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## Strategies for Reducing Voluntary Turnover in the Nonprofit Sector

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Alisa Elliot

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Walden University  
2021

Abstract

Strategies for Reducing Voluntary Turnover in the Nonprofit Sector

by

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MS, American Intercontinental University, 2014

BS, American Intercontinental University, 2013

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2021

## Abstract

Voluntary employee turnover is a critical problem that affects every business entity. Mitigating voluntary turnover and increasing employee retention allows business managers to increase organization performance, reduce financial burdens, and promote business sustainability. Grounded in Herzberg's two-factor theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies business managers use to mitigate voluntary turnover and increase employee retention in the nonprofit sector. The participants were three business managers from three different nonprofit organizations in a metropolitan area in Texas. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, organizational documents, and artifacts. Yin's five-step process was used to analyze the data, resulting in three themes: flexible working conditions impact employee retention, employee engagement influences employee retention, and growth factors motivate employees. A key recommendation is that business managers implement flexible work schedules to reduce voluntary employee turnover. The implications for positive social change include the potential to improve employability, workers' home life setting, and to better serve the community needs by keeping jobs local.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this study to those who have supported me along this intense yet rewarding journey. To my husband, Donald, thank you for sharing me with school since the first day we met. It is because of your encouragement and support that I was able to complete this remarkable journey. To Alex, Dylan, and Danica, thank you for always believing in me, supporting my goals, and making me proud to be mother. To Alex, Mathew, and Thomas, thank you for sharing your father with us and being a positive influence in the importance of continuing education. To my mother, Alice, thank you for being an exceptional role model who set the bar for hard work paying off. To my late father, Raymond, and my loving grandmother, Josie, the generational curse is lifted, and I love you all.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Nonprofits are vulnerable to voluntary turnover because of organizational size and labor-intensive work (Kang et al., 2014; Word & Park, 2015). Managers in the nonprofit sector should evaluate strategies that satisfy employees' needs to increase their long-term commitment to the organization. Researchers have postulated that analyzing human capital, including organizational practices, will increase sustainability and enhance the business competitive advantage (Anitha & Begum, 2016; Kim & Park, 2014). A critical aspect of increasing organizational performance is dependent on applying retention strategies to reduce voluntary turnover (Word & Park, 2015). Therefore, understanding what strategies nonprofit managers use to reduce voluntary turnover is essential to employee retention, business profitability, productivity, and overall organizational health (Elanain, 2014).

### **Background of the Problem**

Voluntary turnover is a critical problem that affects every business entity. Exploring strategies that business managers use to reduce voluntary turnover in the nonprofit sector can help increase the long-term retention of employees. Because of globalization, nonprofit managers compete with for-profit entities for workers with the same skillsets and capabilities, but nonprofits are at a disadvantage because of the inability to compensate at the for-profit level (Kim & Park, 2014; Weisberg & Dent, 2016). Managers in the nonprofit sector often encounter uncertainties because of a lack of financial resources; therefore, mitigating turnover is a top priority to protect the organization's monetary well-being (Selden & Sowa, 2015). Nonprofit managers who

implement strategies to reduce voluntary turnover may increase employee retention and decrease the monetary losses associated with an employee voluntarily quitting.

### **Problem Statement**

Voluntary turnover in the nonprofit sector creates financial burdens, reduces organization performance, increases longitudinal hardships, and challenges business sustainability (Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Nonprofit businesses account for 10% of the United States workforce and 9.2% of wages paid (Lee, 2016). The financial consequences of losing employees range from 90% to 200% of the annual compensation because of recruitment, training, and selecting new employees (Reina et al., 2018). The general business problem was the inability of business managers to retain skilled workers that negatively affect the organization's quality of performance and long-term sustainability. The specific business problem was that some nonprofit managers lack strategies to reduce voluntary turnover.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore strategies nonprofit managers use to reduce voluntary turnover. The targeted population of this study was three business managers from nonprofit organizations located in a metropolitan area in Texas who had experience in successfully reducing voluntary turnover. The implications for positive social change are the potential to improve employability and the retention of a skilled workforce to fulfill the nonprofit business organizations' missions in their communities. The findings of this study may assist managers by offering strategies that will improve employee work-life balance and decrease work-related stress.

### **Nature of the Study**

There are three research methods that researchers can use to conduct a study: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. Qualitative researchers engage with the participant and ask open-ended, semistructured questions to explore a phenomenon through the lens of participants involved in an event (Palinkas et al., 2015). The qualitative method was appropriate for this study because I wanted business managers' perspectives about voluntary turnover, and semistructured interview questions allowed me to gather the necessary information to explore this phenomenon. Quantitative researchers use existing conceptual models to confirm a hypothesis to gain a deeper understanding of an inquiry and relationship between the variables (Palinkas et al., 2015). I did not evaluate a hypothesis or seek to develop a prediction model; therefore, the quantitative method would not have been a suitable approach to take. The mixed method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques (Levitt et al., 2018). I did not select a mixed method approach because I did not collect quantitative data.

I considered three major types of qualitative research designs: case study, phenomenology, and ethnography. Researchers use a case study design to understand an event in a real-world, bounded work environment (Alpi & Evans, 2019; Morgan et al., 2016). A case study was the most suitable design for this study because voluntary turnover is an event that occurs in a real-world, work setting. Researchers use a phenomenological design when studying the personal meaning of participants shared, lived experiences (Letourneau, 2015). I did not select a phenomenological design because I did not seek to understand the personal meaning of the participants' shared, lived

experiences. Furthermore, researchers use the ethnographical design to observe and characterize an entire culture in a natural environment (Simpson et al., 2014). I did not select an ethnographical design because I did not seek to observe a group's culture in a natural setting.

### **Research Question**

What strategies do business managers use to reduce voluntary turnover?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies has your organization used to reduce voluntary turnover?
2. How were those strategies implemented to reduce voluntary turnover?
3. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of the strategies for reducing voluntary turnover?
4. What were the key barriers to implementing your successful strategies for voluntary turnover?
5. How did you address the key barriers to implementing your successful strategies for voluntary turnover?
6. What else would you like to tell me that can be helpful for studying strategies to reduce voluntary turnovers?

### **Conceptual Framework**

I selected the two-factor theory as the conceptual model to understand applied strategies to reduce voluntary turnover. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory is critical to the understanding of employee retention and includes factors that satisfy or dissatisfy an employee (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Herzberg et al. developed the two-factor

theory, also known as the motivation hygiene theory, to understand job satisfaction in the workplace (Alshmemri et al., 2017). The two-factor theory consists of hygiene and growth factors (Herzberg et al., 1959). Hygiene factors are extrinsic factors that include employment, benefits, policies, wages, quality of supervision, interpersonal relationships, and job security (Herzberg, 1974). The growth factors are intrinsic and include work achievement, praise, the possibility of growth, and advancement (Kotni & Karumuri, 2018; Lundberg et al., 2009). According to Herzberg et al., managers may improve employee job satisfaction when seeking to eliminate job dissatisfaction (Kotni & Karumuri, 2018). Herzberg (1974) deduced that hygiene and growth factors affect job satisfaction and impact employee retention. Exploring voluntary turnover through the lens of two-factor theory allowed for a greater understanding of the successful strategies nonprofit managers use to satisfy employees and reduce voluntary turnover in the nonprofit sector.

### **Operational Definitions**

The following operational definitions are provided to clarify specific terms used throughout the study:

*Extrinsic:* An attribute to an employee's condition of employment, benefits, policies, wages, and interpersonal relationships (Lundberg et al., 2009).

*Intrinsic:* The degree to which an employee wants to work well to achieve job satisfaction (Lloyd et al., 2017).

*Turnover intention:* The cognitive withdrawal from the work to a degree at which an employee considers voluntarily quitting (Lu & Gursoy, 2013).

*Voluntary turnover*: The state of an employee ending the work employment relationship indefinitely by choice (Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are unverified facts that practitioners believe to be true without factual evidence (Schoenung & Dikova, 2016). The first assumption I made was that the interview questions that were developed will answer the research question. My second assumption was that the participants would give truthful statements about their experience in reducing voluntary turnover. The third and final assumption was that I selected the appropriate research method and conceptual model with which to explore the phenomenon.

#### **Limitations**

Researchers evaluate limitations to understand the limits and the dependability of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The first limitation was that the number of participants in the study was small, which affects the transferability of the results to the general population. Another limitation was that the study population consisted of nonprofit managers and excluded nonmanagerial employees from the nonprofit and for-profit sectors. The last limitation was that the participants' relationships with their employer may not have been positive and their responses may not have accurately reflected the study population.



## **Delimitations**

Delimitations narrow the scope of the research and set boundaries (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The delimitations of this study were the businesses' geographical location, the participants' job duties, and the business sector itself. Participants of this study had to have a managerial role in a nonprofit business located in a metropolitan area of Texas. Additionally, nonmanagerial staff in the nonprofit sector, for-profit businesses, and employees not working in the metropolitan area of Texas were ineligible to participate.

## **Significance of the Study**

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

This study is significant because it can be a resource for nonprofit managers who want to find strategies to increase long-term employee retention and reduce voluntary turnover. Exploring voluntary turnover in the nonprofit sector was essential because the number of nonprofit businesses is increasing at the same rate as employee turnover (Kearney & Cogburn, 2016; Lee, 2016; Sun & Wang, 2016). Nonprofit managers may use the results of this study to evaluate their business retention strategies and understand factors that impact an employee's decision to quit voluntarily. Future practitioners may use the results of this study to help business managers sustain a skilled workforce, increase job embeddedness, and improve organizational effectiveness.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications for positive social change are the ability to decrease voluntary turnover, increase employee retention, and make employability sustainable. Managers

may use the findings of this study to improve their strategies for increasing employee job satisfaction. Satisfying work improves the quality of life for workers because it provides motivation and personal income, secures a social status, gives structure to daily living, and builds the employee's identity, all of which can benefit families of employees and their communities (Menges et al., 2017). Additionally, the employee-employer relationship influences the employee's feelings and behaviors in their home domain (Lin, Ilies, et al., 2017). The potential for social change also lies in improving the employee's job satisfaction, social status, and work-life balance, which can lead to the increased sustainability of nonprofit business and increasing employees' ability to support their communities and families.

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to analyze the strategies managers in the nonprofit sector use to retain employees. To complete the research for this study, I immersed myself in the research literature to identify the conceptual framework and explore themes associated with voluntary turnover in the workplace. I located relevant articles and journals through searching the following databases accessed through the Walden University Library: Business Source Complete, Emerald Management, Sage Publications Press, ABI/INFORM Complete, ProQuest Central, Psych INFO, Taylor & Frances, and Science Direct. The internet search engine, Google Scholar, was also used in the search. The following keywords were used: *voluntary employee turnover, employee turnover, job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, Herzberg's two-factor theory, nonprofit voluntary turnover, and employee retention*. I ensured that a

majority of the resources were peer-reviewed materials with a publication date within 5 years of my anticipated graduation date. References were stored in a Microsoft Excel file categorized by the author's name, publication date, and the section where the author's work is cited in the study.

