysis of the related theories, I synthesize peer-reviewed sources related to organizational performance, organizational change, and job satisfaction. Additionally, I conclude the subsection with opposing views of the conceptual framework, including seminal sources in support of the theory.

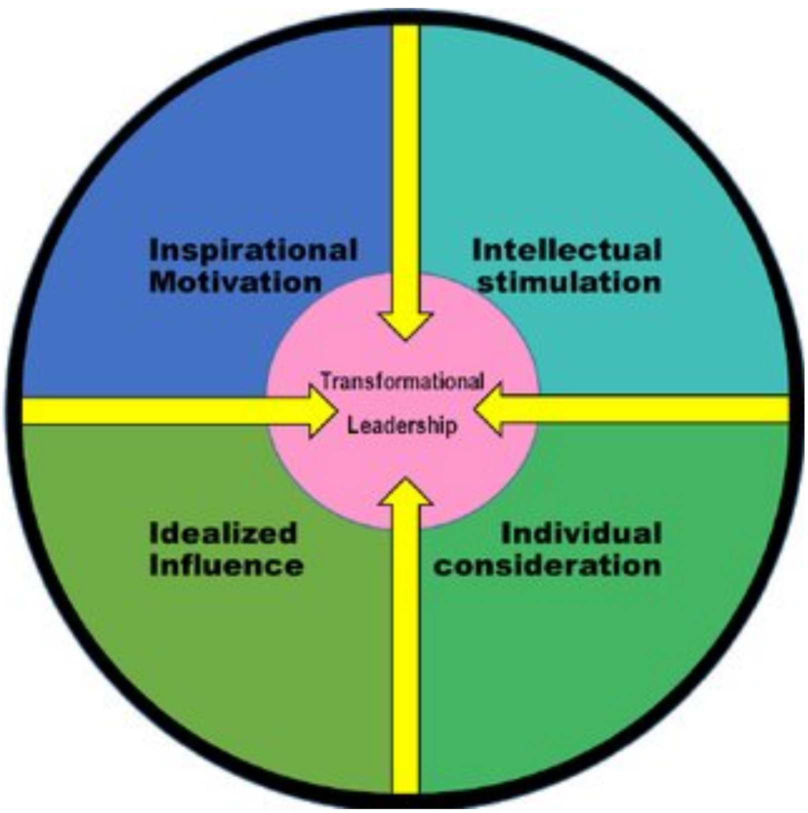
Transformational Leadership

I chose the Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework to address retention concerns through prioritizing subordinate needs. Although there is an inherit power structure given to those in leadership positions, status does not provide security in organizational retention. Increased organizational success depends on leadership styles and is a key factor in retention (Yukl, 2010). Employees activate individualistic higher-order desires to transcend self-interest for goal achievement based on transformational leadership traits (Wright et al., 2012). The satisfaction of subordinates' needs, including increased competence and commitment, arbitrates retention based on transformational leadership (Kovjanic et al., 2012). Typically, leaders are not trained in transformational leadership and organizational development skills (Warrick, 2018), so they may respond to adversities with traditional and ineffective methods of management. Traditional management techniques usually focus on organizational mission requirements and goals, while disregarding or diminishing subordinate needs. In turn, there may be a decline in employee engagement, while increasing poor retention rates.

Organizations should consist of top talented leaders (Warrick, 2018). However, leaders may lack proper knowledge and skills to manage subordinates while advancing operations, addressing employee concerns, and correcting retention standards (Warrick, 2018). The attributes of the transformational leadership theory include (a) intellectual stimulation, (b) idealized influence, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) individualized consideration, all necessary qualities that aim to engage subordinates to increase morality and their overall motivation levels (Burns, 1978; Bass & Avolio, 1994). The attributes of the theory, depicted in Figure 1, highlight that although each element is interdependent, it is necessary to synchronize the overall positive behavioral effects of the leader for transforming outcomes towards organizational achievement. A transformational leader can effectively manage organizational performance and subordinate expectations through simple interactions and understandings (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Figure 1.

The Transformational Leadership Model



Note. Adapted from "Transformational Leadership," by Renjith, Renu, & George, 2015, *International Journal of Scientific Research & Management Studies, 2*(2), p. 114.

Intellectual Stimulation

When a leader exhibits transformational leadership traits, innovation and creative measures may occur. Intellectual stimulation increases a subordinate's cognizance of complications while encouraging new perspectives and modernizations (Bass, 1985). The encouragement of creativity is apparent and vital to reframe previous complications (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders who possess a transformational leadership style stimulate creativity (Bass, 1985). Additionally, Northouse (2016) mentioned that when a leader demonstrates transformational leadership, subordinates are not publicly criticized or ridiculed for errors to ensure they examine critical assumptions appropriately. In turn, subordinates are mentally stimulated and encouraged to resolve organizational concerns. Organizational performance may increase during professional development when learning and psychological growth is supported, which is prevalent in intellectual stimulation from a transformational leader (Burns, 1978).

Individual Consideration

Trust is a mediating factor in individual consideration because leaders should broaden and elevate their subordinate's specific interest to enhance their commitment towards organizational goals (Asencio, 2016). Leaders should facilitate a learning environment by acknowledging areas of improvement in their subordinates, which is prevalent in a transformational leader. Foundational growth and knowledge may increase because of a higher level of potential (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The acceptance and acknowledgment of individual differences may moderate negative behavior towards the differences (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Superiors should perform multiple functions and provide guidance to subordinates toward meeting organizational goals (Youngwirth, 2013). A manager's influence may determine productivity and quality of work when the leader-follower relationship is valid, which is why individualized consideration is pertinent. Getting to know subordinate's strengths and weaknesses may guide the leader towards areas to focus. Individualized consideration is a factor that is most indicative of a robust transformational leader as concern for subordinate's welfare and empowerment is apparent through consistent communication, mentorship, and coaching (Bass, 1985; Northouse, 2016).

Idealized Influence

Leaders should portray reputable qualities that subordinates wish to emulate so that confidence and respect become apparent. Subordinate needs are a priority for a transformational leader to demonstrate personal values of ethical morality. Admiration is an essential quality in leadership as subordinates may respect the charisma in a leader's behavior (Northouse, 2016). A leader who displays a transformational leadership style leads by example and remains consistent in their ethics and values while earning the respect of their subordinates to influence them towards organizational goal achievement (Burns, 1978). A transformational leader believes in transparency and may highlight associated risks for consistency rather than arbitrary measures (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders who appeal to the emotions of their subordinates may create a concrete relationship based on moral comportment and integrity (Asencio, 2016). A superior who shows the transformational leadership style is one who is a role model for their subordinates and successfully gains the trust of their subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Inspirational Motivation

A transformational leader encourages achievement in organizational goals by being passionate and remaining optimistic, which stimulates motivation. The ability to motivate individuals is a pursuit that encourages human performance and is useful to influence behaviors (Susilo, 2018). The creation of a shared vision provides a sense of meaning that fosters commitment and the necessary motivation to insight teamwork towards organizational achievement (Burns, 1978). Displaying inspirational motivational traits increases the opportunity to enhance communication, inspires the current vision of the organization to demonstrate a commitment to goals, and creates a shared future vision (Bass, 1985). Enhancing the overall concept of spirit throughout the entire team also increases the subordinate's passion and optimism (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders are change agents who motivate subordinates. This motivation encourages them to remain optimistic about the future by adding meaning and challenge to their work (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Northouse, 2016).

Employees who are not engaged or invested in their organizations may depart for other opportunities, which increases high turnover rates and expenditures for employers (Shepherd, 2017). Organizational leaders who employ individuals with higher commitment levels tend to have fewer retention concerns (Dixon et al., 2013). An employee may become disengaged for different reasons; however, effective leadership strategies may deter turnover decisions. Warrick (2018) estimated that only 30% of organizations have healthy work environments. Transformational leaders create an innovative climate that enhances creative behaviors in subordinates (Sağnak et al., 2015). Leaders who employ the use of the transformational leadership theory may boost retention by creating inherent satisfaction for employees (Yamin, 2020). By focusing on subordinates' psychological needs as a mediating method, superiors who adopt transformational leadership place more focus on integrative efforts toward retention concerns.

Consistent retirements and poor retention rates contribute to the loss of qualified personnel. Effectively retaining employees, including properly addressing reasons behind poor retention rates, is of vital concern and importance to senior leaders (Moon, 2017b). Subordinates may create their own collective perceptions and narratives of the organizational climate, organizational performance, and the reasons for poor retention rates (Moon, 2017b). Superiors can demonstrate leadership effectiveness by actively supporting their subordinates by remaining accountable for internal processes (Tummers & Knies, 2016). Additionally, a transformational leader indicates support for their subordinates through effective interactions, ethical implementations of the creation of internal processes toward the reduction of poor retention rates, and demonstration of loyalty and commitment (Tummers & Knies, 2016). Superiors should tailor recruitment and retention strategies toward improving the organization, enhancing retention rates, and decreasing potentially negative attitudes, behaviors, and performance (Piatak, 2017). Creating a multi-functional team is vital for organizations to ensure effective completion of all required tasks (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Additionally, superiors should ensure appropriate internal training and development programs to increase morale while reducing poor retention rates (Caillier, 2016). In turn, recruitment costs and adverse retention rates may lower, which is a significant benefit to the organization (Caillier, 2016). Transformational leaders enhance good management skills while building quality relationships with subordinates (Northouse, 2016). A transformational leader also has the ability to influence retention rates and enhance team activities, effectively shifting internal personnel concerns within the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The center of organizational processes revolves around a transformational leader who has a high positive impact on achieving goals and reducing retention (Oberfield, 2014). Leadership holds a vital role in influencing employee’s future career decisions, which is why there should be a high emphasis placed on skilled human capital (Covella et al., 2017). A transformational leader has a strong positive influence over followers that indicates high value to the organization (Oberfield, 2014). In turn, subordinates feel inspired and dedicated to the organization (Oberfield, 2014). A transformational leader also has positive effects on subordinates’ actions and the overall functions within organizations (Oberfield, 2014). Park and Rainey (2008) found that transformational leadership has healthy positive outcomes towards job satisfaction and negative relations to turnover intentions in a study that consisted of over 6,900 participants. Likewise, Shabane et al. (2017) argued that although their 108 participants were generally unsatisfied with the duties of government employment, their superiors that demonstrated transformational leadership was a mediating role in their intentions to stay. Yamin (2020) posited that transformational leadership moderate employee motivation, with negative relations to retention concerns, in a study that consisted of 340 participants. Lastly, Tian et al. (2020) highlighted that a transformational leader plays a significant mediating role in organizational behaviors, organizational communication, and retention through empirical evidence that consisted of 505 participants. Tian et al. (2020) also noted that effective communication was a significant factor in addressing and decreasing retention concerns.

The transformational leadership theory is coterminous with addressing organizational concerns (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978). One who demonstrates transformational leadership has the ability to influence organizational change by articulating clear and concise visions and goals, and by empowering subordinates through motivational techniques (Northouse, 2016). Since a transformational leader is a change agent, there is an increased opportunity to gain the trust of their followers for the betterment of the organization (Northouse, 2016). When a leader adopts the transformational leadership style, they place high importance on satisfying vital needs of their followers such as fairness, stability, and self-actualization (Oberfield, 2014). A transformational leader associates their relation to power as an opportunity to address and correct subordinate needs, including assisting with organizational goal achievement (Bass, 1990).