The beginning of the literature review includes a brief description of the nonprofit sector, followed by an analysis of employee turnover, voluntary turnover, turnover intention, and employee retention. I then dissect Herzberg's two-factor theory and examine extrinsic and intrinsic work factors. Job satisfaction is vital to the theory of voluntary turnover because most nonprofit employees work for the intrinsic and altruistic rewards (Renz, 2016). Failure to satisfy employees' needs can increase the risk of employee turnover (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). I conclude the literature review with a discussion about the conceptual framework followed by an analysis concerning alternate models and theories.

### **Brief Overview of the Nonprofit Sector**

Over 1.48 million nonprofits are registered with the Internal Revenue Service to provide an array of services (LeRoux & Feeney, 2014). Nonprofit businesses include grassroots organizations, foundations, charities, schools, religious bodies, and health care entities and are categorized into the U.S. tax codes 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 as charitable organizations or 501(c)(4) as civic organizations (Hall, 2016). Nonprofit organizations differ from for-profit organizations primarily because of their revenue sources, organizational missions, and the governance of board members who influence the organization (Zhu et al., 2016).

Managers in the nonprofit sector depend on a skilled workforce for service delivery and achieving the organization's mission (Walk et al., 2018). Workers in the nonprofit sector contribute \$522 million in wages to the nation's overall workforce as well as account for 1.5 million jobs and 10% of U.S. total wages (Bright, 2016; Lee et al., 2017). Nonprofit businesses are essential to the U.S. economy because people depend on the sector for jobs and to fill the gaps of services that are beyond their financial means (Olinske & Hellman, 2017). Americans use nonprofit agencies to assist with a range of challenges, including hunger relief, residential housing, sick and shut-in care, research, and many other purposes (Abramson, 2016).

Nonprofit organizations operate without distribution constraints, and the revenue intake is dependent on the donors (Stewart & Diebold, 2017). Nonprofit businesses receive revenue from private and public donations, fees for goods and services, and returns from real estate or monetary assets (Álvarez-González et al., 2017; Stewart & Diebold, 2017). The general delivery of goods and services in the nonprofit sector is usually a labor-intensive endeavor (Word & Carpenter, 2013). Employees are vital stakeholders for nonprofits because they further the organizational mission using personal skills (Álvarez-González et al., 2017). Organizational success is contingent on employee contribution and commitment (Ibidunni et al., 2015). Examination of employee performance and turnover can offer insights into how a nonprofit board completes legal and stewardship obligations (Stewart & Diebold, 2017).

Corin et al. (2016) noted that some of the challenges nonprofit managers face are psychosocial and that the work conditions for the role include high job demands,

inadequate support systems, and scarce resources. Additionally, the nonprofit industry consists of an aging population with limited access to resources, including financial challenges, that make competing against for-profit entities for skilled workers difficult (Knapp et al., 2017). Managing turnover in conditions where there is a shortage of resources continues to be problematic for managers in nonprofit organizations (Knapp et al., 2017). The monetary loss when employees quit is detrimental to nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit business managers typically face challenges when replacing employees because of scarce resources and limited abilities to supply extrinsic employee benefits (Knapp et al., 2017).

Human capital is a powerful resource for business; therefore, reducing employee turnover is a priority (Mathieu et al., 2016). Exploring voluntary employee turnover in the nonprofit sector is critical because of the size and impact of the industry (Bright, 2016; Kearney & Cogburn, 2016). Managers need to understand voluntary turnover because human capital is essential to business sustainability (Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Voluntary employee turnover creates hardships and affects the profit margin of businesses and that can decrease the nonprofit organization's ability to meet their mission (Renz, 2016). Business managers are in a better position to capitalize on the human assets developed in the organization through employee retention when they understand why voluntary turnover occurs in their organization (Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

### **Employee Turnover**

No matter the location, size, or nature of a business, employee turnover is an event that every organization encounter (Gloor et al., 2017). Employee turnover is the

number of employees who permanently leave their jobs (Katsikea et al., 2015). The event of employee turnover is complex because the process includes longitudinal disengagement that consists of psychological, cognitive, and behavioral components (Hayward et al., 2016).

Employee turnover is expensive and increases indirect and direct financial hardships (Gloor et al., 2017; Huang & Su, 2016). Indirect costs of turnover include the collapse of the social market, a decline in employee morale, and an increase in work stress (Mamun & Hasan, 2017). The direct costs of turnover are the fees for selecting, recruiting, hiring, and training a new employee. Employee replacement costs exceed the expense of retaining a qualified worker and some organizations spend 50%-60% of a worker's salary to fulfill a replacement need (Kim & Park, 2014; Michael et al., 2016).

Turnover can weaken the organization's effectiveness by obstructing business continuity, negatively affecting the quality of production and the business operation (Mumtaz et al., 2018; Reina et al., 2018). When employees permanently leave the business, there is a decline in the business operation, performance, and productivity, including a profit loss (Reina et al., 2018). When employees leave, they take away learned skills that may influence the quality of the product and service. A decline in productivity can happen when a manager does not have sufficient time to train a new hire and the current worker is unable to complete a routine task at an optimum level (Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

Employee turnover can be positive when nonefficient workers depart the organization; however, when employees with superior skillsets leave voluntarily, it can

weaken the human capital of the business (Rajan, 2017). Lee et al. (2018) suggested that employee turnover jeopardizes business operations and negatively impacts institutional memory, competitive advantage, and overall expertise. Some scholars have opined that a misalignment between the employee and the employer is the underlying issue of employee turnover (Ribes et al., 2017). Holtom and Burch (2016) indicated that there is a relationship between employee turnover and organizational performance.

### **Voluntary Turnover**

Voluntary turnover is when an employee terminates their relationship with an employer and can be caused by job dissatisfaction, retirement, illness, promotion to another department, and/or personal life changes (Lo, 2015; Mamun & Hasan, 2017; Prottas, 2013). An employee may voluntarily quit for external reasons, such as dissatisfaction with the organizational culture, or poor advancement opportunities, or for internal reasons, such as family conflicts or the desire for personal growth and development (Prottas, 2013).

The complexity of voluntary turnover is multifaceted because it includes components that intertwine with the employee's decision to end their employment (Zopiatis et al., 2014). Researchers have not agreed on a set rule or system to determine the main reason for voluntary turnover (Ribes et al., 2017). However, business managers should not be deterred from understanding factors that impact an employee's decision to end employment with the organization.

Business managers cannot fully control voluntary turnover; however, they can mitigate the process by understanding what factors contribute to the event and how the

business environment impacts an employee's decision to quit (Gloor et al., 2017). Organizational instability, job-related stress, job dissatisfaction, and poor job embeddedness contribute to voluntary turnover (Nahar et al., 2017). Another primary factor of voluntary turnover is an attitudinal decline (Wong et al., 2016). Huang and Su (2016) reported that a positive relationship exists between an employee's attitude about the job and their work performance. Predictors of voluntary turnover are dependent on the employee's age, tenure, pay, and how the organization treats the employees (Ribes et al., 2017). Poudel (2016) found that workplace injustices, the lack of promotions, and unethical leadership are catalysts of voluntary turnover. Additionally, poor staffing decisions, weak and unfavorable grievance policies, an unhealthy work environment, and leaders who fail to motivate employees significantly increase the risk of voluntary turnover (Mamun & Hasan, 2017; Nahar et al., 2017).

Employees who feel they are not a good fit with the organization and the work environment are likely to have low job embeddedness and may quit the organization (Boon & Biron, 2016). However, when managers focus on dissatisfied employees' low job embeddedness and low organizational commitment, they can minimize the number of employees who decide to leave the organization (Mathieu et al., 2016). Skilled workers are less likely to leave an organization if there is a positive organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Robinson et al., 2014). Managers who strive to invest in employees and develop interpersonal relationships with workers are advantageous in reducing voluntary turnover (Peachey et al., 2014). Additionally, the implementation of policies to lessen voluntary turnover may help to minimize the total turnover and save the company



money (Mathieu et al., 2016). Failure to reduce and control voluntary turnover creates a significant loss to institutional business knowledge and profits as well as weakens overall competitive advantage (Cho & Song, 2017; Reina et al., 2018; Schmidt et al., 2018).

### **Turnover Intention**

Researchers have invested a considerable amount of time analyzing turnover intention (Hayward et al., 2016). Turnover intention is an employee's deliberate and conscious plan to leave an organization (Lin, Tsai, et al., 2017; Memon et al., 2014). Scholars have usually approached turnover intention from a value perspective lens and suggested that an employee's attitude towards the business mediates the intent to leave (Pepple, 2018).

Characteristics that influence turnover intention are the employee's age, pay, job satisfaction, career growth opportunities, and interpersonal relationships (Kang et al., 2014). Unrealistic job expectations, lack of commitment to the organization, poor organizational performance, and personal attitude are some factors that contribute to turnover intention (Christian & Ellis, 2014; Lo, 2015). A decline in job satisfaction is an indicator of turnover intention (Kim & Fernandez, 2017; Wang et al., 2017). An employee's relationships with coworkers can also influence their intent to quit. Christian and Ellis (2014) suggested that an employee's intent to quit voluntarily may influence other worker's decision to leave the organization. Furthermore, job-related stress can influence job dissatisfaction and increase turnover intention (Siddiqui & Jamal, 2015).

Some researchers have suggested that turnover intention is the best predictor of turnover behavior, which can lead to actual turnover (Lo, 2015; Yalabik et al., 2016).

Turnover intention becomes actual turnover when the employee surpasses the intent to leave and moves toward ending the employee-employer relationship (Holston-Okae, 2018). Some researchers have argued that turnover intention is not a good predictor for actual turnover because some employees fail to quit the organization (Cohen et al., 2016; Sun & Wang, 2016). Sun and Wang (2016) found that an employee's intent to leave an organization may not reach fruition because of future uncertainties, such as the ease of movement, family situation, and financial reasons.

Managers could reduce employee turnover intention when employees feel valuable to the organization (Nica, 2016). Employees feel valuable when managers honor promises and follow through on obligations (Chambel, 2014). Nazir et al. (2016) posited that managers can reduce employee quit intention when they provide autonomy, appropriate training, decision-making input, and encourage interpersonal support from coworkers. Peachey et al. (2014) suggested that managers can influence job commitment and reduce turnover intention by fostering relationships in the organization (Peachey et al., 2014).

### **Employee Retention**

Employee retention strategies are critical to organizational success, business competitive advantage, and sustainability. Developing retention strategies is important because the transferability of an employee's skillset (Strom et al., 2013). When managers invest in retention strategies, they can improve service quality, social responsibility, organizational morale, job satisfaction, and sustain human capital (Khalili, 2014). Retention methods should focus on employee sustainability and organizational culture,

climate, and commitment (Anitha & Begum, 2016; Mathieu et al., 2016). Creating retention strategies can be challenging because each employee has a different skill set, ability, and need.