Burns (2003) mentioned that the anatomy of motivation involves transforming change to better an individual situation. Previous success has the power to strengthen motivation. The primacy of motivation revolves around spiraling motives that creates integrated structures, sparking intricate creativity (Burns, 2003). Goal directed behavior instigates a self-relevant cognitive view of motivation (Cantor, 1987). There is great flexibility of individuals when there is a desire to adapt to organizational change (Cantor & Harlow, 1994). Flexibility highlights the importance of individual consideration in the transformational leadership theory. When a transformational leader increases subordinate's motivation, there is a heightened opportunity to produce significant and positive change, while decreasing organizational concerns (Burns, 2003). By motivating subordinates, one may possess such an enthusiasm that they complete more tasks than their original intentions, achieving higher performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Probing deeper into the motivational factors of the transformational leadership theory are two dynamics of motivation. Burns (2003) established such factors as a vertical dimension, which is the direction of an individual's motivation with a much higher level of ambition and hope. Additionally, Burns (2003) designated the second factor as a horizontal dimension, which is the process of an individual applying innovative measures to amalgamate structures of collective motivation. It is important to note that motivation sparks and empowers creativity (Burns, 2003). Creativity is pertinent in intellectual stimulation, a prevalent trait in the transformational leadership theory. Wright et al. (2012) posited that the transformational leadership theory's foundational traits associate with increased motivation and the overall clarification and necessary modifications of organizational goals.

Related Conceptual Frameworks

There continues to be extensive scholarly research devoted to the transformational leadership theory, over other aligning key theories, because of the proven factors of holistic organizational success (Yukl, 2010). Motivation is related to retention and is an integral factor in job satisfaction (Northouse, 2016). The value of motivation remains high because of humanistic factors. Individual choices are influenced by perceived biases, heuristics, and false representation of alternative measures (Vroom, 1964). The transformational leadership theory produces the most utilized foundational guidance for effective retention strategies (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Northouse, 2016). However, retention strategies and motivation can successfully align with a multitude of other theories. I have summarized similar theories that align with increasing motivation to assist with reducing retention. Similar to the motivating factors of the transformational leadership theory, the Gilbert's behavioral engineering model (BEM), Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation, and the Hertzberg 1959 two-factor theory hold similar considerations about motivational factors.

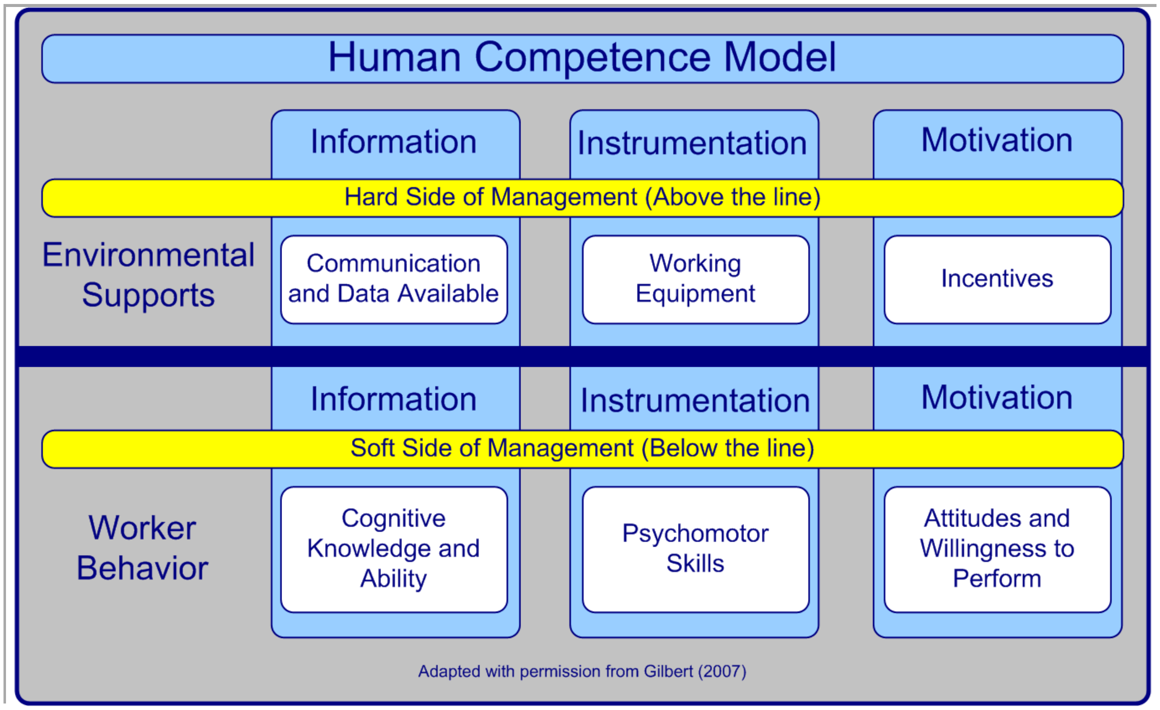
Gilbert's Behavioral Engineering Model (BEM)

The focus of BEM is on improving motivation through an emotional connection enhanced by cognitive focus. Gilbert (1978) emphasized the significance of BEM and indicated how influences affect an individual. Additionally, Gilbert further demonstrated a delineation between each variable of BEM. Gilbert stated the first delineation included environmental support, which consists of data, resources, and incentives. Gilbert also mentioned that individual behaviors, which consists of knowledge, capacity, and motives is a second delineation of each variable. BEM is used to measure the overall competence of performance by identifying potential influences that may hinder an employee's behavior (Marker, 2007). The original BEM variables that affect environments and behaviors are: (a) data, which focuses on detailed expectations and concise feedback; (b) resources that include instruments and other provisions that match humanistic factors; (c) incentives that support consequential career improvement and growth opportunities, with an overall commitment to provide motivation; (d) knowledge focuses on required skills for exemplary performance; (e) capacity refers to the physical shaping of the individual to ensure proper adaptation to the organizational environment; and (f) motives, which include preferences that promote receptivity and accurately assess individual intentions (Gilbert, 1978; Ross & Stefaniak, 2018).

BEM is a valuable tool for identifying obstacles that may hinder individual and organizational performance in a methodical manner. Chevalier (2003) mentioned that an updated BEM is necessary to clearly define root causes of performance gaps. Chevalier also mentioned the importance of properly distinguishing between human repertoire performance and organizational performance. An updated version of BEM is illustrated below in Figure 2. Fusch and Gillespie’s (2012) updated BEM indicated that environmental concerns and employee behavior are the main triggers of human performance. Environmental support and work behaviors affect the overall information, instrumentation, and motivational elements of the hard and soft margins of management (Fusch & Gillespie, 2012). Additionally, Fusch and Gillespie clarified that the environmental support element is the hard side of management, focusing on organizational approaches, while the soft side of management addresses employee behavior, focusing on employee-related strategies.

Figure 2

The Updated Version of the BEM



Note. Reprinted with authorization from "A practical approach to performance interventions and analysis: 50 models for building a high-performance culture," by Fusch & Gillespie, 2012, Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, p. 2.

Although BEM remains to be a fundamental component of performance improvement, there are apparent criticisms, including a lack of performance aide to provide guidance. For instance, Krapfl (1982) mentioned that BEM seemingly directs and controls employee behaviors when failing to identify barriers. Krapfl also mentioned that there may be issues with procedural measurability.

Vroom Expectancy Theory of Motivation

Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation highlights the nexus between performance and motivation, including factors that may influence job satisfaction. Vroom (1964) indicated that motivation is a method to manage employee decisions, and views cognitive processes that may have adverse or positive effects. Since motivation is seemingly a driving force behind humanistic factors, managing motivation through innovative measures is essential for increased organizational performance (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). Although motivation drives behaviors, the additional factors of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence are critical influences that focus on cognitive antecedents: (a) the expectancy factor relates to employee anticipation of specific performance, based on their individual efforts, that may lead to obtaining a specific goal, and is relatively subjective; (b) the instrumentality factor relates to reward anticipation based on an employee's performance outcome, which is the probability to obtaining specific outcomes; and (c) the valence factor relates to overall preference of the received outcomes, including the anticipation of such outcomes (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018).

Criticism of Vroom's (1964) theory included the ability to accurately measure behaviors and is rather simplistic in nature. Limitations such as a lack of measurability fails to accurately describe the overall complexities of employee motivation (Graen, 1969). Additionally, there also appears to be a lack of definitive associations when predicting long-term patterns of consistent behaviors (Lawler & Suttle, 1973). Scholars consider the theory to be rational because of the insinuation that an employee's behavior is only tied to their self-interest (Behling et al., 1975).

Hertzberg 1959 Two-Factor Theory

In 1959 Frederick Herzberg developed the two-factor theory to highlight the nexus between motivation and an employee's attitude, which may determine their level of job satisfaction. Hertzberg stated that the foundation of the two-factor theory is a focus on motivational-hygiene factors that creates a fundamental difference between an individual's affective state toward job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Hertzberg et al., 1959). Job satisfaction is a factor related to motivators, while dissatisfaction is a hygiene factor (Hur, 2017). The hygiene factors are the foundation to the motivational factors of procuring rewards, and directly related is the hygiene-motivator that ties the overall concept of necessity to rewards (Hansen et al., 2002). Human beings want to be needed and that need ties to their internal motivation (Hertzberg, 1983). Hertzberg creatively linked the two-factor theory to extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors toward enhancing positive job satisfaction (Lukwago et al., 2014). Motivational and hygiene factors dictate the levels of employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their employment (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Additionally, development and self-actualization moderate the avoidance of unpleasantries (Alshmemri et al., 2017). An absence of motivating factors does not automatically equate to an increased level of job dissatisfaction (Saad & Hasanein, 2018). The purpose of hygiene factors is to prevent or remove negative attitudes (Hyun & Oh, 2011), while motivational factors ties rewards to recognition (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Superiors should understand the links of motivating factors and employee motivation (Herzberg, 1983).

Contradictory to the positive qualities of Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory are criticisms. Hyun and Oh (2011) suggested an emphasis on comparative prominence during a reevaluation of both factors, because the suggestion that all motivating factors associate with job satisfaction maintains a pertinent position over hygiene factors. Similarly, Tang (1992) highlighted that money is a hygiene factor and the notion that hygiene factors cannot motivate employees is a poor fundamental argument. The seemingly lack of concise and cohesive empirical support may create a conceptual weakness in the validity of the foundation of the theory.

Organizational Performance

There is a long-term connection between transformational leadership and organizational performance (Yammarino et al., 1993). A transformational leader significantly affects organizational performance by demonstrating loyalty and commitment to subordinates and the organization and remaining accountable for their actions (Tummers & Knies, 2016). Leaders can predict organizational performance while having a substantial effect on organizational outcomes, employee performance, and employee potential (Bass, 1990). A superior who demonstrates a transformational leadership style enhances organizational performance by influencing internal processes and subordinate behaviors (Bass, 1990; Tian et al., 2020). Transformational leadership enhances a subordinates' self-perception, including the overall positive attitude toward their superiors (Kovjanic et al., 2012). Scholars use the transformational leadership theory to conceptualize leadership, to explore relationships among managers and their followers, and to influence subordinate and organizational performance (Northouse, 2016). Transformational leadership strategies can influence sustainability and enhance innovation by enforcing holistic and individualistic approaches (Shafique & Kalyar, 2018). As such, the promotion of innovation also enhances creative thinking which warrants new ideas and strategies towards the betterment and overall improvement of the organization's performance (Taneja et al., 2012). Meeting the essential psychological needs of subordinates', as prevalent in transformational leadership, is a mechanism for superiors to influence strong work ethic, enhancing organizational performance (Kovjanic et al., 2012). Transformational leaders empower and motivate their subordinates, which not only increases individual productivity and organizational performance, but greatly assists in reducing poor retention rates (Taneja et al., 2012). An effective leader is responsible for improving organizational performance by addressing and mitigating internal and external concerns, including safeguarding subordinate and organizational needs (Zeb et al., 2018). The organizational environment and overall performance may predict employee retention through motivation (Yamin, 2020). Motivation may influence retention while further improving organizational performance by enhancing the internal joy of duties for employees (Yamin, 2020). It is important to note that increased organizational performance requires a refocus of organizational leaders (Moldovan & Macarie, 2014), on their influence for creating internal changes. The influence of leadership is crucial when changing less than desirable organizational cultures and negative habits or practices. Since every organization has an internal culture, consistent positive interactions are vital to avoid employee negativity and group-think (Schultz, 2014). When assembling an effective team, avoiding group-think should be a goal to enhance team effectiveness (Ready, 2014). This is also necessary when refocusing the organization. Peng et al. (2020) concluded that transformational leadership enhances organizational modifications through positive commitment to change and cynicism, based on an empirical study with over 12,000 participants.

To successfully achieve organization goals, organization leaders need to foster trust, high morals, and leadership ability (Hoover & Pepper, 2014). Trust in leadership is crucial from subordinates, and also applies to leadership trusting subordinates while avoiding micromanaging them (Hoover & Pepper, 2014). High morals and values are additional concepts that have a strong presence in a transformational leader (Hoover & Pepper, 2014). Findings from a 2013 Harris Poll reflect an erosion of trust concerns in corporate leadership (Hoover & Pepper, 2014). Trust concerns may stem from a lack of appropriate leadership strategies for successful organizational performance. Higher levels of trust in superiors significantly reduces poor subordinate retention rates (Pitts et al., 2011). To build trust within organizations, leadership should inculcate ethical principles. Trust is necessary not only within the organization but may make the company look attractive by consumers. Avoidance of negative perceptions may occur through efforts to establish ethical principles.

Interest in ethical leadership has increased by academics and practitioners (Lawton & Paez, 2015). This has been partly motivated by unethical behaviors of top executives, highlighted by the media. There is a pivotal relationship between ethics and leadership which, constitutes early definitions of leadership (Lawton & Paez, 2015). Ethics in leadership creates a path for a moral organization (Lawton & Paez, 2015).

Ethics is rooted in a cognitive perspective that emphasizes the role of moral judgment (Albert et al., 2015). However, several frameworks for managerial integrities expands on culture, the mission, and leadership. There is also a nexus between how one performs, and what one does when facing adversities. Leadership style is compatible with a consequentialist approach because it is concerned with performance (Lawton & Paez, 2015). A leader who displays the transformational leadership style has an increased chance of enhancing individual and organizational performance based on the focus of addressing the subordinates' psychological and social needs while increasing individual trust, motivation, and morality.

Organizational Change

The ability to sustain employees' commitment to change increases when superiors exhibit transformational leadership (Shin et al., 2015). Understanding how generational norms and differences affect an organization's work dynamic is paramount for implementing internal discipline and organizational change. Creating a stable workforce may require superiors to examine the generational dynamics in efforts to influence employee retention (Dixon et al., 2013). Enhancing a stable workforce while increasing acceptance of organizational change requires the promotion of cross-generational pursuits (Dixon et al., 2013). To gain and increase valuable cultural experience (Chatman, 2014), it is essential to bring all employees together for a sense of shared purpose and transparency. There is an increase of commitment levels across generations and a positive influence on retention based on knowledge management and leadership abilities (Dixon et al., 2013; Yamin, 2020). Authentic transformational leaders influence the ethics of individual followers and groups (Northouse, 2016), so cultivating a culture of shared purpose is paramount for organizational success. Additionally, Wright et al. (2012) posited that a superior who displays transformational leadership has a greater chance to clarify organizational goals to assist with internal changes because of their ability to articulate attractive visions for subordinates to follow. Leaders who display the transformational leadership style enhance organizational culture by creating a learning environment that explicitly encourages equity while addressing change.

Employees may become hesitant to accept new processes and policies for organizational change, hindering internal and external success. Organizational change may induce controversy, creating resistance (Andersson, 2015). Individuals may anticipate frustrations towards proposed modifications, which increases resistance (Schultz, 2014). The increased pace of change requires continuous innovative interventions (Jones et al., 2016). Resistance to change is a passive routine towards an active process in organizations, but leaders play a pivotal role in inciting commitment and contributions from subordinates (Andersson, 2015). Schultz (2014), and Weston et al. (2017), argued that to manage change and mitigate hindrances effectively, a leader should possess innovative initiation with the intention of enhancing organizational change while addressing potential technical aspects and behavioral concerns. Effelsberg et al. (2014) mentioned that organizational success might depend on the willingness of followers within organizations to transcend their self-interest. Employees maintain a *mental model* of personal perceptions of themselves and their work ethic, which is why effective leadership is pertinent during organizational changes (Schultz, 2014). Leadership style is a vital lever to organizational success and enhances competitive power (Mastenbroek, 1996). A transformational leader fosters pro-organizational behavior that decreases individual self-interest of subordinates, while creating a learning organization (Effelsberg et al., 2014; Mastenbroek, 1996). Additionally, a transformational leader can improve organizational efficiency by consistently promoting innovation and change that contributes to the emergence of reorganizing efforts towards long-term strategic implementations and effective decisions (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Cultural values may affect voluntary turnover because of a link to internal culture and retention (Sheridan, 2017). Significant shifts in retention may alter the organizational culture because of the indication of a human capital desolation (Pitts et al., 2011). Minor turnover is healthy and may benefit organizational wellness and viability; however, the increased cost involved with turnover may disrupt performance while causing a shift in the organizational culture (Wynen & de Beeck, 2014). There are notable circumstances that may affect retention within organizations. Increased turnover intentions link to individual, organizational, and external factors (Wynen & de Beeck, 2014). However, a transformational leader combines effective leadership strategies with operative decision-making approaches to highlight quality improvement while enhancing organizational changes (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2016). Logical reasoning and effective leadership play a vital role in the positive changes within organizations.

Teamwork is a significant factor in organizational change. A transformational leader tends to deepen relationships with subordinates for greater depth to affect organizational change (Bass, 1985). Transforming an organization requires collective achievement through perceived trust in the leader (Burns, 2003). An employee should feel empowered through trust of their abilities, which increases through trust of their leader (Schultz, 2014). A transformational leader has the inherent ability to awaken hope in subordinates that empowers them to achieve organizational goals (Burns, 2003). A transformational leader can influence organizational change by aligning subordinate values to organizational values, communicating inspirational ideology, and empowerment (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Additionally, psychological empowerment mediates subordinate behavior towards organizational change (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

Creating and maintaining a culture of empowerment cultivates the ability to make necessary organizational changes, including positive changes within employees (Shultz, 2014). When a leader empowers a subordinate, the process of power-sharing positively enhances the organizational culture (Buble et al., 2014). Trust builds empowerment when a concise direction and clear purpose are evident (Bass, 1985; Schultz, 2014). Schultz (2014) mentioned an effective method to implementing organizational change is by: (a) creating awareness, (b) constructing a plan to alter current situations while crafting new goals, (c) make modifications for improvements, and (d) normalize and sustain new processes. Thusly a learning environment emerges, empowering subordinates to create new directions toward goal achievement. A transformational leader is the most effective leader to direct each organizational element towards goal achievement because of the high level of motivation (Buble et al., 2014; Burns, 1978). The powerful interactions of leadership and motivation create a mutual pack toward achieving organizational success (Buble et al., 2014; Northouse, 2016).

Job Satisfaction

Transformational leadership assists in creating cohesiveness that further enhances job satisfaction (Northouse, 2016). Job satisfaction, including retention, are guided by management who adopts transformational leadership styles (Shafique & Kalyar, 2018). There is a lack of association between job satisfaction and poor retention rates when important factors such as goal clarification and concise performance management practices are evident (Wang & Brower, 2018). Individualized consideration, which is only prevalent in a transformational leader, holds a considerably greater positive impact on job satisfaction (Asencio, 2016). Interactional perspectives may assist in creating an understanding of job satisfaction while also positively enhancing employee perspectives (Wang & Brower, 2018). Transformational leaders possess a multilevel nature of leadership abilities, enhances job satisfaction, and the concept of teamwork by focusing on each subordinate requirement and the overall desired outcomes (Braun et al., 2012). By ensuring a professional atmosphere enhanced by mutual respect, satisfaction, and collaboration, a transformational leader may successfully increase the overall job satisfaction of their subordinates (Abelha et al., 2018). There is an apparent link between one who demonstrates a transformational leadership style and subordinate followership because leadership style influences motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Buble et al., 2014). Followership possess a dynamic role in contributing to internal operations and the overall effectiveness of the organization (Jin et al., 2016). Good leadership enhances good followership and links to job satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 2003; Northouse, 2016). Additionally, followership is a pertinent indication of greater job satisfaction when the superior adopts the transformational leadership style (Jin et al., 2016). There is substantial empirical research that confirms employee job satisfaction increases when psychological growth is apparent, as prevalent in intellectual stimulation when superiors earn the trust of their subordinates (Burns, 1978; Cho & Park, 2011). Based on a study with 360 participants, Braun et al. (2012) found there is a positive impact on individual and team perceptions, including job satisfaction and enhanced team performance, when the superior demonstrates a transformational leadership style. A study using cross-sectional data from a U.S. Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, conducted by Jin et al. (2016) confirmed that when perceived supervisor support is apparent, higher job satisfaction is evident. Likewise, a similar study also employing the use of a U.S. Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey conducted by Asencio (2016) revealed that a high level of trust in superiors increases a higher level of job satisfaction in subordinates. Asencio also found that those subordinates who reported higher levels of job satisfaction mentioned that their superior: (a) displayed high ethical behaviors, (b) inspired them to accept and adhere to the organizational vision, (c) encouraged innovation to resolve new and previous concerns, and (d) stimulated creativity. Each of the elements is prevalent in transformational leadership traits. Lastly, a study that consisted of 166 diverse participants from varying organizations conducted by Abelha et al. (2018) discovered that transformational leaders moderate job satisfaction, affective states, and behavioral attitudes within the work environment.

Subordinates emotionally portray their superior’s behavior; however, such outcome is only prevalent for subordinates who believe their leaders place a high emphasis on their individual needs (Linden et al. 2014). Leadership style has a sizeable influence on the overall attachment to a leader. Superiors should form a bond with their subordinates for the continued success of the organization. There is an attachment process involved in the leader-follower relationship, in which the follower should trust the leader to lead effectively (Molero et al., 2013). Additionally, increased trust plays a substantial role in job satisfaction (Asencio, 2016). A lack of trust is not conducive of a transformational leader, or any of the applicable traits. Molero et al. (2013) demonstrated that transformational leadership is negatively associated with subordinate's insecurities including apprehensions and avoidant behaviors in a study consisting of 225 participants. Additionally, Molero et al. (2013) indicated an increased perceived leader effectiveness from subordinates who have superiors that adopt the transformational leadership style.

Job satisfaction factors, demographic factors, and organizational factors are the main determinants of subordinates anticipating voluntary termination of employment (Pitts et al., 2011). The creation of organizational culture occurs through varying individual and collective behaviors, influences, morals, and principles (Schultz, 2014). However, work-related attitudes and approaches may differ based on generational differences. The workforce may consistently change with the internal culture conforming to the current generational groups (Piatak, 2017). An organization may consist of a generationally diverse group, with varying cultures, and common life experiences (Dixon et al., 2013). Varying cultures and generational diversity may provide organizations with an increased competitive advantage while decreasing barriers to success (Wilson, 2014). It is vital to understand such diversity in organizations to properly prepare for and address potential internal challenges (Taneja et al., 2012). Generational differences and subsequent transformations may cause changes in organizations, further shaping internal culture (Ertas, 2015). The era in which one is born may contribute to their individualistic worldviews, internal values, and overall work ethic (Ertas, 2015). There are substantive generational differences in a concise form of descriptive characteristics that accurately defines each generation (Costanza et al., 2012). Although Howe and Strauss (1993) popularized the sociological theory concerning generations, Mannheim (1952) developed the theory highlighting the variations within each group. There are several definitions to describe each group. Mannheim's definition indicates generations as societal formations based on age and historical, social events. Between the years of 2010 and 2020 U. S. workforce may expect an increase of 75% millennial generational diversity (Ertas, 2015). The four types of generations applicable to my study are: (a) individuals born after 1920 and before the mid-1940s are members of the silent or traditional generation, categorized as the conservative and rather disciplined group; (b) those born after the mid-1940s and before the mid 1960s are baby boomers, often called time-stressed and moderately avaricious; (c) generation Xers are born after the mid-1960s and before 1980, commonly referred to as individualistic skeptics; and (d) millennials are born between 1980 and the mid-1990s may be aware of societal shortfalls with increased social consciousness yet possess egotistical and disparaging traits (Strass & Howe, 1991; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Twenge et al., 2008).