Researchers indicated that a correlation exists between an employee's overall well-being and loss of human business capital (Sears et al., 2013). The employee's well-being is a multicomplex construct consisting of 26 ranges of life domains (work itself, emotional state, physical health, financial status, quality social interactions, and community); (Sears et al., 2013). Considering the employee's work-life balance is important when creating retention strategies (Campbell et al., 2014). When the managers implement strategies that allow freedom of leisure and recreation opportunities employees may reciprocate by investing time and commitment to the organization (Sharma & Nambudiri, 2020).

Before implementing retention strategies, managers need to consider how the outcome will increase employee retention, productivity, and quality of work (Campbell et al., 2014). Managers can increase employee retention when they provide performance-based compensation, clear organizational vision, and a sustainability program that develops talent (Holston-Okae, 2018). Additionally, managers that incorporate flexible work schedules and encourage employee productivity may increase employee job embeddedness (Peachey et al., 2014). Lyons et al. (2015) suggested that managers' focus on changes in the workforce, such as work values, attitudes, advancement, and development, are in an advantageous position to rethink strategies to address internal and external work problems.

Retaining employees in the nonprofit sector is achievable. Nonprofit managers can create a team environment that promote employee allegiance by implementing employee retention strategies (Strom et al., 2013). Effective retention methods in the nonprofit sector should include the organization's mission, the employee's work values, compensation, and job security (Jaskyte, 2015).

### ***Overview of Employee Needs***

Maslow (1943) recognized physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs as individual needs. The needs Maslow identified comprise a hierarchy of factors essential to motivation and self-development (Jones, 2016). Maslow classified the types of needs in order of importance (physiological, security, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization). Maslow's five categories of needs relate to the worker's decisions to leave or remain with the organization. The success of the organization is at risk when managers neglect to meet the internal and external needs of their workers (Boyd, 2014). Unmet needs and outside influence may interfere with the worker's self-realization of work achievement. Managers may motivate the workers' performance level and help to satisfy their psychological and physical needs when they recognize the importance of meaningful work and self-actualization in an employee's life (Martela & Pessi, 2018). Workers in the nonprofit sector may find motivation in the organization's mission and the support of critical stakeholders. Some nonprofit employees use the organization as a vessel to reach personal and societal goals that can mediate organizational commitment (Akbari et al., 2017).

### ***Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is a worker's overall emotional state about employment (Ashraf, 2019; Gelard & Rezaei, 2016). The feeling of contentment an employee exhibits when the organization meets their job expectations is job satisfaction, and if the employer is unable to fulfill the employee's job expectations, they will experience job dissatisfaction (Knapp et al., 2017; Lundberg et al., 2009). Some researchers postulated that job satisfaction results from the worker's perspective on job opportunities, workplace equality, and fair treatment from managers (Ball et al., 2017; Leavy, 2016). Employee job satisfaction and employee job dissatisfaction are two categories that empirical evidence strongly indicates as predictors of voluntary turnover.

Job satisfaction is important and is dependent on many variables that impact internal and external motivators (Slimane, 2017). Internal motivators are intrinsic and referred to as autonomous motivators and external motivators are extrinsic and recognized as controlled motivators (Potipiroon & Ford, 2017). Internal and external motivators can influence an employee's overall commitment to the organization (Slimane, 2017). When managers seek to strengthen a workers internal and external motivation the employee's level of job satisfaction will increase (Martin, 2018).

External work factors are important to keep employees satisfied however the overall job satisfaction level is higher and long-term employee sustainability increase when growth factors are met (Cronley & Kim, 2017). Employees are influenced by external factors but only temporarily (Slimane, 2017). External factors are needed to avoid job dissatisfaction but do not increase long-term employee retention.

### ***Work-Life Balance***

Work-life balance is the day-to-day interaction with family, friends, the community, and involves self-care while managing the demand of work duties (Chemirmir et al., 2017). The phenomenon of work-life balance is subjective and depends on the worker's demands. Work-life balance is a crucial factor in keeping employees satisfied with the work environment, work responsibilities, and the home life. Scholars postulated that a good work-life balance can foster job satisfaction, work performance and organizational commitment (Gragnano et al., 2019). Additionally, employees with a healthy work-life balance may exhibit less stress-related outcomes such as work stress and job burnout. Organizations that realize the importance of establishing equilibrium between an employee's work-life and home life can benefit from long-term rewards that include employee sustainability.

Employees' work-life can positively and negatively affect the home life (Hsu et al., 2019). Some positives of employees having a healthy work-life balance are enhanced creativity and innovation and that may increase organizational outcomes (Gragnano et al., 2019). Negative work-life outcomes are detrimental to the organization and affect the employee's morale, productivity, and attitude about the work itself. Prioritizing employee's work-life balance can influence employee morale and job satisfaction (Deery & Jago, 2015).

## **Herzberg's Two-factor Theory**

In 1959, Herzberg et al. published the two-factor theory, also known as the motivation hygiene theory and the dual factor theory (Eid, 2016; Kotni & Karumuri, 2018). Herzberg and associates developed the theory using Maslow's hierarchy of factors (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Herzberg et al. evolved Maslow's findings into essential managerial implications and suggested that managers provide hygiene factors to limit job dissatisfaction. Damij et al. (2015) suggested that motivation derives from a range of social factors that influence an employee's attitude about the job. Damij et al. concluded that motivated workers could improve productivity, work performance, and work motivation.

Herzberg et al. (1959) noted five psychological growth stages that employees experience: psychological growth, advanced comprehension, ability to adapt, personal development, and creativity. Herzberg et al. developed the two-factors that contribute to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction in the workplace. The two-factors are intrinsic and extrinsic traits that influence job satisfaction and mediate the workers' productivity (Damij et al., 2015). Employee job dissatisfaction factors are job security, employee status, organizational policies and procedures, regulations, wages, and the work environment (Kulchmanov & Kalianna, 2014).

Herzberg and associates (1959) developed the two-factor theory after interviewing 200 participants who worked for a Pittsburg manufacturer as accountants or engineers. The participants' feedback helped Herzberg gain subjective knowledge into how the workers perceived the company's attitude towards the workforce. Participants

gave examples of positive and negative feelings about work objectives, including describing how long the feelings last. Herzberg used the information to analyze why the employees felt satisfied or dissatisfied with their job and determined whether the feelings relate to performance, interpersonal relationships, or overall wellbeing (House & Wigdor, 1967). Herzberg et al. (1959) found that the participants' answers varied and were dependent on their attitude towards the work. Herzberg organized the employee's work perceptions into two categories: growth factors and hygiene factors. Herzberg et al. determined that growth factors (intrinsic) and hygiene factors (extrinsic) mediate the employee's positive and negative feelings.

### **Herzberg's Growth Factors**

Herzberg found that growth factors are intrinsic and motivate employees to push beyond performance boundaries (Fallatah & Syed, 2018). Herzberg categorized growth factors as the higher-level needs that pertain to the individual's psychological growth (Ashraf, 2019). Growth factors are the work itself, rewards and recognition, autonomy, and the possibility of growth (Lundberg et al., 2009). Employees' work performance should mirror their satisfaction level when managers seek to satisfy growth factors (Fallatah & Syed, 2018).

### ***The Work***

In the two-factor theory, the work itself is classified as intrinsic and relates to how the employee feels about the job duties (Herzberg et al., 1959). The work demand and available resources can impact an employee's attitude about the job and the work assignment and job duties are factors that positively or negatively affect the employee job



satisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Employees attitude about the work impacts their job satisfaction. Workers may experience a feeling of job satisfaction when they complete work-related tasks. Researchers found that a group of Nigerian midwives who enjoyed helping patients and completing their job duties exhibited job satisfaction (Adegoke et al., 2015).

A worker's attitude toward the job itself can change when the manager fails to provide sufficient resources to make the employee's job demands less strenuous. In Sweden, nurses who worked in an intense job environment with limited resources experienced work-related stress and exhibited job dissatisfaction (Holmberg et al., 2017). Holmberg et al. suggested that managers who strive to balance the employee's work demand may improve the workers' job satisfaction. Managers are in a better position to create a sustainable job for the workers when management understands how the work itself influence job satisfaction. The job duties should fit an employee's level of experience and the manager should provide support to assist with the job demand.

### ***Rewards and Recognition***

Rewarding and recognizing employees is important (Dahiya et al., 2014). A reward can be a promotion, salary, bonus, or other incentive for the employee's support to the organization (Sankar, 2015). Organizations can also use a nonmonetary reward process to balance a monetary reward system (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). Managers show recognition when recognizing the employee's efforts and contribution to the organization (Maurer & Chapman, 2018). Employee commitment and job satisfaction increase when managers show public support to employees (Jehanzeb et al., 2013).

Managers must relate to the organization's reward and performance system to employee job performance (Francis et al., 2020). Employers who create incentives that align with the organizational mission and employee predisposition help the employee gain a perspective of contributing to the organization and benefitting the society (Ritz et al., 2016). When management fail to align an award or recognition system the employee's job performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and trust diminish (White, 2015). Rewarding and recognizing employees effectively is critical as workers are more satisfied with the job when they receive accolades for a job well done (Babalola, 2016). Implementing a reward and recognition system increase employee satisfaction (Dahiya et al., 2014). Additionally, managers can significantly improve in attracting new candidates when incorporating a reward and recognition system (Ertas, 2015).

### ***Autonomy***

Autonomy is an essential factor that workers consider when deciding to remain with an organization (Ghosh et al., 2013). Many employees prefer work environments that embrace employee decision making (Duffy et al., 2015; Ritz et al., 2016). Some employees value the opportunity to make decisions, govern tasks, and contribute to the organization (Ghosh et al., 2013). Business managers benefit from encouraging employee autonomy (Coetzer et al., 2017).

Managers influence autonomy when they include employees in business decisions and encourage them to self-govern their job duties (Lyon, 2016). When managers delegate tasks the employee's responsibility, skillset, and interpersonal relationships

improve. Additionally, managers of organizations that allow job autonomy enhance the employee's work-life balance.

Deery and Jago (2015) suggested that work-life balance increase when managers allow employees to manage their time and job duties when they perform satisfactorily. Involving employees in organizational decisions can influence their job satisfaction and they are more inclined to stay with the organization (Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Employees who feel the freedom to contribute to the organization by adding value to its unique mission are more likely to remain with an organization (Ghosh et al., 2013).

### ***Advancement***

Companies that provide work advancement opportunities can motivate workers to go beyond the boundaries of job duties (Ghosh et al., 2013). Employee job satisfaction positively correlates with advancement opportunities such as promotions, bonuses, and incentives. Employees who think advancement is possible may have a favorable job outlook and usually have higher job satisfaction levels.

Companies that invest in human capital by providing development opportunities in skills and education reap long-term rewards (Maurer & Chapman, 2018). Employees who receive promotional opportunities may feel valuable. Managers who provide guidance and encouragement to mentees, peers, and advocates play a vital role in employee advancement (Schulz & Enslin, 2014). An appropriate career development program can enhance the probability of employee advancement and increase the managers' potential to hire and promote within the organization.

### ***Training and Development***

Training is critical because employees learn the attitudes and behaviors that reflect the organizational culture (Jehanzeb et al., 2013)., Employees consider the sacrifice of leaving an organization when the managers create a work culture where training and development are essential (Robinson et al., 2014). Many researchers agreed that managers who give employee training and development opportunities significantly impact the employee's decision to stay with the company (Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Managers who engage with employees by providing career development programs and offering career support can increase employee retention (Schulz & Enslin, 2014).

Managers who encourage employees to continue educational opportunities have more satisfied employees than businesses that do not offer the same opportunities (Jehanzeb et al., 2013). Christian and Ellis (2014) posited that leaders who invest in training and the development of employees provide valuable resources to increase job performance. Jehanzeb found that employee training positively correlates with employee's turnover behavior and organizational commitment (Jehanzeb et al., 2013). An employee may consider the number of training opportunities the organization provided before deciding to quit.

### **Herzberg's Hygiene Factors**

Hygiene factors are critical to an employee's job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Hygiene factors do not motivate employees; however, failure to supply hygiene factors may cause work dissatisfaction (Lundberg et al., 2009). Lacey et al. (2015) suggested that hygiene factors may meet the workers'

current job satisfaction but does not guarantee their future job satisfaction. Working conditions, compensation and benefits, company policy, leadership, interpersonal relationships in the workplace, and job security are hygiene factors in the two-factor theory (Alshmemri et al., 2017; Lundberg et al., 2009).

### ***Working Conditions and the Work Environment***

Working conditions and the work environment are critical factors of job satisfaction (Siddiqui & Jamal, 2015). Work conditions and work environment are broad terms that cover various elements in the workplace. The job environment and the work climate impact the employee's working condition significantly (Sun & Wang, 2016).

Companies with flexible work conditions demonstrate that they value work-life balance (Sánchez-Hernández et al., 2019). Businesses can mitigate worker's poor feelings about the working conditions by providing a safe and comfortable environment for employees. Alshmemri et al. (2017) suggested that work conditions that are difficult, repetitive, or tedious can impact job satisfaction. Organizations experience a higher degree of work efficiency, productivity, and job commitment from satisfied employees when providing satisfying work conditions (Bexheti & Bexheti, 2016; Khoreva et al., 2017).

Employees who work in a stable environment are more likely to stay with the organization (Mamun & Hasan, 2017). An unstable work environment and work stress can lead to job dissatisfaction (Siddiqui & Jamal, 2015). Managers who ignore the work environment can create an adverse effect on the employee's work performance (Monga et al., 2015; Shu et al., 2018). When employees are dissatisfied with poor working

conditions, there is a significant chance that they may seek external work opportunities (Ghosh et al., 2013).

### ***Compensation and Benefits***

Compensation is a quantitative measurement of an employee's worth to an organization and the rate of pay depends on the industry, the competition, the ability to pay, and the employee's expertise (Poudel, 2016). An employee's professional industry, expertise, and age can impact their level of importance when compensated and receive benefits. Poudel suggested that managers who routinely review employee compensation significantly increase employee retention. Most compensation systems do not internally motivate a worker although the pay rate is a critical factor for employees (Nazir et al., 2016). Organizations with weak competitive wages and a low pay system may increase employee job dissatisfaction (Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

Employees who work in the nonprofit sector job satisfaction level may not be as affected as workers in the for-profit sector. Johnson and Ng (2015) determined that workers in the nonprofit sector are not prone to crossover to the for-profit sector regardless of receiving low wages compared to counterparts in the for-profit industry. Johnson and Ng noted that millennial managers in the nonprofit sector are more influenced to cross sectors to increase pay. Johnson and Ng suggested that millennial managers decide to leave the organization because of educational and managerial positions in the organization.

### ***Company Policy***

Company policy is different in each organization and influence workers on multiple levels. Herzberg et al. (1959) suggested that a company's policy negatively affects a worker's attitude among their peers. Herzberg et al. postulated that employees often have a negative perspective about company policies and think that the policies are created for the advancement of workers with a formal education. There is empirical evidence that the company's policies significantly decrease employee motivation and increase a worker's decision to voluntarily leave the organization (Muslim et al., 2016). Managers should ensure that policies are just and fair and positively impact the worker's job satisfaction.

Several researchers agreed that organizations that have work-life balance policies positively impact the employee's attitude about the job and increase job satisfaction, productivity, and retention (Chemirmir et al., 2017). Work-life policies that include a flexible work schedule, holistic counseling, childcare centers, and temporal agreements indicate to workers that the organization realizes the importance of balancing work and life. Managers can achieve the most out of employees when organizations have policies that improve the work-life balance (Erwin et al., 2019).

### ***Leadership***

Leadership is considered a primary factor in organizational change (Yasir et al., 2016). Leaders provide direction to followers to reach a common goal and set the tone for the attitudes and behaviors needed to achieve an outcome. Some researchers postulated that leadership behavior fosters effective management of employees and influences work

commitment and productivity (Babalola, 2016). The leader's behavior impacts the employee's decisions and work perception at various levels in the organization. Additionally, the leaders influence the employees' attitudes and behavior towards the organization (Applebaum et al., 2015). Many researchers agreed that organizational leaders mediate the overall outcome of the business because management having a direct line to the business and the workers (Chaudhry et al., 2015).

Waldman et al. (2015) suggested that the organizational leadership role impacts the employee's attitude about the company. Leadership is a continuum of phases that initiates from an ineffective leadership style to a transactional leadership style, and ends with transformational leadership (Yasir et al., 2016). Laissez-fair leaders are noneffective and do not bring about organizational change. Yasir suggested that transactional leaders are driven by employees meeting specific expectations in exchange for a reward. Transformational leadership focuses on the growth and development of the employees (Erwin et al., 2019). Transformational leaders transform the organizational culture and align the employees to achieve positive outcomes (Yasir et al., 2016).

Ethical leadership is vital to organizational success and positively impacts employee behavior and attitudes within the organization (Benevene et al., 2018). Leaders who are ethical exhibit qualities that are just and allow workers to openly express their work perspective. Poor leadership and inconsistent management can increase employee dissatisfaction and work-related stress (Mamun & Hasan, 2017). When leaders fail to motivate, encourage, or build connections with employees they can expect job dissatisfaction.



### ***Interpersonal Relationships***

Mamun and Hasan (2017) suggested that an employee's interpersonal relationship significantly impact a worker's turnover intention. Employees experience a shared phenomenon when trying to be effective in the workplace with their colleagues (White, 2015). According to Parker and Gerbasi (2016), when managers establish relationships between individuals or groups in the workplace, employees become less likely to leave. The importance of interpersonal relationships in an organization is evident in empirical studies that indicated that instrumental connections with coworkers build work relationships.

Interpersonal relationships can impact others in the organization. Mamun and Hasan (2017) evaluated 477 workers in 15 departments and found that the employees with a positive perception about colleagues leaving the organization influenced the remaining employees to desire to quit. Employees who exit the organization may cause distress within department teams. Parker and Gerbasi (2016) suggested that the departure of an employee can interrupt the team's achievement and have adverse effects on organizational performance. When an influential worker departs, the probability of additional employee turnover in that department increase.

### ***Job Security***

Workers value a workplace that is secure and safe (Maslow, 1943). Job security is a factor that corresponds to the level of physiological needs in the Maslow hierarchy. Employees associate job security with safety needs, and failure to satisfy these needs may lead to job dissatisfaction (Gharib et al., 2017). Purohit and Bandyopadhyay (2014)

studied data from 92 medical officers in three states in India and determined that job security is a significant factor for their employment. Managers who advocate to improving workplace morale, consider the worker's well-being, and offer development opportunities increase job security (Masum et al., 2015).

Managers gain employee commitment when offering a sense of job continuity (Kassa, 2015). Employees may perceive high performers and organizational work practices indicators of the company's level of job security. Word and Park (2015) found that job security is essential in employee motivation and influence nonprofit employees work commitment. Some employee's perception of job security is different. Shamsudin et al. (2011) postulated that some workers focus on career development and may not find job security a motivating factor.

### **Herzberg's Two-factor Theory and Job Satisfaction**

Maslow's hierarchy of factors is five categories that are essential to human motivation and self-development (Jones, 2016). The factors in the theory consist of two categories: hygiene factors and growth factors, which are also known as motivators (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Herzberg and associates determined that hygiene factors and growth factors mediate an employee's positive and negative feelings about the work. In Herzberg et al. (1959) seminal work, *The Motivation to Work*, Herzberg and associates improved the motivation hygiene theory by explaining that the overall satisfaction of the employees working for an organization mediates job satisfaction. Herzberg et al. noted that the satisfiers (satisfaction) and dissatisfiers (dissatisfaction) influence turnover intention.

Herzberg described the growth factors as intrinsic traits that include work itself, rewards and recognition, autonomy, and the possibility of growth (Lundberg et al., 2009). Growth factors in the two-factor theory represent the worker's motivation to push beyond performance boundaries (Fallatah & Syed, 2018; Herzberg et al., 1959). According to Herzberg (1974), a worker will perform at the optimal level when growth factors are satisfied. Managers who encourage intrinsic rewards and social activities significantly impact the employee's commitment to the organization (Nazir et al., 2016). When managers fail to fulfill an employee's, growth factors their job performance decrease (Lundberg et al., 2009).

Hygiene factors are extrinsic traits that relate to the conditions of employment, compensation, benefits, company policy, administration, and interpersonal relationships in the workplace (Alshmemri et al., 2017; Lundberg et al., 2009). Hygiene factors do not motivate workers; however, failure to fulfill the needs may lead to job dissatisfaction. Sankar (2015) completed a study with participants in the paper mill industry and found that the workers consider hygiene factors essential. In Sankar's research, the scholar determined that a direct relationship between hygiene factors and employee retention exists. Although employees may be satisfied, job dissatisfaction can happen when hygiene factors are absent. Mamun and Hasan (2017) noted that the primary reason for turnover is because of job dissatisfaction.

### **Criticism of the Two-factor Theory**

Some researchers criticized the two-factor theory by explaining that today's motivation factors are drastically different from when Herzberg et al. (1959) proposed the

theory (Damij et al., 2015). Herzberg's approach to understanding motivating work factors fail to include the transition of globalization, knowledge transfer, and technology. Ozsoy (2019) suggested that the contextual situation (e.g., income, personality, and country) could affect Herzberg's theory and that the two-factor theory needs testing on people with diverse cultures, occupations, personalities, and those who live in different countries. For instance, not every worker shares the same attitude or belief, and motivational factors differ since the individual's attitude is formed before they enter the workforce. Different employees may have varying work expectations depending on their occupation and location (Jaiswal et al., 2014). The worker's geographical location can affect their motivation especially when they are from an economically underdeveloped country (Ozsoy, 2019). People who lived in an underdeveloped country may set different expectations than those working to increase their compensation.