Generational differences may vary among organizations and is vital for diversified innovations in strategy developments, while maintaining an overall competitive attractiveness (Taneja et al., 2012). The varying differences may shift rational approaches and moral judgments affecting the organizational culture, which highlights the importance of an interpersonal approach (Albert et al., 2015). Failing to balance diversity may contribute to misalignment within organizations (Ready, 2014). Generational differences may affect internal organizational factors such as retention and recruitment (Wilson, 2014). Additionally, cultural values may differ among varying groups affecting retention (Tian et l., 2020). Since retention concerns vary across each generational group, the factor remains to be of critical concern that may be of importance to supervisors (Ertas, 2015). The younger generation only account for 17.6% of the federal workforce, while 33.9% of employees are over the age of 50 (Wang & Brower, 2018). Job satisfaction may differ by individual commitments; however, a study conducted by Molero et al. (2013) did not indicate meaningful differences between generational membership. In fact, the study conducted by Molero et al. (2013) strongly suggested that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and a decreased intent to turnover is because a leader exhibits transformational leadership traits. Individuals utilizing such trait may have the increased ability to enhance organizational commitment through leader effectiveness (Molero et al., 2013), reduced poor retention rates, and increased individual job satisfaction among subordinates (Costanza et al., 2012). Molero et al. (2013) also mentioned that older generations are less likely to voluntarily terminate employment, which is not as prevalent in the younger generation. Ertas' (2015) study also confirmed that the younger generation has an increased likelihood of voluntary turnover. One of the main reasons the younger group is more likely to terminate employment is because of poor supervisory relationships (Ertas, 2015). Such facts are not a hindrance to one who displays a transformational leadership style because of the influence of individualized consideration. Additionally, a transformational leader is one who prioritizes the importance of how leadership can successfully motivate and inspire people throughout the organization, including how attitudes and behaviors impact performance and job satisfaction (Ali-Mohammad & Mohammad, 2006).

Human resources practices are important factors for job satisfaction because of knowledge management and sharing. Human resources policies and procedures have a high emphasis on career advancement (Susilo, 2018). Training and development are elements of knowledge management and may assist in resolving organizational concerns (Kim & Ko, 2014). By professionally developing employees, you invest in increasing their value to the organization (Ready, 2014). Adiguzel (2019) insisted that training opportunities may also contribute to increased development and the overall quality of communication. When subordinates trust their superiors, the sharing of knowledge management is more accessible and increases positive attitudes and productivity (Kim & Ko, 2014). Additionally, there is evidentiary support in Kim & Ko’s (2014) study that suggested a favorable perception of human resources when there is an increase in knowledge sharing behavior. Kim and Ko (2014) also concluded that there is a significant increase in trust in supervisors including a positive impact on overall knowledge sharing behavior. Sharing such knowledge is prevalent in intellectual stimulation, a transformational leadership trait (Northouse, 2016).

Given the aforementioned, transformational leadership arbitrates employee perceptions, moderating job satisfaction through prevalent traits that are consistent with building trust. Additionally, transformational leadership enhances effective interactions towards the creation of a learning environment (Adiguzel, 2019). Effective communication and consistent motivation enhance subordinate's job satisfaction, significantly decreasing the chance for voluntary turnover (Tian et al., 2020). Employees that are satisfied in their job are often more motivated with higher productivity levels (Bass, 1985).

Opposing Views of the Transformational Leadership Theory

Balancing in contradiction of all the positive qualities of the transformational leadership theory are a few conceptual weaknesses. Yukl (1999) acknowledged that transformational leadership emphasizes emotions and values while highlighting the importance of symbolic behaviors towards subordinates. However, Yukl posited that the theory features a nebulous construct that lacks a systematic approach yet creates a narrowed focus on dyadic processes.

Yukl's (1999) research lacked a comprehensive review of his empirical evidence. For instance, Yukl mentioned that the transformational leadership theory possesses vague mediating variables and is deficient in measuring outcomes. Such claims are equivocal to current research because the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X accurately measures all dimensions of the theory (Bass et al., 2000). Additionally, Yukl (1999) credited Bass (1985) for foundational guidance on the transformational leadership theory. Although Bass aided in creating applicable measuring abilities, including extending the original concept, Yukl (1999) vaguely credited the originator of the theory, Burns (1978), missing key applicable facts of each component of the theory.

Likewise, van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) argued that the transformational leadership theory lacks a specific model that fully captures an overall moderating process. However, Figure 1 and the detailed sections on intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation clarifies the moderating effects that transformational leadership has on processes and outcomes. Therefore, providing evidentiary support toward an exact model that regulates procedures.

Despite the opposing views of the transformational leadership theory, the theory continues to possess an ascendant position in comparison to similar conceptual frameworks. The transformational leadership theory is the most value-added leadership approach to increase an individual's commitment and job performance, which is a direct result of the increased motivation among subordinates (Susilo, 2018). There is an amplified opportunity to enhance the positive effects of overall individual job satisfaction and loyalty (Northouse, 2016), including the robust, intuitive appeal to influence followers towards goal achievement (Yamin, 2020). The transformational leadership theory contributes to the extensive methods to highlight the importance of followers and places a strong emphasis on morals and values (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Directly affecting the success of the organization, a transformational leader compels a vision that inspires subordinates to achieve organizational goals by instilling a sense of purpose, resolving complex concerns through innovative measures, and effectively enhancing job satisfaction through the retaining of employees (Tian et al., 2020).

Transition

The primary objective of Section 1 was to introduce the research topic and address how transformational leadership theory aligns with a study on retention in government agencies. To do this, I introduced the applied business problem and purpose statement, setting the foundation of the study. I concluded the section with detailed data on the following subsections: nature of the study, research and interview questions, conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, significance of the study, and a review of academic literature. Section 2 includes an interpretation of the entire project of the research method, collection data techniques, the analysis process, maintaining reliability and validity, and the overall study plan. Section 3 consists of the application to the professional environment and the potential of implications for change.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 contains clarifying data and explanations of my role as the researcher, participants and sampling criteria, and the deciding factors for the methodology and design approach. I also address ethical responsibility. Subsequent sections include the data collection instruments and technique, organization technique, and data analysis. Additionally, I address the dependability and creditability of my study in the reliability and validity subsection.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. The targeted population was government leaders within a government agency in Washington, D. C. who have implemented successful strategies to enhance retention. Government leaders who read the study findings might contribute to social change by implementing strategies to retain government workers that may benefit citizens through improving government services.

Role of the Researcher

How the researcher perceives and represents their role is paramount (Cumyn et al., 2019). Throughout the data collection process, researchers should remain unbiased and impartial when collecting evidentiary support. Researchers are required to collect data ethically and fairly, while also minimizing conflicts of interest (Cumyn et al., 2019). Additionally, there should be a high level of transparency while ensuring confidentiality. I began my study by composing open-ended questions, after I received institutional review board (IRB) approval for soliciting contributions from participants.

Existing experience within various government agencies in Washington D.C. assisted with developing a foundational knowledge of retention concerns and how superiors mitigated such issues. Therefore, I developed a relationship between myself and several superiors. That experience exposed me to effective strategies that supervisors employed to mitigate retention concerns.

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (1979), the Belmont Report illustrates ethical guidelines for the purpose of protecting participants in a research study. The ethical guidelines demonstrate the importance of respect towards participants while avoiding any exploitations towards their vulnerabilities. As the researcher, I ensured respect and protection of each participant's confidentiality while appropriately obtaining consent to support my study. The form in Appendix A was used to provide each participant with the necessary background information of my study.

Researchers must attempt to mitigate bias and avoid viewing data through a personal lens. The integration of data collection tools may assist in reducing research bias (Paul, 1996). To mitigate bias and the avoidance of viewing data through a personal lens, I listened intently while ensuring my demeanor, body language, and facial expressions remained neutral. I asked clarifying follow-up questions and audio record responses. Additionally, I employed member checking by asking the participants to review my interpretations to ensure accuracy after the original interview. Using the interview protocol method may allow the ability to focus on specific tasks while probing the collection of data (van de Wiel, 2017). Use of the interview protocol, Appendix B, ensured all participants responded to appropriate and specific questions applicable to my study. The interview protocol allowed for probing, in addition to the original interview questions.

Participants

The selection of appropriate participants for this study was paramount to address successful leadership strategies to enhance retention. The criteria for selection included individuals who were in supervisory positions who used successful strategies to enhance retention. To avoid weak and invalid results, the selection of suitable participants was necessary to ensure individual compatibility (see Dasgupta, 2015). The participants were four supervisory employees from a federal government agency in Washington, D.C. and supervised sections with effective retention rates.

In qualitative research, a responsible and trustworthy researcher remains grounded in relational ethics (Hall, 2014). When seeking access to participants for research purposes, the researcher must avoid all forms of ethical dilemmas (Hall, 2014). Additionally, the researcher must provide a comprehensive explanation outlining the purpose of the study, a copy of the interview protocol, and participant criteria to executive leaders for participant access approval (Hall, 2014). To gain access to participants who fit the above criteria, I contacted the executive director of the organization to request a roster of individuals who met the participant criteria. Next, I contacted each potential participant through email (see Appendix A) to request their voluntary participation. I also ensured to protect their confidentiality. To establish rapport and mutual trust, I properly introduced myself and my study and engaged in candid conversation. I also maintained a professional and calm demeanor, dressed in business casual attire, frequently communicated in a friendly manner, and remained transparent and honest about the purpose of my study and the participant rights. My recruitment of participants and the collection of data began once I received IRB approval of my proposal.

Emotional maturity and strong interpersonal skills are a requirement for gathering qualitative data (Collins & Cooper, 2014). Trustworthiness increases the confidence and comfort levels of participants during the data collection process (Collins & Cooper, 2014). To build trust and establish comfort with each participant, I advised them to select the location and time to conduct their interview. Open communication and dialogue create trust and a meaningful relationship that is beneficial for future research purposes (Collins & Cooper, 2014). Additionally, remaining transparent about the purpose of my study while adhering to ethical standards assisted in further developing a meaningful and trustful relationship.

Research Method and Design

Completion of this study occurred by employing qualitative methodology and a case study design. Understanding strategies to enhance retention was best explored using the qualitative methodology to ensure accuracy in understanding social experiences. Qualitative methodology is best suited to explore social, multifaceted leadership issues (Guercini, 2014). I selected the case study design because of the objective of my topic and research question. The case study design is a distinguishing method of social science inquiry (Yin, 2018).

Research Method

Gutmann (2014) mentioned that qualitative research is helpful in reviewing practices that are not available in a quantitative method. A qualitative method is relevant to management concerns to provide hybrid solutions to complex problems (Guercini, 2014). By using a qualitative method, the researcher can employ the use of open-ended questions to gather an in-depth understanding of the social phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Researchers use the qualitative method to seek in-depth understanding of social phenomenon through detailed observational evidence and open-ended questions (Yin, 2018). In addition to using detailed observational evidence, I asked open-ended questions to identify and explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. Therefore, qualitative methodology was the appropriate choice for my study.