Herzberg's two-factor theory is useful with diverse populations; however, there are limitations to the theory (Yusoff et al., 2013). Herzberg identified specific factors that the participant can select and categorize as satisfiers or dissatisfiers. The participant may become confused when trying to decide how to group a factor and may wrongly categorize the factor (Yusoff et al., 2013). Additionally, the intrinsic and extrinsic factors may change over time because the individual's life stage and professional outlook (Ho et al., 2016). Kultalahti and Viitala (2014) suggested that Herzberg's theory does not consider generational changes in the workforce and that recent generations have different intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Kultalahti and Viitala suggested that millennials regard

flexible jobs and good interpersonal relationships with peers and managers to be more critical motivators than previous generations.

Criticism of Herzberg's theory does not stop leaders from using the two-factor theory. The theory remains relevant in understanding what satisfies or dissatisfies the workforce. The two-factor theory may be useful for implementing programs that enhance job satisfaction, increase productivity, increase retention, decrease job dissatisfaction, and reduce overall turnover (Amarasena et al., 2015). Mobley (1977) found that the primary factors of voluntary turnover are job dissatisfaction and available job opportunities. Furthermore, the notion that the two-factor theory is useful when exploring voluntary turnover. Mobley determined that job dissatisfaction is a multilayer process that begins with seven steps: (a) thinking of quitting; (b) evaluating job opportunities and the cost of quitting a current job; (c) having an emergent attitude to look for an alternative job; (d) searching for alternative job; (e) evaluating identified alternatives; (f) evaluating the pros and cons of the current job and alternative jobs; and (g) having the intention to quit, which eventually leads to actual turnover.

### **Alternative Models and Theories**

The following information in this section provides an overview of relevant models and theories that I considered when deciding the theoretical framework for this study. The theoretical framework is a blueprint and a guide to conduct the construct and support the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The models and theories in this section focus on the employee's decision to leave the organization and the intrinsic benefits some workers receive when working in the public sector.

### *March and Simon's Model*

Voluntary turnover is a phenomenon that is multifaceted and complex. Scholars refer to the March and Simon (1958) seminal model when exploring voluntary employee turnover (Boswell et al., 2017). March and Simon created the earliest turnover process model (Lee et al., 2018). An employee's option to find another job is an indicator of voluntary turnover according to March and Simon's model (Boswell et al., 2017). A proximal factor of turnover is the desirability to leave the organization and the perceived ease of movement (Lo, 2015). The employee's ease of movement is dependent on the economy, employee expertise, and job alternatives (Boswell et al., 2017). When employees search for work opportunities outside of the organization, the chances of actual turnover increase.

March and Simon created the voluntary turnover model to demonstrate the importance of organizational equilibrium (Lo, 2015). An employee will remain with an organization if the benefits are equal to or greater than the contributions made by the employee. If the benefits and contributions do not balance, then the desirability and ease of movement become factors in the employee's decision to leave the organization (Lo, 2015). Prabhu and Drost (2017) suggested the equilibrium of desirability, ease of movement, and available job opportunities as the primary mediators in voluntary employee turnover research. An employee's desire to leave an organization relates to job satisfaction (Lo, 2015). March and Simon suggested that the economy plays a definite role in an employee's decision to voluntarily leave an organization. I did not select March and Simon's model because the model is about an employee's quit intention because of

external opportunities and does not capture the managerial practices used to reduce voluntary turnover.

### ***The Unfolding Model***

In 1994, Lee and Mitchell developed the unfolding model (Crawford et al., 2019). The unfolding model is comprised of four psychological and behavioral paths that employees encounter when deciding to leave an organization voluntarily. Push pull factors influence an employee's psychological process to quit and influence the employee's turnover decision. The four unfolding model paths are (a) initial psychological shock, (b) a script that depicts a plan of action, (c) research, and (d) image violations (Crawford et al., 2019). Lee and Mitchell (1994) acknowledged that not every employee follows this path directly. Lee and Mitchell posited that the employee's decision to leave the organization relates to the desirability and ease of movement.

Employees consider the two forces, push and pull, when deciding to search for an alternative job (Mathieu et al., 2016). The external factor (pull) and internal factor (push) are significant in the role of voluntary turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). The concept is that the market influences the employee's turnover behavior (pull), but psychological behavior mediates the decision (push). Tse et al. (2013) categorized push pull into three predictors: the employee's decision to withdraw, the perceived ease of movement, and the force pulling an employee to stay. The force pushing the employee to leave is the job dissatisfaction that an employee feels toward the organization (Tse et al., 2013).

The opportunities available in the public sector mediate the employee pull to leave predictors (Tse et al., 2013). The stability of the economy mediates the employee's

decision to voluntarily leave the organization and the supply and job demand are job alternatives (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). The ease of movement and the availability of jobs are push factors that the employees consider before ending employment (Gerhart, 1990; Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Mathieu et al., 2016). Push factors create situations that cause significant discomfort, and pull factors are financial and influence the probability of finding new work (Mathieu et al., 2016). Push factors are job related perceptions, including the employee's attitude towards the job.

In comparison with the two-factor theory, the unfolding model is a decision model that represents the employee's decision process to voluntarily leave the organization (Lee et al., 1999). The unfolding model helps to understand the employee's decision process to quit; however, not all employees exit a job and follow the unfolding model because of internal and external factors. Some of the internal and external factors can be mitigated by strategies put in place by the managers. The research inquiry focus is about reducing voluntary turnover from a manager's perspective and does not focus on the employee's psychological process of quit intentions.

### ***Public Service Motivation***

Public service motivation (PSM) is a theoretical model that differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate employees (Word & Carpenter, 2013). Many workers in the public service industry display PSM (Bakker, 2015; Bright, 2016; Word & Carpenter, 2013). Bright (2016) suggested that altruistic needs may influence employees to work in the public service sector. Employee's job-related goals drive their choice in determining work value (Jaskyte, 2015). Nonprofit workers place a high value on helping



others and receive motivation from the mission and values of the organization (Word & Carpenter, 2013). Workers in the nonprofit sector typically look beyond monetary compensation and benefits because of an interest in meaningful and motivating work.

Motivating public employees to work in a field that helps individuals and protects the public interest is vital in establishing a healthy and empathic society (Ritz et al., 2016). When a worker and employer share similar values, the alignment of organizational values is consistent (Memon et al., 2014). A nonprofit employee's motivation is typically intrinsic factors that mediate the reason and purpose for working (Word & Carpenter, 2013).

There is empirical evidence that employees with PSM demonstrated high levels of individual work performance and this increased organizational performance levels (Huang, 2019). Huang discussed a study where researchers analyzed responses from randomly selected U.S. federal employees with high PSM. The researcher indicated that employees with increased levels of PSM received a higher performance appraisal rating. PSM might influence employee perceptions of organizational performance. The results from the analysis of data collected from a survey of 1,739 public workers in South Korea indicated that workers with a high level of PSM had a positive attitude about the organization's overall performance. There is some debate about the correlation between PSM and job performance (Miao et al., 2018) suggested that the correlation between PSM and job performance is inconclusive.

PSM can have a downside and may impact the employees' job stress, work-value lens, job dissatisfaction, and disengagement (Ritz et al., 2016). Ritz et al. suggested that

overzealous behavior is problematic in an organization and creates detrimental effects on interpersonal relationships and negatively affects the organizational culture. Employees who display overzealous behaviors can eventually experience work burnout and a poor work-life balance (Bakker, 2015). PSM theory focuses on how the employee's altruism and pro social activities mediate work performance (Huang, 2019). I did not select the PSM theory as the conceptual foundation for the research inquiry because not all public workers are not motivated to work in the public sector for altruistic reasons. Additionally, I do not seek to understand how the employees' motivation for the organization's mission impacts their decision to stay.

### ***Job Embeddedness***

Job embeddedness is a worker's perception of internal and external factors that affect his or her attitude towards the job (Coetzer et al., 2017). Job embeddedness is a theory about factors that influence the employee's decision to stay rather than to leave an organization and relate to job satisfaction. Mitchell et al. (2001) suggested that three factors influence an employee's decision not to leave an organization: the employee's relationship with the job and community, fit in the organizational environment, and the cost or sacrifice involved in leaving the organization (Coetzer et al., 2017). Coetzer et al. suggested that link, fit, and sacrifice are what create job embeddedness.

Coetzer et al. (2017) studied participants in small and large organizations to understand if job embeddedness is a predictor in employee turnover decisions. The researchers found that job embeddedness is a predictor in turnover intentions in large organizations but not a predictor in small organizations. Coetzer et al. suggested that

employees working at small organizations perceived leaving as more sacrificial than those exiting a large organization. I did not select job embeddedness because the phenomenon is about the employee's internal and external perceptions about the job. I do not seek to explore the managers' personal feelings about their relationship with the organization.

I did not to use the alternative models and theories in this section as the conceptual framework to the research inquiry, but I found the models and theories beneficial for building the study. The theory that researchers select for a study should help to provide a conceptual base for understanding, analyzing, and investigating a phenomenon (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The conceptual framework is useful in specifying and defining complexities with the phenomenon. The research question is what strategies managers use to reduce voluntary turnover and is not about what predictive factors employees consider before leaving an organization. However, understanding the employee's decision process and the factors they consider before quitting is important when analyzing voluntary turnover.

### **Transition**

In Section 1, I provided an overview of the foundation of the study. I discussed the background of the problem, provided the problem statement, reviewed the nature of the study, research question, and interview questions. Section 1 included an overview of the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. I concluded Section 1 by stating the significance of the study, listing how

the study may contribute to business, and providing a robust synthesis of professional literature about voluntary turnover.

In Section 2, I explain the project. The first portion of Section 2 includes the purpose statement and the role of the researcher and participants. In the second portion of Section 2, I provide an overview of the research method and design, population and sampling, and ethical research. Next, I discuss the data collection process and include the data collection instruments, data collection technique, and data analysis. I finish Section 2 by reviewing the reliability and validity of the study. In Section 3, I present the findings of the study, discuss how the results may be applied to professional practices, the implications of social change and the recommendations for future researchers. I concluded by reflecting on the process of completing the research.

## Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I provide an overview of the project plan by first reiterating the purpose statement followed by an explanation of my role as the researcher. Details about the participants, the research method and design, and the population and sampling are presented. I also explain the data collection instruments and technique used as well as the data analysis process. The section concludes with a description of how the reliability and validity of the study were achieved.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore strategies nonprofit managers use to reduce voluntary turnover. The targeted population of this study was three business managers from nonprofit organizations located in a metropolitan area of Texas who had experience in successfully reducing voluntary turnover. The implications for positive social change are the potential to improve the employability and retention of a skilled workforce to fulfill the nonprofit business organizations' missions in their communities. The findings of this study may assist managers by offering strategies that will improve employees' work-life balance and decrease work-related stress.