Quantitative researchers use close-ended questions and focus on testing hypothesis about variables' characteristics or relationships (Apuke, 2017), Additionally, quantitative researchers generalize data (Apuke, 2017). Yin (2012) mentioned that researchers who employ a quantitative method could not indicate leadership through statistical outcomes. I did not intend to ask close-ended questions, nor did I test a hypothesis to seek correlations or relationships. Therefore, a quantitative method was inappropriate for my study.

The mixed-method approach is necessary when researchers seek to use qualitative data to evaluate further quantitative data (Sekho et al., 2017). However, I did not employ the use of quantitative data. Therefore, the mixed methods approach was not suitable for my study.

Research Design

I employed a case study as the design, but I did consider focus groups, narrative, and ethnography designs. A case study allows the researcher to focus on complex social phenomena as a method to obtain evidence (Johnston, 2017; Yin, 2018). A case study is a distinguishing approach to observing social science (Yin, 2018). Additionally, a case study design shows the explanatory and not just descriptive or exploratory functions of single case studies (Yin, 2018, p. 7). Such a design is an optimal choice when the researcher is seeking to explore detailed and concise views (Johnston, 2017). When a researcher employs the case study design, there is an increased opportunity for gaining a real-world assessment. Case study researchers explore a contemporary phenomenon through empirical methods within a defined population throughout the unit of analysis for bounded studies (Yin, 2018). I selected case study design to explore the strategies that government leaders use to enhance retention within the scope of the population in the selected government agency.

Focus groups use the participants' perceptions as a data collection technique and require the researcher to generate discussions in a group setting (Yin, 2018). However, the open setting may cause participants to tailor their perceptions based on who is present because confidentiality is not promised. Focus groups were not the optimal choice for my study because I ensured confidentially for each participant. Researchers may use a narrative design to describe previous encounters and experiences (Korach, 2012). Using narrative research design allows the participants to incorporate personal accounts through storytelling (McAlpine, 2016). However, personal accounts and interpretations of descriptive storytelling may lack accuracy and specific details that are imperative for the validity of the study. Therefore, I opted against the narrative design. Researchers may employ ethnography to explore the behaviors and occurrences within a specific cultural group (Fusch et al., 2017). Additionally, ethnography is an in-depth study of daily participant behaviors and cultural interactions among people (Fusch et al., 2017). The ethnography design may require the researcher to heavily engage in the cultural interactions through fieldwork. I did not study sharing among a particular culture group, but rather a definitive strategy. I conducted semistructured interviews and did not observe participants. Therefore, ethnography was not the optimal choice for my study. I used a qualitative single case study to address the research question and explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance retention.

When there is a failure to encounter data saturation, the study findings may have validity issues (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To ensure data saturation, while also obtaining deep and rich data, I employed multiple data collection techniques, including (a) semistructured interviews with follow-up member checking interviews, (b) direct observation through virtual meetings, (c) review of organizational documents to enhance retention, and (d) maintaining a reflective journal. Collection of data occurred until there were no new emerging themes. Redundancy in data collection is an indication the researcher achieved data saturation (Walker, 2012).

Population and Sampling

The population included supervisory government employees within a government agency in Washington, D.C., who have implemented successful retention strategies. I employed a purposeful sample technique for my study by ensuring the population meets the participant criteria. I ensured data saturation by conducting: (a) semistructured interviews with follow-up member checking interviews, (b) direct observation through virtual meetings, (c) reviewed related organizational documents, and (d) maintained a reflective journal. Member checking may assist in ensuring validity.

Yin (2018) mentioned that the sampling logic requires a specific technique for the selection of respondents. The sampling techniques I considered are quota sampling and purposive sampling. Quota sampling refers to controlled non-probability random samples (Dodge, 2003). In quota sampling, the researcher may determine the population and characteristics of which to select participants from (Dodge, 2003). Although quota and purposive sampling are similar in that both methods tend to identify participants, quota differs because of the specific focus on sizes and proportions of subsamples (Lavrakas, 2008). Researchers may employ the use of quota sampling when the total number of participants is more of an unwavering requirement than an objective (Dodge, 2003). I analyzed data in conjunction with collecting data, as required in purposive sampling. Therefore, quota sampling is not the optimal choice for my study.

Purposive sampling refers to the selection of particular characteristics that may enable the researcher to conduct research (Lavrakas, 2008). The purposive selection is paramount when choosing from a small sample size, and when the elimination of non-essential items occurs (Ornstein, 2014). Purposive sampling may provide accuracy in detailed explanations for specific populations to allow exploration of developing ideas (Rapley, 2014). Concise and relevant data come from a purposive sample to assist researchers with an appropriate selection (Konig & Waistell, 2012). I selected participants from a population of those with preselected criteria. Therefore, purposive sampling is the optimal choice for my study. The sampling method is purposeful by selecting participants who are (a) successfully maintaining retention standards, (b) is a current supervisor, and (c) works in the identified organization in Washington, D.C.

Yin (2014) mentioned that a small sample size might be advantageous for researchers to collect data through open-ended questions and semistructured interviews. Additionally, the sample size may vary for qualitative researchers, which is contingent on the objective and purpose of their study (Marshall et al., 2013). Sample sizes may differ in qualitative research from that of quantitative research because of the focus being to explore the range of varying opinions, instead of calculating point of views (Emmel, 2013). The sample size is generally justifiable through the outline of the research criteria (Emmel, 2013). Additionally, in qualitative research, all data collected should represent the indicated topic, and the researcher should measure the sample size by the depth of the collected data (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Therefore, for this qualitative, single case study, I selected four senior leaders from one organization in Washington, D.C.

Ethical Research

I conducted this study under the Walden IRB approval number 10-25-20-0973648. When participants decided to volunteer their time to become a part of the study, they signed the informed consent form (Appendix D), as required by Walden University. Prior to conducting the interview, I: (a) provided each participant a copy of the informed consent form, and (b) provided a detailed explanation of each section to ensure the participants clearly understood that participation was voluntary. The informed consent form ensures the researcher provide appropriate knowledge of the study, provide all benefits and risks, and is vital to research ethics (Yin, 2014). Additionally, before the interview, I advised participants of their right to confidentiality and my ethical obligation to protect their identity. Researchers should protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants to ensure their involvement does not place them in uncompromising situations at a later time (Yin, 2018). I also advised participants of their ability to withdraw consent. Participants may withdraw their consent at any point by contacting me via telephone, email, or face-to-face communication. In such an event, I would immediately document the withdrawal, cease further communication, and destroy any obtained data from the participant who elected to withdraw. I did not compensate participants.

Ensuring to adhere to the Belmont Report guidelines for ethical research, I ensured not to include participant names or the organization within my study. I coded participant's names with generic, gender-neutral names to disguise their identity. I also employed the use of pseudonyms to enhance confidentiality further. Researchers often utilize the coding of identifying characteristics for added security (Yin, 2012). Additionally, to ensure each participant's ethical protection, all collected data, and any confidential information, will remain in a locked safe for 5 years. All electronic data was secured via password on an external hard drive. Disposal of collected data will occur after 5 years.

Data Collection Instruments

The primary data collection instrument in qualitative research collection is the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014). As the researcher, I interpreted and analyzed all data heard and seen. Therefore, I was the primary data collection instrument. The additional data collection instruments I utilized were: (a) semistructured interviews with follow-up member checking interviews, (b) direct observation through virtual meetings, (c) reviewed related organizational documents, and (d) maintained a reflective journal.

Interviews allow the opportunity to increase the understanding of individual experiences, including the structure and purpose of specific decision making (Roulston, 2012). I conducted semistructured interviews, by following the interview protocol (Appendix B), to collect data from successful supervisory government employees. Semistructured interviews occur in a specific location and time while allowing the flexibility to ask additional probing questions, enhancing data saturation. The semistructured interview style may enable me to guide the discussion to collect data gently. Respondents can define their occurrences through the use of open-ended questions while raising important concerns (Denzin, 1970b). Face-to-face interviews were appropriate as I asked each participant predetermined, yet open-ended questions, through more of a discussion format. Doing so allowed me to record and analyze participant responses to pertinent questions concerning retention strategies.

Member checking is an accurate measure researchers can utilize to help achieve validity (Caretta & Pérez, 2019). Additionally, member checking allows the participant a chance to increase researcher knowledge by ensuring the researcher's interpreted data is accurate (Birt et al., 2016). To enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection, I employed member checking one week after the conclusion of the semistructured interview. I shared a copy of my succinct synthesis for each response with the participant to confirm that my interpretations match the participant's intended meaning. Protocols are pertinent to case studies to enhance reliability (Yin, 2014). Therefore, I adhered to the interview protocol to record accurate accounts of behaviors, non-verbal cues and asked additional probing questions.

In addition to constructing interview questions, researchers review archived documents to assist in reporting valid findings during case studies (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Stake (1995) and Street and Ward (2012) argued that researchers employ the use of archival records in case studies to assist with data analysis and to enhance the validity of findings. Yin (2018) mentioned that reviewing archival records is another method to analyze data. Therefore, in addition to constructing interview questions with follow-up member checking, I reviewed related organizational documents such as (a) the most recent Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to gather an understanding of effective retention strategies, (b) reviewed federal employee work-life programs that target reducing retention, and (c) reviewed leadership policy documents related to reducing retention. I also maintained a reflective journal and conducted direct observation through virtual meetings.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques I employed to explore strategies government leaders use to enhance employee retention were: (a) semistructured interviews with follow-up member checking, (b) direct observation through virtual meetings, (c) reviewed related organizational documents, and (d) maintained a reflective journal.

The purpose of employing semistructured interviews is to understand the participant's past experiences and factual occurrences to support their responses (Moustakas, 1994). There is also an opportunity to observe and interpret the participant's nonverbal interaction to enhance data saturation (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). The semistructured interviews proceeded at the time and location established by the participant. I employed the Interview Protocol (Appendix B), with additional probing. The Interview Protocol contained a list of questions and a brief script that I adhered to. I ensured to schedule follow-up member checking after the semistructured interview to share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each question. Doing so ensured accurate interpretations of participant responses. Member checking may assist the researcher in enhancing the validation of participant responses and explores the creditability of results (Birt et al., 2016). I also took note of non-verbal cues, additional probing from all non-verbal behavior, to ensure I obtained deep and rich responses. Each interview lasted up to 60 minutes, and each member checking follow-up interview lasted up to 30 minutes.

I completed direct observation by attending virtual meetings to observe superiors' interactions with their subordinates. I conducted the observation once a week for four weeks, while making notations of the actions and behaviors of the superior. Direct observation allowed me the ability to understand behaviors that the superiors deem normal.

I reviewed organizational documents such as (a) the most recent Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, (b) federal employee's work-life programs, and (c) federal policy documents related to reducing retention. Each record is available for general public access and requires no special permission. I critically analyzed the records to gain an understanding of the federal government's implementation plan to reduce turnover. All supervisory government employees should adhere to such plans. The archival documents rendered support in addressing the research question by indicating retention efforts and assisting me in achieving data saturation. Archival documents may allow the researcher to interpret and produce relevant data in case studies while allowing accuracy in explorations (Yin, 2018).

Lastly, I maintained a reflective journal to note the experience and internal thoughts of the data collection process. The journal was a physical document with entries separated by day, event, and location. By employing multiple sources of evidence, the researcher may strengthen the validity of the case study, while providing various methods of a constant phenomenon (Yin, 2018). The process of collecting data ceased once there were no new emerging themes apparent.

Data Organization Technique

I organized all data received from (a) semistructured interviews with follow-up member checking, (b) direct observation through virtual meetings, (c) reviewed related organizational documents, and (d) maintained a reflective journal, by employing the use of the Microsoft Office Program, Excel. Excel allowed me to create a visualization spreadsheet to associate codes and patterns with reoccurring concepts and ideas by categories, enhancing the flexibility to redefine my data. Once all interviews, observation, journal entries, and the retrieval of archival documents was complete, I created an Excel spreadsheet to compare and contrast participant responses. Next, I analyzed the responses to create and code concepts and ideas critically. I also critically analyzed each archival record related to reducing retention to increase my knowledge of federal government retention efforts. Additionally, I uploaded each archival record into a separate Excel spreadsheet to create and code concepts and ideas for each document.