### **The Role of the Researcher**

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument and impacts every phase of a qualitative, field-based study (Denzin, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). I am the primary data collection instrument of this study as the researcher. Several scholars have agreed that the researcher's role is to design the study, recruit participants,

conduct interviews, transcribe and interpret data, analyze and verify data, and report themes and concepts (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Sanjari et al., 2014).

Researchers must be aware of their perspective and contemplate how their views may influence the decisions made throughout the study (Yin, 2018). I have worked and volunteered in the nonprofit sector; however, I do not have nonprofit managerial experience, and therefore, no real-world expertise about voluntary turnover and employee retention. My work history in the nonprofit sector and the lack of real-world nonprofit managerial experience could have introduced bias into the study. To mitigate potential bias, I adhered to the guidelines and the principals outlined in *The Belmont Report* by following an interview protocol (see Appendix). *The Belmont Report* is a blueprint for establishing a process to facilitate research in a just and respectful manner (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Additionally, *The Belmont Report* is the foundation for setting the ethical standards of the researcher's role and ensures that the participants receive correct information to make informed decisions (Miracle, 2016). To mitigate bias, understanding the researcher's lens is critical (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). I mitigated bias by not asking managers that I have worked for to be a participant of the study. Additionally, managers from nonprofit organizations where I was either an employee, contractor, volunteer, or board member were not recruited.

Castillo-Montoya (2016) recommended the use of a systematic framework in a research inquiry to understand a phenomenon. I used semistructured interview questions and followed the interview protocol (see Appendix). I asked each participant the same

interview questions in a consistent manner but with varying clarifying questions to obtain more in-depth information. I prepared for the interviews in advance to ensure that I followed the research method and design. A researcher's level of preparedness can influence the quality of the research (Yin, 2018).

### **Participants**

Selecting the appropriate participants is critical to a study. Participants are to be eligible and knowledgeable about the research topic and must be willing to share their personal perspectives (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The requirements to be a participant in this study included being a manager in the nonprofit sector, working in the metropolitan area of Texas, and successfully having reduced the voluntary turnover of employees. Individuals who do not meet these requirements were not eligible to participate in the study.

To gain access to participants, I used a metropolitan area in Texas public online database to find nonprofit organizations to contact to participate in the study. I used the organization's public member directory to gain access to the nonprofit businesses. The metropolitan database is dedicated to assisting philanthropic endeavors by connecting the donor with an organization that shares their interest. The database has a total of 649 nonprofit organizations categorized into 26 issue areas. Each organization profile includes the organization's mission, programs, leadership, board of governance, financials, contact information, and a summary about the organization. I sent an informal email to the organization's contact person to introduce myself and the purpose of the study as well as provide an invitation to participate in the study and attach the informed

consent form. The informed consent form included conditions of the study, such as the interviews being recorded, the ability to voluntarily withdraw from participating in the study, and how there is no incentive or compensation to participate in the study. The potential participants agreed to participate by responding with “I consent” to indicate that they understood the informed consent process. Participants completed the informed consent process prior to the interview.

A study can be successful when a researcher secures access to participants who are qualified and willing to participate in the study (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016). I engaged with the participants throughout the research process, establishing a working relationship through keeping the lines of communication open and encouraging them to contact me by email whenever there was a question or concern. I also conducted member checking. Member checking allows a researcher to improve the accuracy of data collection (Harvey, 2015). After I completed the data analysis, I contacted the participants and provided them with a typed, two-paragraph summary of the data results associated with their individual output as a participant. I asked the participants to submit changes within 5 days. I used any changes submitted to further explore the findings (discussed in greater detail in Section 3) to enhance the validity of the study.

### **Research Method**

There are three general research methods from which researchers choose when conducting a research inquiry: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed (Yin, 2018). For this study, I used the qualitative method to answer the research question: What strategies do nonprofit managers use to reduce voluntary turnover? I obtained information by engaging



with the participants asking semistructured, open-ended interview questions to explore the phenomenon from their viewpoints. A qualitative method is the most suitable approach when a researcher wants to complete a thorough investigation into a participant's behavior, beliefs, and the social norms that influence an event (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). A qualitative method was the most appropriate approach for this study because I conducted a thorough investigation into the social norms that increase employee retention and reduce voluntary turnover.

Unlike the qualitative method, researchers use the quantitative research method to obtain the truth using statistical data (Yilmaz, 2013). The quantitative method is an effective and efficient way to discover the cause and effect in a relationship and involves the testing of a hypothesis or comparing the variables (Bettis et al., 2014). I did not use mathematical data or seek to make a correlation, evaluate a hypothesis, or compare variables; therefore, the quantitative method was not appropriate for this study.

Mixed method is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods that is used to explore a research inquiry (Turner et al., 2017). Researchers can gain a better understanding of a diverse set of practices and strengthen the study when combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Mixed method is appropriate for a complex research inquiry that requires comprehensive findings (Yin, 2018). I did not want to explore diverse practices and did not use quantitative data; therefore, the mixed method approach was not suitable for this study.

## Research Design

I considered three qualitative research designs for this study: case study, phenomenology, and ethnography. A case is an event or entity and can be an individual or an organization (Campbell, 2015). A multiple case study design contains more than one case in a different setting. Researchers use a multiple case study design to ask the same interview questions to multiple participants in a different setting to layer the findings (Yin, 2018). I conducted this multiple case study with three participants who work in three different organizations.

Researchers use a phenomenological design to explore a phenomenon in a political, historical, and sociocultural context (Yin, 2018). The participant's emotions about the shared experience are a factor that researchers explore in a phenomenological design (Pick et al., 2016). I did not select a phenomenological design because I did not explore nonprofit managers' emotions in a political, historical, or sociocultural context.

Ethnographic research usually requires participation from a group of 20 or more individuals who communicate over an extended period (Yin, 2018). An ethnographical design was not appropriate for this study because of the time constraints. Additionally, I did not explore a culture through their daily living activities in their natural environment.

Researchers achieve data saturation when they can no longer find emerging issues, develop no new themes, and the research inquiry is answered (Lowe et al., 2018). Interviewing participants is a method to obtain data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I reached data saturation after interviewing three participants and no new developments emerged regard the phenomenon under study.

## **Population and Sampling**

Selecting a population with expertise on and experience with the phenomenon of interest ensures that the data are abundant and generalizable (Apostolopoulos & Liargovas, 2016). The population of this study were nonprofit managers who work in metropolitan Texas that were knowledgeable about voluntary turnover. The population that I selected was appropriate because they work in the nonprofit sector, had experience with employee turnover, and had expertise in voluntary turnover. I selected a sample size of three participants with in-depth knowledge of employee sustainability. Most case study research consists of less than 12 participants and may even be a single case study (Campbell, 2015). Researchers must have a sample size that is large enough to gain insight into the research inquiry but not so large that the information becomes unnecessary (Górny & Napierała, 2015). Researchers use purposeful sampling to obtain participants with critical, relevant, and plentiful knowledge about the research topic (Yin, 2018). I used purposeful sampling as the sampling strategy to recruit participants. Selecting participants purposefully makes it possible to complete a complex study despite time, resource, and access constraints (Benoot et al., 2016).

Researchers establish a sample size to reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is when a researcher continues to collect data to a point that ensures that no new information develops from the sample size population (Boddy, 2016). Researchers should collect data that are rich and thick in content rather than focus on the sample size (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014). I reached data saturation when the participants' responses were a recurring theme and no new developments emerged. My

sample consisted of three nonprofit managers from three different organizations. A sample size of two or three is sufficient when completing a multiple case study, and the number of interviews needed for a qualitative study to reach data saturation is not quantifiable (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Yin, 2018).

### **Ethical Research**

Informed consent is required prior to the commencement of a study involving human participants (Perrault & Nazione, 2016). Finding and selecting the participants did not commence until I received permission from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Walden University's IRB serves to protect human participant rights (see Miracle, 2016). The final IRB approval number for this study is 01-06-21-0544003. After receiving IRB approval, I contacted eligible participants by email to explain the scope and purpose of the study. Researchers should inform potential participants about the study and discuss the overall expectations, including how the researcher will accomplish the goal and how the findings are presented (Yin, 2018).

An informed consent is the disclosure of information about the nature of a study and assists the participants in making a knowledgeable and informed decision (Partridge & Allman, 2016; Perrault & Nazione, 2016). Potential participants received an email that included a description of the informed consent process. The informed consent form detailed the purpose of collecting the data, how the information would be used, how the information would be kept confidential, and how I would manage the data. A description of the study, the purpose of the study, the potential risks and benefits of the study, and how to voluntarily withdraw from the study were also contained in the informed consent

form. Lastly, my contact information and association with Walden University was documented on the informed consent form. To get the participant's consent, I asked them to reply to the email communication by typing, "I consent." I used Walden University's informed consent example to ensure that I followed the IRB's ethical guidelines.

Participants are eligible to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequence. According to White and Hind (2015), participants should be free to withdraw from a study at any time without explanation. Resnik (2016) concluded that participants should not feel any undue stress or obligation to participate in a research study. Participants were informed that they can withdraw from the study through email, by videoconferencing, or in writing at any time before publication. If they withdraw from the study, their data was removed from the analysis, findings, and report. There are no incentives and no compensation for being a participating in the research and this information is noted on the informed consent.

The informed consent form should have a description about how the participant's information will be stored, kept confidential, and secured (Hiriscau et al., 2014). I protected the participant's information by storing their data in a password protected Google drive folder to keep their identity hidden. The hard copies are stored in a locked cabinet at my home for 5 years where only I have access to the content of the cabinet. I protected the participant's identity by replacing names with alphanumeric characters (P1, P2, and P3). Each organization's information is obscured using the acronym for nonprofit organizations, NGO, combined with alphabet letters (NGO-A, NGO-B, and NGO-C). I kept the organization's data confidential and secured by storing the information in a

locked file cabinet and a password protected Google Drive folder that only I can access. After 5 years, I will destroy the hard copies using a shredder and I will permanently delete the participants' and organizations' data that I stored on a universal serial bus. I will also permanently delete the information stored in the password-protected Google Drive folder.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection is the first stage in the research process in qualitative study (Rimano et al., 2015). The primary data collection instrument is the researcher (Kallio et al., 2016). As the primary data collection instrument, my goal was to interpret the phenomenon using interview transcripts, journal notes, public documents, and organizational documents as obtained from the participants.

Qualitative researchers may use three types of interviews: semistructured, structured, and narrative (Stuckey, 2013). Peters and Halcomb (2015) suggested that a semistructured interview allows the researcher to obtain relevant data about the participant's experience, perception, and opinions. I decided to conduct semistructured interviews because I want to achieve an in-depth range of detail about the managements' experience with voluntary turnover. To explore the participant's expertise, a researcher must focus, listen carefully, and not ask leading questions (Fung et al., 2013). I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix) when collecting data. A semistructured interview is a critical method for obtaining primary data for a specific research inquiry (Stuckey, 2013).

Researchers can increase reliability and validity when implementing member checking and triangulation in the research process (Zohrabi, 2013). Member checking allows the researcher to verify that they accurately captured the participant's views (Noble & Smith, 2015). Additionally, the participants received a summary of my interpretation of their responses. Participants were asked to provide feedback to indicate that I have correctly interpreted their responses. If the participants were not satisfied with my typed interpretation, I revised and resent the changes by email until they approve with a confirmation stating "approved."

### **Data Organization Technique**

Storing and analyzing data is imperative; therefore, researchers must have the means to store collected data and obscure the participants and the organizations information. Data collected during the research process should be secured (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I secured the collected data in a password safe Google Drive folder where I classified the participants and the organizations information using pseudonyms. Each participant's name is replaced with an assigned alphanumeric (P1, P2, and P3). Each organization is labeled with the acronym for nonprofit, NGO, with an ascending alphabet letter (NGO-A, NGO-B, and NGO-C). I kept the participants and the organizations data confidential by storing the information in a secured locked file cabinet and a password-protected Google Drive folder. I am the only person with access to the information and the data will stay confidential in storage. After 5 years, I will use a shredder to destroy hard copies and I will permanently delete all the participants' and organizations' data that

I have stored on a universal serial bus including the password-protected Google Drive folder.

### **Data Collection Technique**

A systematic database with a chain of command process is essential to data organization (Tumele, 2015). I used semistructured interviews, organizational and public documents, and journal notes. The organizational documents among others provided by participants include the employee handbook and documentation about the fringe benefit package. Using company documents, public documents, and interviews are appropriate for qualitative research (Britten et al., 2017). I conducted the interviews virtually because of the current geographical health climate. Typically, interviews that are completed in person, face-to-face, allow for better observation and allow the researcher to build a relationship with the participant (Yin, 2018). Using a videoconferencing tool, Zoom, gives the researcher the ability to connect virtually but does not compare to physical interaction because unforeseen technical issues may occur. Zoom is a cloud-based videoconferencing service that is secured, provides audio and video recording capability, and allows people to meet virtually (Archibald et al., 2019). Additionally, I used a hand-held audio recorder to record the participant's response as a backup method to ensure that the data are not jeopardized.

Researchers strengthen their studies when triangulating data by utilizing multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2018). However, collecting qualitative data can be timely and costly because the resources needed to capture the data correctly (Gillespie et al., 2014). There are advantages and disadvantages to the qualitative collection techniques that I am



using to the collect data. Semistructured interviews are advantageous because the researcher can evaluate data, discover emerging themes, and ensure the accuracy of the participant's description (Noble & Smith, 2015). Yet, semistructured interviews have a disadvantage because the researcher can be bias towards the participant and this can affect the validity of interviewee's response (Yin, 2018). Organizational documents and public documents are beneficial when a researcher is triangulating collected data. However, the researcher is bound to the business's record keeping and documenting and the information may not accurately represent the factual data because of the company's bias.

Potential participants were contacted by email and received information about the nature of the study. Participants completed the informed consent prior to the interview. Before the interviews commenced, participants were informed that the interview is recorded and that they can withdraw from the study at any time without an explanation or consequence. I informed the participants that they will not receive compensation or incentives to partake in the study. There was not a face-to-face interview because the current health climate in Texas. All interviews were conducted virtually. Participants were asked to schedule 45-60 minutes of their time to answer six interview questions and a follow up question. The interview day and time was scheduled according to the participant's availability. I asked the participants to select a quiet location with a stable internet connection to use Zoom, a videoconferencing tool, to conduct the interview remotely. Each participant was asked the same six interview questions and a follow-up question, but different clarifying questions based upon the answers to the interview

questions. I asked the participants for public documents and organizational documents that relate to employee turnover and employee retention. The interview was transcribed verbatim, and the participants received a typed summary of the data analysis. I emailed a two-paragraph typed summary of the data analysis of their interview and asked for additions and deletions from them within 5 days. Participants were asked to verify that the information is correct to member-check. I used the verified summaries as a method to validate the themes.

### **Data Analysis**

Describing the data and interpreting the information is the purpose of data analysis in a qualitative study (Neale, 2016). Before the data analysis begins, researchers should determine an acceptable methodology to start the data analysis process (Neale, 2016). Researchers use triangulation to understand an inquiry within the context of the central question and to mitigate bias (Heale & Forbes, 2013).

There are four triangulation types: (a) methodological triangulation; (b) investigator triangulation; (c) theory triangulation; and (d) data triangulation (Denzin, 2014). Heale and Forbes (2013) suggested that methodological triangulation is helpful when a researcher collects two or more sets of data using the same methodology. I used methodological triangulation and three types of data sets semistructured interviews, field notes, and public documents.

I used semistructured interview questions as the primary data set. Yin (2018) noted that a critical component of the data analysis process is compiling and transcribing the collected data. The process of data analysis can be overwhelming to some researchers

because of the complexity of systematically organizing stored data (Chowdhury, 2015). When researchers create a systematic, they will have structure and order (Neale, 2016). I used the software, NVivo v12, to help me transcribe and analyze the semistructured interviews. DeFranco and Laplante (2017) recognized NVivo v12 as a good tool to help researchers analyze collected data.

I transcribed the audio recording by NVivo v12. Additionally, I cross referenced the recorded audio while reading the transcript line by line to make sure the contents are accurate. Rosenthal (2016) recommended that the researcher's audio recording should be transcribed using the exact words in the audio recording. Researchers can gain familiarity with the content of the audio recording by reviewing the recording (Neale, 2016). I used the field notes written to assist with nonverbal cues that I may have forgotten. Providing an additional source of data helps researchers note observation of the participant and the setting (Campbell, 2015). I used Zoom to capture the virtual meeting. Using Zoom as a videoconferencing tool to conduct virtual semistructured interviews is beneficial because sessions are securely recorded and stored without a third-party involvement (Archibald et al., 2019).

I analyzed each participant's interview before starting the process with another participant until I reach data saturation. I used NVivo v12 to organize the data and to aid me in categorizing key concepts from the interviews into codes to formulate themes, to answer the research inquiry, and to see if the results correlate to Herzberg's two-factor theory. The data that are presented in words and themes makes it possible for the researcher to interpret the findings (Bengtsson, 2016).

## **Reliability and Validity**

### **Reliability**

To minimize bias and error, a study must be reliable (Yin, 2018). The reliability of the data and the findings are critical components of the research. Researchers conducting a qualitative study must have findings that are reliable, consistent, and dependable (Zohrabi, 2013). A qualitative study is considered reliable when the researcher justifies the strategies, provides an explanation for the processes and methods, and provides transparency (Yilmaz, 2013).

The dependability of a qualitative study involves transparency and accuracy when presenting the participants views (Noble & Smith, 2015). I was consistent in my interview process by following the interview protocol (see Appendix). Researchers who are consistent in their research methods achieve dependability (Jiggins-Colorafi & Evans, 2016).

### **Validity**

The validation process consists of several methods that include member checking of data interpretation, participant transcript review, and triangulation. Cypress (2017) noted that the researcher can enhance the credibility of collected data with the use of member checking, triangulation, and interview protocol (see Appendix). Methodological triangulation improves the quality of a study and researchers are in a better position to understand the phenomenon when there are multiple techniques used to collected data (Mabuza et al., 2014).

I used semistructured interviews and audio recordings to make certain that I captured the participant's responses factually. I transcribed the audio recordings and used organizational documents about training strategies. Additionally, I used public documents and journal notes to triangulate the secondary data. Researchers who gather data, such as organizational documents and public documents, from a primary source increase the validity of the research and corroborate the data (Yin, 2018).

Transferability is the process of replicating the same results across any context (Noble & Smith, 2015). To enhance the transferability of the study, the researcher must give a robust description of how the study is completed (Houghton et al., 2013). I have provided a thorough description that is rich in detail and a description of how I completed the study. Researchers should provide a comprehensive explanation of procedures, population, limitations, and demographics to ensure that transferability is achieved so that future practitioners can obtain comparable results (Palinkas et al., 2015). I used purposive sampling to address enhance transferability. According to Cypress (2017), using purposive sampling can improve transferability. The transferability of this study may be limited due the geographical location and the population of the study. Participants in the study are nonprofit managers and the frontline workers are excluded. The population also consists of only the nonprofit sector therefore the results may be different in the for-profit and the government sectors.

Confirmability is the verification that the participant's thoughts and perceptions shaped the study and not the researcher's bias (Moon et al., 2016). The primary goal of confirmability is to allow the researcher to present the facts and the participant's insights

into a specific phenomenon (Moon et al., 2016). Researchers should outline the path of the study and explain the rationale for the decisions made throughout the research to achieve confirmability (Houghton et al., 2013). I achieved confirmability by adhering to the path that I created to conduct the research. Additionally, I followed the interview protocol to assist me with limiting information that may be bias. I mitigated bias, but I am aware that a researcher cannot eliminate all bias.

Data saturation impacts the research quality and is achieved when all the information needed to answer the research question is obtained and there are no new themes or issues that emerge (Hennink et al., 2017; Lowe et al., 2018). It was my responsibility as the primary data collection instrument to reach data saturation. The researcher is responsible to provide data saturation, and this can be accomplished using interviews (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured that I reach data saturation by interviewing participants until the research question was answered and no new themes or information emerge.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2, I provided information about the process of completing this qualitative multiple case study. Additionally, I explained the role of the researcher, the recruitment of participants, described the research and design method, identified the population, and discussed ethical research. I also described the data collection instruments and technique, data organization, data analysis reliability, and the validity of the research. In Section 3, I present the findings including how to apply the results in a

business practice. Additionally, I discuss the implications for social change, and I conclude Section 3 by giving my recommendations for future research.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore strategies that nonprofit business managers use to reduce voluntary turnover in the nonprofit sector. I interviewed three nonprofit business managers working for three different nonprofit organizations that are in metropolitan Texas. Each nonprofit business manager had experience in successfully reducing voluntary turnover. To collect data, I conducted a semistructured interview with each manager and reviewed their organization's employee handbook and documentation about the fringe benefits offered. The findings showed strategies that the managers use to reduce voluntary turnover in the nonprofit sector.

I conducted the interviews using the virtual conferencing tool, Zoom, and recorded them with a handheld audio recorder. The participants' information was kept confidential and obscured with the use of alphanumeric codes. I asked each manager a series of six interview questions (see Appendix X) in succinct order about the strategies they used to reduce voluntary turnover in their nonprofit organization. The data collected from the participant interviews, my journaling notes, and review of employee handbooks and documents pertaining to fringe benefits from nonprofit organizations under study were triangulated and analyzed. The collected data were uploaded to NVivo, Version 12 to develop themes from the codes that were derived from the data. I completed member checking to increase the validity and reliability of the study. Findings were derived through determining the overarching strategies that participants use to reduce voluntary turnover. I completed member checking by providing participants with typed, two-paragraph summaries of the findings and giving 5 days to suggest changes. In the



following subsection, I discuss the findings through providing a list of the emergent themes.