It is vital for qualitative researchers to not only explore and interpret obtained data but also to organize the data (Yin, 2014). Researchers should ensure the integrity and storage of data (Kennan & Markauskaite, 2015). To ensure I complied with ethical research requirements, I securely stored data by keeping all electronic research material in a password-protected external hard drive. Additionally, all hardcopy data remained securely locked in a combination protected safe. Once 5 years pass, I will dispose of all research material by deleting documents from the hard drive and shredding all hardcopy documents.

Data Analysis

I analyzed archival documents critically and received data to interpret responses from participants and discussed the employed data analysis techniques. Qualitative data analysis requires the researcher to critically analyze content to determine relevance, with an objective to explore the content (Lawrence & Tar, 2013). Critically analyzing data also allows the researcher to understand the perceptions of the experiences (Lawrence & Tar, 2013). Triangulation involves different research methodologies that seek to explore similar or the same phenomenon (Denzin, 1970a). Researchers often use triangulation to confirm findings through varying perspectives to represent a factual reality (Jack & Raturi, 2006). To enhance the reliability and validity of the collected data, researchers should not disregard the relevance of triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018). Denzin (1970a) and Patton (1999) mentioned the four types of triangulation include: (a) methodical, (b) theory, (c) data source, and (d) investigator. I utilized methodological triangulation for my study. Methodological triangulation is commonly used in qualitative research, especially when involving interviews and multiple techniques in data collection (Carter et al., 2014). Methodological triangulation assisted me in developing a comprehensive understanding of participant responses during: (a) semistructured interviews with follow-up member checking, (b) direct observation through virtual meetings, (c) the review of related organizational documents, and (d) maintaining a reflective journal, while enhancing the reliability and validity of my findings. Therefore, methodological triangulation was the optimal choice for my study.

Employing the use of a software program to assist in analyzing data helps the researcher to create a conceptual structure (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Additionally, the researcher may identify relationship configurations, and common themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). To analyze and interpret the meaning of participant responses and datasets, I employed the use of Excel to highlight and separate reoccurring concepts and ideas into categorizations.

Mind mapping allows the researcher to analyze qualitative data through a graphic technique while highlighting biases (Tattersall et al., 2007). The mind map represents a key premise in a pleasing graphical format while allowing a rapid dynamic between the collection of data and responses (Burgess-Allen & Owen-Smith, 2010). Using a physical mind map assisted in addressing and mitigating potential bias, while also further separating reoccurring concepts and ideas. I conducted mind mapping by creating a graphical representation of reoccurring concepts on a blank whiteboard. The center of the whiteboard displayed the words ‘retention strategies’, followed by main branches to connect reoccurring concepts and ideas. Next, I placed the reoccurring concepts and ideas into coded lists, creating separate categories, to determine and interpret the reason for the category. Grouping of the main concepts and ideas was the intent of me categorizing reoccurring concepts. The physical mind map helped me critically analyze and review the reoccurring concepts to link them to related concepts in the coded lists. Mind mapping accurately integrates common ideas by organizing the emergence of new themes, and the meanings derived (Tattersall et al., 2007), making this method the optimum choice for my study. Additionally, the mind map also increased the transparency and trustworthiness of my research by mitigating personal bias.

The with-in method is a methodological triangulation technique (Casey & Murphy, 2009). Qualitative researchers use the with-in method to enhance the validity of data by increasing the overall understanding of the social phenomenon (Casey & Murphy, 2009). I am using more than one source of data collection techniques.

Therefore, I interpreted the meaning of the key-coded list of concepts and ideas through the with-in method.

Thematic analysis is more of a mutual or common form of analysis conducted in qualitative research and may assist in exploring and recording patterns in data (Javidi & Zarea, 2016). Using the thematic analysis approach may contribute to systematizing and verifying all data (Nowell et al., 2017). Additionally, thematic analysis is a method for detecting, reflecting, and clarifying the authenticity in data (Javidi & Zarea, 2016). Since I was seeking to discover new key concepts and ideas during data collection, thematic analysis is the most appropriate method to employ.

During the analytical phase, I synthesized the reoccurring concept and idea from each data source to develop the overall themes. Then I compared the reoccurring concepts and ideas in the coded lists to existing literature to confirm research findings. Lastly, I accurately documented what my collected data represented.

Reliability and Validity

Dependability, confirmability, creditability, and transferability are concepts to determine reliability, validity, and objectivity in qualitative research (Houghton et al., 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The reliability and validity subsection demonstrate how I achieved each element in my study findings. Although I am the primary data collection instrument, I employed the use of member checking and the interview protocol. Additionally, I audio recorded responses, paired with accurate note-taking, and ethical considerations. Utilizing multiple sources of data assisted in reaching data saturation.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the repeat of consistent findings from collected data in case study research (Yin, 2018). Dependability is a required element for the reliability of results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Achieving data saturation is a necessity in case study research to ensure the dependability of findings. To ensure the dependability of my research, I employed member checking of collected data interpretations. Member checking is a validation technique in qualitative research to ensure accuracy in researcher interpretations (Birt et al., 2016). To obtain deep and rich data, I utilized: (a) the interview protocol to ask participants the same questions, (b) paraphrased as needed, (c) asked numerous probing questions, and (d) audio recorded responses to transcribe precise notes in a Microsoft Word document. The interview protocol served as a reminder for me to capture the participants' experiences based on their perceptions accurately. The researcher uses the interview protocol to create an inquiry-based dialogue (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Additionally, the interview protocol allows document feedback while strengthening reliability in qualitative research (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Validity

Validity necessitates that the findings correctly reflect data, enhancing the accuracy of the case study (Yin, 2018). Validity concerns may be apparent when there is a lack of data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Alternative methods of symmetry should not replace validity efforts (Jack & Raturi, 2006). To determine validity, researchers should employ the appropriate measures to achieve accuracy in conclusions (Noble & Smith, 2015). The multiple data sources I employed to achieve validity and enhance data saturation were: (a) semistructured interviews with follow-up member checking, (b) direct observation through virtual meetings, (c) the review of related organizational documents, and (d) maintained a reflective journal. The use of multiple data collection techniques decreases threats to validity by counterbalancing potential weaknesses. Additionally, multiple strategies of methodological triangulation confirm accuracy (Denzin, 1970a). I achieved validity through the use of the interview protocol (Appendix B), and member checking to confirm my data. An appropriate in-depth validation technique is member checking (Birt et al., 2016).

Street and Ward (2012) stated the advantage of methodological triangulation is that the researcher increases their ability to enhance validity. Methodological triangulation establishes in-depth knowledge, including mutual confirmation (Mazurek-Łopacińska & Sobocińska, 2018). Additionally, methodological triangulation syndicates several sources to observe and study the same or similar phenomenon (Denzin, 1970a).

Confirmability

Confirmability allows the researcher to establish bias-free research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers should attempt to minimize conflicts of interest and bias during data collection (Cumyn et al., 2019). By employing the interview protocol and member checking, I addressed all questions and observed non-verbal behaviors. I also probed for additional data, to enhance validity by ensuring accuracy in my interpretations of responses. Observing participants in meetings allowed me to perceive human activity and interactions to gain an understanding of internal activities. I was also able to observe actual leadership strategies employed by superiors. Reviewing organizational documents allowed me to understand how the government implements and maintains retention standards. To ensure transparency while avoiding the potential of falsifying information, I employed the use of a reflective journal. Ortlipp (2008) argued that maintaining a reflective journal during qualitative data collection is an integral part of the research process. Doing so allows the researcher to facilitate reflexivity while maintaining transparency (Ortlipp, 2008). Employing methodological triangulation of all data collection techniques may enhance confirmability as the findings represent accurate conclusions from received data. Jack and Raturi (2006) stated that researchers often use triangulation to present authenticity in findings when presenting facts.

Creditability

To ensure creditability, I provided each participant with a paraphrased overview of the conducted interviews. To explore the creditability of results in qualitative research, researchers use member checking to validate participant responses to ensure accuracy (Birt et al., 2016). By employing the use of direct observation, I enhanced data saturation and credibility by identifying characteristics in supervisory personnel relevant to reducing retention. I also indicated concise explanations of procedures utilized. By reviewing and analyzing organizational documents aimed to address retention strategies, I noted plausible data drawn from an original government source, further enhancing creditability. Additionally, by maintaining a reflective journal, I enhanced creditability by decreasing bias and partialities. Researchers can identify and eliminate subjectivities by using a reflective journal during the research process (Ortlipp, 2008).

Transferability

Transferability allows the ability to construct conclusions based on results but is ultimately the choice of the reader (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Determination of the transferability of my research is the decision of the next qualitative or mixed methods researcher. However, to support my study's potential transferability, concise and detailed explanations of my findings are evident. Additionally, limitations and procedural guidance, are evident. Such guidance may optimize understanding of my research, and may allow future scholars to achieve the same conclusions.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I expounded on the research method and design to justify the use, while also establishing the role of the researcher, participants, and the population and sampling method. I also established ethical considerations, data collection and organization techniques, and data analysis. Additionally, I determined relevant factors that enhanced the reliability and validity of my study. In Section 3, I illustrated my presentations of findings, including applications to business practice, implications for social change, and suggestions for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. My study consisted of data gathered from instruments such as (a) semistructured interviews with follow-up member checking, (b) direct observation through in-person and virtual meetings, (c) the review of related organizational documents, and (d) a reflective journal. By thoroughly analyzing collected data, I was able to identify the following themes associated with successful retention strategies that supervisory government leaders use to enhance employee retention: (a) idiosyncratic employee engagement, (b) specific relational transmissions, (c) promotion of diversity, and (d) stimulating psychological incentives. See Table 1. I found that the study findings aligned with the transformational leadership theory.

Section 3 includes a comprehensive and detailed discussion of the identified themes, applications to professional practices, and social change implications. I also provide recommendations for additional actions and further research. My doctoral study closes with a reflection on my overall process towards completion and concluding comments.

Presentation of the Findings

Identifying strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention was the overarching research question. To answer the research question, I gathered data from each collection instrument. I thoroughly analyzed collected data, then employed a classical method to code and identify patterns and meanings. I facilitated methodical triangulation to assist in creating a comprehensive understanding of those meanings. The realization of reaching data saturation occurred once no new emerging concepts or ideas were apparent. I then created a physical mind map to group each concept and idea into key categories while highlighting reoccurring themes, as illustrated in Table 1. This subsection comprises reoccurring themes discovered through critical data analysis received during data collection. Through extensive analysis, I was able to link each theme to Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory, the conceptual framework. Burns suggested that prioritizing subordinate needs creates a positive impact on retention.

Table 1

Emerging Themes and Frequencies

Emerging theme	Frequency	Percentage of total
Idiosyncratic employee engagement	45	31%
Specific relational transmissions	47	32%
Promotion of diversity	21	14%
Stimulating psychological incentives	34	23%
Total	147	100%

Theme 1: Idiosyncratic Employee Engagement

Engagement, specifically individualistic employee-orientated engagement, was a consistent strategy indicated by my participants while discussing effective leadership strategies to enhance retention. Leadership is a specific process of influence that requires constant fostering of individualistic engagement to effectively guide the right behaviors towards organizational success (Davis & Van der Heijden, 2018). Ricky (pseudonym) mentioned the individualistic side of leadership by highlighting the importance of treating everyone as moral individuals. Ricky stated, "Critiquing employees to increase confidence while working on other areas develops and mentors them while respecting their efforts." This explains the importance of getting to know your team.

Idiosyncratic employee engagement helps achieve more desirable behaviors and positive work-related outcomes from subordinates (Shams et al., 2020). Ronald (pseudonym) highlighted the need to engage subordinates on specific levels to influence them effectively. Ronald stated, "People feel invested by personal engagement and do not react well with received guidance and no interim encounters." Ronald continued by stating, "You must observe individual body language and reactions." Likewise, Daniel (pseudonym) emphasized the importance of idiosyncratic employee engagement. Daniel stated, "Employees have an expectation from the organization and leaders, but employee behavior is difficult to predict, so individual talent management is essential."

Individualistic employee engagement may occur by building a sense of collectiveness through the role of reciprocity (Davis & Van der Heijden, 2018). Ronald highlighted the importance of cohesion in retention by insisting on consistent teamwork and truthfulness during counseling. Ronald stated, "You have to ensure your workforce works together as a team while building cohesion, and you must be truthful during counseling as that shows engagement." Likewise, Lola (pseudonym) mentioned the importance of individualistic employee engagement. Lola stated, "It is important to observe your team, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and foster an environment that allows vulnerability to express care and concern."

Direct Observations

During direct observations, each leader engaged their subordinates as individuals to seek alibis. The leader encouraged communication by requesting updates on their employee's specific areas. The leaders maintained a professional tone and posture, which appeared to incite motivation and allowed everyone to speak freely. The end of each meeting was similar. The leaders thanked their employees for their time and encouraged everyone to remain safe.

Organizational Documents

Individualistic employee engagement is apparent in organizational documents to which all federal employees must adhere. The Policy, Data, and Oversight area on opm.gov specifies several apparent retention strategies. For instance, retaining employees with disabilities occurs through individual accessibilities. In addition, exit interviews are encouraged to engage employees one last time and to obtain valuable retention data. Appropriate accession planning is also encouraged and employed as a retention strategy. Moreover, there is a publicized goal to enhance successful job performance through training while also accurately tracking and reporting individual training. As a part of performance management, individuals receive a detailed summary of performance during individual counseling. Lastly, human resources efforts establish and maintain management accountability while conveying appropriate expectations.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Alliance

Successfully managing employee performance through focused employee engagement generates increased levels of job satisfaction (Gruman, 2011). There is distinct importance on collective purpose in leadership, highlighting the necessary ability to modify leadership styles (Burns, 1978). Emphasizing the importance of a mutual purpose stresses unity while harmonizing values, motives, and goals (Burns, 1978). A transformational leader emphasizes the importance of followers through morals and values (Northouse, 2016). Additionally, a transformational leader creates a sense of collectiveness in each employee within the organization by inciting motivation (Burns, 2003).

Creating a sense of collectiveness throughout an organization may motivate and effectively influence behaviors. Engagement, specifically individualistic engagement, not only enhances performance but also the individual's well-being (Bailey et al., 2017). An employee chooses the level of their personal engagement with work based on leader engagement (Kahn, 1990). The leader's responsibility is to enhance the employee's psychological state through motivation and influence (Kahn, 1990; Truss et al., 2013). Through consistent engagement, communicating high expectations creates an emotional connection and shared vision, as apparent in inspirational motivation, a prevalent transformational leadership trait (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2016).

A transformational leader can influence employee behaviors on an individual level, creating cohesion and a sense of collectiveness. Previous literature findings have reflected a confirmation of the discoveries in Theme 1 on the importance of idiosyncratic employee engagement. Bailey et al. (2017) concluded that employee engagement positively associates with individual morale and task performance, enhancing organizational performance. Likewise, in a study consisting of 505 participants, Tian et al. (2020) concluded that communication not only moderates behaviors, a transformational leader who spends time developing and training their team enhances behaviors and overall retention.

Theme 2: Specific Relational Transmissions

Managing talent by developing a relational rapport with subordinates was a consistent strategy indicated by my participants while discussing retention strategies. Being specific in communicable exchanges gains each subordinate's trust, allowing for value-added dialogue and authentic connections (Asencio, 2016). Such connections create a high level of transparency, leading to superior's ability to gain full awareness of each subordinate's strength and weakness (Asencio, 2016).

To expand on the importance of employing specific relational transmissions, Ricky mentioned the significance of building a rapport with each subordinate. Ricky stated, "You have to learn your team as the key to retention is ensuring individuals feel they are a valued team member, can contribute, and feel challenged." Ricky continued, "A relational approach is a preferred leadership approach because one can develop a rapport."

Employing specific relational transmissions involves recognizing each subordinate's positive and undesirable aspects individually (Dong et al., 2017). Lola highlighted the significance of managing employee's talents. Lola stated, "Talent management allows one to learn their employees while placing them in appropriate positions to operate in their strengths." Likewise, Daniel mentioned the importance of leadership and retention through specific relational transmissions. Daniel stated, "Leadership is an ongoing process that requires you to earn and maintain trust with your employees. The best method for that is to maintain dialogue.” Moreover, Ronald mentioned the necessity of relational transmissions. Ronald stated, “Retention involves knowing employee’s internal balance, but also reducing low performers to assist in maintaining that balance.”

Direct Observations

During observations, each leader greeted their employees and genuinely seemed interested in how they were. Time management was of high interest as the leader appeared to keep the meetings focused on the topics of discussion and the individual in charge of specific areas. Additionally, there was consistent eye contact, which appeared to signal genuine interest in their team.

Organizational Documents

Specific relational transmissions were apparent in the organizational documents to which each federal employee must adhere. For instance, there are enhanced training opportunities based on individual consideration aimed at retaining employees with disabilities. Closing skill gaps is the goal, enhancing human capital management. Advances to enhance human capital framework centers toward (a) effectively managing talent, (b) sustaining a performance culture, (c) placing employees in positions to enhance their individual strengths, and (d) establishing a trusted relationship. There are also apparent performance management initiatives unique to individuals, such as developing their capacity to perform. Additionally, there are individual and executive development plans created to enhance stability and work-life balance.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Alliance

Specific relational transmissions involve the leader building a relationship and learning their employee as an individual. Individual consideration is a prevalent transformational leadership trait applicable to establishing a learning environment while acknowledging subordinates' strengths and weaknesses (Burns, 1978). A transformational leader understands the importance of individual consideration by assisting subordinates to develop their strengths (Northouse, 2016). A leader who adopts the transformational leadership style can effectively gain their employees trust through individualistic interactions (Asencio, 2016). A transformational leader leads by deepening relationships with their employees to gain greater depth of their abilities (Bass, 1985).

Dong et al. (2017) employed a multilevel, multisource survey and concluded an individual focus has a positive indirect effect on individual creativity through means of individual skill development. Additionally, knowledge sharing arbitrates individual-focused skill development and creativity. Likewise, a study conducted by Sheehan et al. (2020) concluded that there is a positive tie between a transformational leader, organizational innovation, and performance when internal sharing and individual consideration is apparent.

Theme 3: Promotion of Diversity

Each participant specifically mentioned the importance of diversity and the connection to retention. A leader that promotes diversity creates more opportunities and a learning culture with strengthened communication and high workplace intelligence (Lozano & Escrich, 2017). To enhance organizational intelligence, one must acknowledge cultural differences, norms, and values, resulting from effective leadership (Ahmad & Saidalavi, 2019). Diversity of thought enhances organizational values and internal culture. Additionally, diversity emphasizes the various approaches to problem-solving, which is critical to creating a learning environment while seeking organizational success (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2013). In a sense, diversity fosters participation by encouraging employees to engage their knowledge, skills, and abilities, relevant areas to enhancing job satisfaction and retention (Lozano & Escrich, 2017).

Ricky highlighted the importance diversity has in retention. Ricky stated, "It is important for an organization to have diversity because that creates diversity of thought and fresh ideas. Ronald also insisted that diversity helps to create a variety of thoughts. Ronald stated, "Diversity assists with new thoughts and also makes the organization more agile." Likewise, Daniel emphasized the importance of diversity. Daniel mentioned, "One must evolve with the change to be able to react to the future and an intricate part of retention strategies by acknowledging changing cultures.

Direct Observations

During direct observations, each leader demonstrated a communicative tone, which encouraged teamwork, extensive discussions with respect to time, and diversity of thought. Ronald specifically requested that each employee collaborate to exchange ideas. Likewise, Ricky and Lola suggested that each employee work together to achieve an established organizational goal.

Organizational Documents

Understanding the importance of a diversified workforce, the federal government has an entire directorate focused on the proper integration of diversity and inclusion. The personnel in that directorate are prepared to: (a) shift workplace demographics, (b) develop comprehensive strategies to integrate diversity, and (c) improve services to all populations. There are also inherent implementations to create a ready workforce by emphasizing human capital while improving organizational effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Alliance

Organizations have the ethical responsibility to implement diversity to ensure inclusion results in positive behaviors (Rabi et al., 2020). Managing diversity is an ethical need that can impact retention (Lozano & Escrich, 2017). Diversity creates a learning environment through an inclusive approach that creates a unique balance of belonging within organizations (Podsakoff et al., 2009).

Emulating ethical morality creates admiration from subordinates (Burns, 1978). There is an apparent link between diversity and the transformational leadership trait, idealized influence. The leader exercises consistent high morals centered around inclusion, inciting admiration from each subordinate. A transformational leader employs idealized influence to affect group behaviors by portraying a strong role model with high ethical standards that employees wish to follow (Northouse, 2016). Transformational leaders are highly concerned with equality and insist that their employees maintain high morals (Burns, 1978). A transformational leader consistently demonstrates the importance of diversity in organizational cultures (Dong et al., 2017). Additionally, employees may emulate leader behaviors because of their high level of respect and admiration (Dong et al., 2017).

Through literature examination and field studies, Rabi et al. (2020) concluded that employee perceptions of integration and diversity positively link to an ethical virtue. Additionally, ethical virtue conveys employee perceptions on the integration of diversity measures, behaviors, and workplace deviance, all of which impact retention.

Theme 4: Stimulating Psychological Incentives

Simulating psychological incentives was the final consistent strategy indicated by my participants while discussing effective leadership strategies to enhance retention. Each employee maintains intellectual motivation but may not volunteer such data. The main reason centers around trust, highlighting the importance of transparency and an effective leadership style (Weisman, 2017). Creating an emotional connection may allow an opportunity to create a psychological contract with each employee (Davis & Van der Heijden, 2018). Reaching an employee on a psychological level enhances creativity and may allow them to match their individual values to the organization (Davis, & Van der Heijden, 2018). Effectively aligning individual values to organizational values occurs on an intellectual level (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Additionally, mental stimulation arbitrates employee behaviors allowing for enhanced creativity (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

It is vital to relate to your subordinates to build a relationship (Burns, 1978). The only accurate implementation method is ensuring that the foundational factor of trust is consistent (Weisman, 2017). Doing so provides the capacity to effectively stimulate each employee’s creativity while encouraging a growth mindset; however, trust is the underlining factor (Yang & Treadway, 2018). Lola highlighted the importance of trust to enhance retention. Lola stated, “One must create an environment of trust, take care of people, and not make employees feel subordinate.”

Creating an environment of trust means allowing your employees the ability to exercise their creativity through the stimulation of psychological incentives (Anjali & Anand, 2015). One must have consistent opportunities for intellectual stimulation. If you intellectually neglect employees, their level of job commitment may suffer, negatively affecting retention (Anjali & Anand, 2015). Daniel emphasized the importance of creativity through stimulation. Daniel stated, “Empowering employees to make decisions while avoiding micromanaging risks could impact an employee’s decision to remain in an organization.” Likewise, Ronald referred to the importance of psychological stimulation. Ronald mentioned, “One must know the psychometrics of employee behaviors, strengths and weaknesses, and how to energize them.”

Direct Observations

During direct observations, each leader emphasized the importance of psychological stimulation. For instance, Ricky discussed directorate highlights and current organizational news. Ricky’s actions allowed each employee the ability to remain informed while adjusting the outcomes of their assigned workloads toward organizational success. Doing so incited individual creativity. Lola allowed each employee to brief their perspectives areas. Although she provided encouraging feedback, each employee exercised their creativity by implementing their methods of resolving potential concerns.