### **Presentation of the Findings**

I used a qualitative, multiple case study to answer the following research question: What strategies do nonprofit business managers use to reduce voluntary turnover? In semistructured interviews, the participants gave their perspectives about strategies they use to mitigate voluntary turnover in their organization. The emergent themes are flexible working conditions positively impact employee retention, employee engagement influence reduce voluntary turnover, and growth factors motivate employees. Depending on workers' desires, motivation can be either intrinsic or extrinsic (Lee, 2020).

Managers at each organization encountered barriers when implementing strategies to reduce voluntary turnover. The primary barrier that each participant discussed is navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic. The second barrier is getting board members with corporate backgrounds to understand the frontline worker's perspective. Another barrier described was the implementation of policy revisions to reflect the growing changes within the organization. The last hurdle that managers reported is the lack of a system to assess the effectiveness of the strategies used to reduce voluntary turnover. All the managers interviewed lacked a formal process to gauge the organization's success in mitigating voluntary turnover.

### **Theme 1: Flexible Working Conditions Impact Employee Retention**

The most frequent theme I discovered while analyzing the data concerning voluntary turnover in the nonprofit sector was the importance of organizational flexibility. Organizational flexibility is the ability of a business to adapt to change and the responsiveness of the leaders when change is needed (Bal & Izak, 2020). Now more than ever, employees are seeking flexibility in the workplace, and evidence has indicated that there is an increase in workers negotiating work hours and duties (Bal & Izak, 2020); therefore, business managers need to be flexible to meet the workers' demands. All the participants expressed that their workforce is adjusting to working at home while managing their households during the pandemic, indicating a strong need for organizations to accommodate workers' needs. Organizational flexibility is the primary strategy that managers used to retain workers. Flexibility in the workplace is allowing workers to achieve work objectives outside of the traditional confines that are typical of standard organizations (Iheriohanma & Austin-Egole, 2020). All the participants suggested that having a flexible employee-employer relationship reduces voluntary turnover. Participants 1, 2, and 3 shared that having a flexible work environment is essential to retaining a skilled workforce.

Participants 1, 2, and 3 use organizational flexibility to improve workers' job satisfaction. The managers suggested that flexibility is critical to reducing voluntary turnover. Participant 3 of NGO-C suggested that flexibility in the nonprofit sector is a critical component to balance the lack of extrinsic rewards that NGO-C does not offer. Participant 3 shared,

Just making sure that whoever is working on our team knows that they are valued and given flexibility when we can. Because we think, we all know, when it comes to salary in the nonprofit sector, so we have to offer something, something else.

Many organizational leaders attempt to offset the company's inability to offer a competitive wage by offering workers flexibility, such as relaxed dress codes, flexible schedules, career development opportunities, commuter assistance, and health programs (Slatten et al., 2020). Each participant recognized that flexibility is a good substitute for a noncompetitive salary. Low wages and missing fringe benefits are to be expected when working in the nonprofit sector (Slatten et al., 2020). Participant 2 shared,

Because we are nonprofit, we have a strong mission. People really do not leave because they get tired of our mission, but they leave for more money, and especially in the nonprofit world, I mean the salaries are just a lot lower.

Participant 1 of organization NGO-A offers workers flexibility and freedom to manage their long-term commitment to the organization. Participant 1 allows workers who leave on amicable terms to return to work as needed under mutual terms. Participant 1's decision to allow flexible working conditions improved NGO-A's employee retention. Many of the reasons that workers voluntarily leave an organization are due to dissatisfaction with the working conditions (Wójcik, 2020). Participant 1 shared one of their long-term worker's experience with the organization that led to a 15-year work history,

I have multiple people that we have worked with that have come and gone in the organization over lengthy periods of time. My current office manager started

working with us on a part-time basis. They would come in and do a project, and then go back to California, and then come back in and do another project, and it was a little bit longer. And then he moved to our area for a while - did worked with us, then left and went to another part of the country. You know, so this went on for [awhile and] I think he has been with us now for 15 years on and off.

Like Participants 1 and 3, Participant 2 discussed the need to be flexible with workers. NGO-B adjusted their required meeting schedules to accommodate the employees' scheduling needs. Participant 2 said,

People have different schedules, so we did have some issues about what the best time to have a mandatory meeting. We have moved meeting times around to try to accommodate workers. I think that has helped. It does not help with perfect attendance, but at least people know we are listening.

### ***Work-Life Balance***

The significance of work is created from life and work experiences (Wójcik, 2020). Additionally, a worker's level of job satisfaction depends on their outlook and varies from person to person because the factors that motivate are derived from their quality of work and life (Lee, 2020). With an increase in teleworking, where some organizations encounter a 24-hour work environment, a standard work schedule can be challenging because some employees may find it difficult to separate work from play (Iheriohanma & Austin-Egole, 2020). Establishing a good work-life balance during an influx of transitioning workers to stay-at-home jobs can be daunting; however, organizational leaders significantly increase employee retention when the company

provides flexible work hours, overtime, flex time, job sharing, teleworking, shift work, and compressed workweeks (Iheriohanma & Austin-Egole, 2020). Each participant found that the organization's ability to be flexible with employees' work-life balance benefitted their overall employee retention. Participant 1 of NGO-A suggested that they implemented organizational flexibility because of their personal experience of working while establishing a family. Participant 1 stated, "I started my professional life before children, then with three children, and now they are all grown and on their own. I know the scenario, but I also know that you can make it work if given some flexibility, [working with a family is possible]."

Participant 3 of NGO-C suggested that flexibility in the workplace is beneficial to equalize the work-life balance and is a significant need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant 3 continued to explain the importance of work-life balance and how leaders need to be supportive of the employees' home life, concluding that there is a significant need to promote work-life flexibility to improve employee retention because COVID-19 is another challenge that workers are encountering. Participant 3 shared,

At the beginning it was very fly by the seat of your pants to try and get the get a person in a wall and get them to do their job. And so, it was it's really been a learning experience.

The participants discussed the impact of COVID-19 on their workers and the organization. Managers had to create strategies to assist workers through the changes and transitioned staff to work at home. Participant 2 at NGO-B gave workers suggestions about how to juggle the work-life balance and cope with stress. NGO-B sent workers

wellness emails and offered webinars to inform employees about the importance of taking care of themselves. Participant 2 reported, “I have offered through our human resources department some webinars on mental health and taking care of yourself. And we do weekly columns on those issues [in company emails].” Participant 2 concluded that due to the current level of stress, more workers are taking time off to cope with daily stress, and doctors are more willing to write prescriptions. Organizational flexibility is necessary for NGO-B as more workers take time off to cope with daily life stress.

Participant 2 stated,

Workers are going to a doctor when they are able to. When they get there, they are able to take off a couple of weeks of FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) to regenerate. Doctors are more comfortable, I think, writing those kinds of FMLA notes now because people are really overwhelmed and depressed and exhausted.

Many businesses are encountering problems with navigating administratively through COVID-19 (Moretti et al., 2020). Every organization is affected by the pandemic; therefore, organizational flexibility is essential to employees’ work-life balance. Furthermore, the pandemic disrupts the entire world, affecting people’s lifestyles, routines, and the economy (Haleem et al., 2020). Holmberg et al. (2017) criticized Herzberg’s two-factor theory for missing the association between mental health and job satisfaction. Increased levels of job dissatisfaction are known to affect worker’s mental health (Holmberg et al., 2021); therefore, managers should seek strategies to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.

### ***Company Policy and Administration***

Successful organizations create strategies to improve the betterment of the employees by making their policies flexible (Idowu, 2020). All the participants shared how having flexible policies and procedures helps with employee retention. Employers that give employees flexible work hours and less rigid policies have a competitive advantage over companies that do not offer the same benefits (Idowu, 2020).

Participants 1 and 3 shared that using a “living document” assists with modifying disciplinary actions to specific situations because all workers’ issues are not the same. For instance, a living document allows Participant 1 to give accommodations to workers, whereas a contract may create undue stress. Participant 1 reported, “We’ve seen that in some ways it does not work at all. It puts a restriction on the worker.” Participant 1 also stated, “We don’t need to go to a very structured concept, and it really does relieve a lot of people that come to work for you, they’re much more open to working for you.” Participant 1 continued, “When you put restrictions in contracts, you start putting restrictions on the employee and employer relationship and that’s when NGO-A always had trouble. Now it does not mean that there can’t be an outline [or that] there can’t be guidelines.”

Participant 3 discussed the importance of getting workers to participate in administrative procedures, such as the development of their job description to reflect the workers’ capability accurately. When managers allow workers to contribute to their job descriptions, they encourage autonomy and job security. Participant 3 shared their experience of having workers participant with the administrative team to revise the job description to fit the worker’s needs, saying,

Making sure that we find the right person and they really understand what the job is. Because we are a small organization, I feel like people end up wearing many hats, and sometimes those hats do not fit into the job description. And so, we like adding the worker in the process of finalizing the job description.

Participant 2 also reported that NGO-B encourages administrative support by finding hidden skillsets to improve the employees' job security. Participant 2 said, "We're using talent surveys. We also use performance management appraisals to see who wants to learn, who wants to grow, and who wants to do something a little bit different."

The two-factor theory includes company policies and procedures as a hygiene factor that if satisfied, may lessen job dissatisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Policy and procedures play a significant role in an employee's level of job satisfaction. This factor involves both good and poor organizational policies that impact the worker's ability to successfully perform job duties and tasks (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Managers who lack the ability to delegate, show inconsistency with their messaging, and communicate poorly can negatively affect their workers' job behaviors.

## **Theme 2: Employee Engagement Influence Employee Retention**

Communication is the process of sending a message to a recipient through verbal or nonverbal methods (Kalogiannidis, 2020). All the participants of the study stated that open communication is critical to reducing voluntary turnover. Each manager suggested that effective communication and employee feedback is important to mitigate risk, solve problems, and develop interpersonal relationships. Effective communication helps to build trust between the employees and the leaders (Kalogiannidis, 2020). Additionally,



managers shared that employee feedback is beneficial to the organizational performance, the worker's career development and determines the way to best utilize the employees' skillset.

Each participant shared the importance of communicating with workers and listening to feedback. Participant 1 suggested that encouraging open communication at the beginning of the working relationship is an essential factor of reducing voluntary turnover in NGO-A. Participant 1 suggested that low employee voluntary turnover occurs in NGO-A because they keep the conversation open. Participant 1 shared,

When I talk to people, because they do, they will ask me, you have been around for 25 years, and you are still working with some of the same people, and nobody has left you and said you are a horrible person. And I said, because we did not go to that point. You keep the conversation open like I said earlier.

Participant 2 suggested that active listening and watching body language is an effective nonverbal method of communication. Participant 2 reflected on a teleconference where they noticed a worker's physical dismay about a project change. Participant 2 shared,

I am trying to do a lot of