Ronald asked several clarifying questions. Doing so appeared to enhance psychological stimulation because each employee had to think on a more creative and strategic level. Daniel insisted on innovative methods for resolving organization concerns by allowing each employee the opportunity to brief their plans without interference.

Organizational Documents

Upon reviewing and analyzing federal government organizational documents, I found apparent retention strategies. For instance, several documents highlighted enhanced employee opportunities through unbiased individual creativity for those with disabilities. The federal government aims to invest in employees through formal and informal learning. Compensation allows for flexibilities in salaries and leaves while appropriately rewarding good performance, and leadership and career development.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Alliance

Academic literature confirms the discoveries in Theme 4 on the essential necessities to stimulating psychological incentives. Effectively stimulating an employee in a psychological capacity enhances (a) moral reasoning, (b) creates self-awareness, (c) allows them to internalize their moral perspectives while creating a balance in authentic processes and, (d) enhances the overall relational transparency (Northouse, 2016).

Employees must have a high level of trust in their leader to achieve intellectual stimulation (Burns, 2003). Schultz (2014) posited that trust allows the employee to feel a sense of empowerment, which fuels their individual abilities. Trust enhances creativity and builds empowerment through consistency and precision (Bass, 1985; Schultz, 2014).

A transformational leader has the intuitive ability to enable employees to achieve established organizational goals through empowerment (Burns, 2003).

Mental stimulation enhances organizational commitment creating a sense of ownership (Han & Kim, 2018). Encouraging creativity allows the employee to learn through psychological growth as applicable in intellectual stimulation, a prevalent transformational leadership trait (Burns, 1978). A transformational leader thoroughly stimulates their employee's creativity by encouraging innovation (Northouse, 2016). Adopting a transformational leadership style promotes mental stimulation through the challenge of resolving organizational concerns while enhancing originality (Northouse, 2016).

Han and Kim's (2018) empirical study with over 17,000 participants, insisted that stimulating employees on a psychological level has a direct positive link to organizational commitment. Han and Kim (2018) concluded that mental stimulation can positively affect retention. Likewise, Engelbrecht and Samuel's (2019) mixed-methods study with 207 participants confirmed that a transformational leader positively impacts retention through perceived organizational support.

Applications to Professional Practice

People are the critical assets in organizations, and leadership plays an important role in retention. A loss of talent highlights poor retention rates and creates a precarious workforce. Correcting retention concerns is of high importance to increasing proficiency while positively affecting: (a) the overall competitive advantage, (b) organizational performance, (c) and the reduction of recruitment and training costs. Successful retention may improve government services through organizational sustainment, heightening business value to stakeholders and consumers.

The findings are relevant to improved business practice through the ideology of (a) inspirational motivation, (b) individual consideration, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) idealized influence. Effective leadership strategies are consistent indications of successful retention strategies. Supervisory government employees can use the findings of this study to implement proven retention strategies by employing (a) idiosyncratic employee engagement, (b) specific relational transmissions, (c) promote diversity, (d) and stimulating psychological incentives. My intention is that the findings assist supervisory government leaders with effective retention strategies.

Implications for Social Change

Leadership plays a pivotal role in social change efforts. Leadership can influence society to overcome obstacles for positive social transformations (Rast et al., 2018). An individual may learn their leadership style through tangible experiences associated with mission accomplishments (Wagner & Mathison, 2015). Concrete experiences shape leadership styles by creating a connection through specific meaning making (Wagner & Mathison, 2015). Appropriate leadership initiatives have the power to connect organizations within the local communities (Wagner & Mathison, 2015). Leaders have a moral obligation to minimize hindrances toward positive progress for social change efforts (Fine, 2016). Since there is a connection between the concern of post-modernism and power, leaders must empower subordinates with knowledge while enhancing the intelligibility of the need for social change (Fine, 2016). Additionally, superiors' performance must convince subordinates to emphasize the importance of social change (Fine, 2016).

This study's findings may provide a practical template to federal supervisory employees on effective leadership strategies toward reducing poor retention rates. Such reduction may further decrease organizational costs associated with recruitment and training, increasing organizational sustainment and availability of services. The overall improvement of government services may benefit citizens as job sustainment may decrease talent loss while improving government agencies and local communities' social conditions.

Recommendations for Action

Recommendations concomitant with the study's findings include (a) creating a sense of collectiveness in the organization to motivate and influence subordinate behaviors, (b) exercise consideration when assigning duties by gaining complete knowledge of individual strengths and weaknesses through relationship building, (c) excite intellectual stimulation by allowing subordinates the ability to express creativity in their work while avoiding micro-managing, and (d) promote diversity to create a learning culture that enhances ethical values and workplace intelligence.

Supervisory federal government employees may find that employing the above recommendations may enhance retention within their organizations. Employing a transformational leadership style, vice a transactional leadership style, may highlight each employee's individual needs. Doing so may also help the superior to learn how to stimulate each subordinate to increased job satisfaction while enhancing retention. All supervisors should pay particular attention to implementing each recommendation.

I intend to disseminate my findings by providing each participant with a published copy of my study, if requested. Additionally, I will seek ProQuest publication to ensure scholastic and global availability. Lastly, I intend to publish a summary version of my findings in professional and academic journals relevant to federal government stakeholders.

Recommendations for Further Research

The overall focus of this study was identifying effective leadership and retention strategies in government agencies. The population for this study consisted of federal supervisory employees within a government agency in Washington, D.C. Additionally, the study was specific to the federal government.

I noted a few limitations to the study, including recommendations for further research. Limitations may create weaknesses or alter study conditions affecting validity (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The federal government's employees must adhere to established policies and regulatory guidance to ensure an impartial, proficient, and professional civil workforce. Therefore, my study may benefit the federal workforce, diminishing the previous population, and location limitation. However, additional study limitations include (a) limited to qualitative research parameters and (b) the potential of bias responses from participants.

Qualitative research effectively reviews practices unavailable in alternative methodologies yet may provide hybrid clarifications to multifaceted issues (Guercini, 2014; Gutmann, 2014). The federal government relies heavily on quantitative data via surveys to assist in highlighting the frequency of replies to capture the majority of responses. In future federal government research, one may consider employing electronic surveys in conjunction with interviews to capture a larger audience and increase the quality of responses. Surveyed data may further reduce bias as all answers are anonymous. Although the specific research question regulates the proper research tools, employing a survey may increase response rates while enhancing validity (Fincham & Draugalis, 2013). However, qualitative research may not wholly capture the frequency of implementing of strategies in numeral form, which is vital in government research. Therefore, one may consider incorporating quantitative data in future research, employing a mixed-methods approach.

Bias is a hindrance to the validity of research results (Cumyn et al., 2019). Researchers must keep in mind that participants are not co-researchers or collaborators (Collins et al., 2005). Gathering rich, valid data is imperative in research, rather than settling for socially acceptable responses. Therefore, in the future, researchers should: (a) have some level of familiarity with the federal government's organizational processes and policies, (b) employ member checking, (c) probe during interviews, and (d) strictly adhere to established interview protocols. Doing so may increase the opportunity to obtain rich and accurate data while potentially decreasing participants' biased responses.

Reflections

I understand the value of leadership in organizations and how a leader can impact subordinate retention and productivity toward meeting organizational goals. I gained such an understanding throughout my time as an active-duty Army officer, specifically during my tenure in the National Capital Region. During my attendance in the Organizational Leadership: Doctoral Theory and Practice course, my curiosity grew on how strategical approaches encompassed with positive changes in leadership styles could affect retention. Such curiosity shaped the outline of my doctoral study. After completing data collection and data analysis, I realize that leadership is not an esoteric trait, nor a cognitive ability, but more of a behavior. Employing such behaviors may stimulate psychological incentives in subordinates. Additionally, leadership requires you to be culturally conscious, highlighting the importance of diversity, employee engagement, and relational transmissions.

Previous experience in government agencies increased personal biases or preconceived ideas and values on effective retention strategies. However, extensive research and consistent guidance from committee members allowed me to learn objectively. Thoroughly analyzing collected data limited any potential effects of my personal bias. I do hope that supervisory government leaders find my study beneficial for enhancing successful retention strategies.

Conclusion

Leadership is an age-old concept employed to assist management with achieving organizational goals. Reducing poor retention becomes a reality when superiors adopt a transformational leadership style that effectively: (a) motivates, (b) influences, (c) engages, and (d) stimulates their subordinates in positive manners. A leader must prioritize their employee’s needs to gain their trust, effectively influence their behaviors, stimulate creativity, while creating a learning culture. Additionally, leaders should create an emotional connection with employees with the intention of building foundational trust.

Customizing your leadership style to each employee may be time-consuming but is a more effective way to building a relationship. A transformational leader views their organization holistically, but effectively motivates each employee through individual consideration. Employees feel value-added with increased job commitment, while their intentions to depart that organization significantly decreases.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter for Study Participants

[Date]

RE: Doctoral Study That May Be of Interest

Good Day, [Name]:

My name is Desiree Andrus and I am currently collecting data for a research study as a requirement for a doctoral degree from Walden University. The focus of my study is to explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. The title of the study is Leadership Strategies and Retention in Government Agencies. Your assistance will highlight distinctive perspectives to my research.

Please note the participation is voluntary.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at XXX@waldenu.edu or reply to this email.

Sincerely,

Desiree N. Andrus

Walden University Post Graduate Student

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol	
What I did	**What I said—script**
Introduced the interview and set the stage	The purpose of the study is to explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. Each interview may take up to 60 minutes, and you have the right to withdraw consent at any time. I will provide a summary of the findings after the interview. I will also transfer all verbiage into a Microsoft Word document and contact you to review all interpretations as part of the member checking process.
• Watched for non-verbal queues • Paraphrased as needed • Asked follow-up probing questions to get more indepth	1. What strategies do you have in place to enhance employee retention?
	2. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of strategies you use to enhance employee retention?
	3. What method did you find to work best to increase employee retention?
	4. What were the principal barriers to implementing your strategies for increasing employee retention?
	5. How did you address the principal barriers to increase employee retention?
	6. How did your employees respond to your techniques?
	7. What additional information would you add regarding strategies used to enhance employee retention?

Wrapped up interview thanking participant	Thank you for your participation. This concludes today's interview session.
Scheduled follow-up member checking interview	I will follow up the next week to allow you a chance to review my interpretations of your responses to ensure accuracy.
Follow–up Member Checking Interview	
Introduced the follow-up and set the stage	Thank you for your participation. As a reminder, the purpose of the study is to explore strategies that government leaders use to enhance employee retention. This follow–up interview may take up to 30 minutes, and you have the right to withdraw consent at any time.
Shared a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question Brought in probing questions related to other information discovered—note the information was related to my study and I adhered to the IRBs approval. Walked through each question, read the interpretation and asked: Did I miss anything? Or, what would you like to add?	1. What strategies do you have in place to enhance employee retention?
	2. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of strategies you use to enhance employee retention?
	3. What method did you find to work best to increase employee retention?
	4. What were the principal barriers to implementing your strategies for increasing employee retention?
	5. How did you address the principal barriers to increase employee retention?
	6. How did your employees respond to your techniques?

	7. What additional information would you add regarding strategies used to enhance employee retention?

Appendix C: Observation Protocol

***Tentative* Schedule**	*(A schedule of meetings received after IRB approval)*
Date:	*(A schedule of meetings received after IRB approval)*
(a) The Background: Physical setting (Describe in detail the surroundings.	
(b) The Leader: How does he/she address their subordinates? How does he/she start the meeting? How does he/she end the meeting? Does the leader allow their subordinates to speak during the meeting? Describe the leader's tone of voice. Describe the leader's body language.	
Additional Notes about the Leader:	

(c) Time:	(d) Observation: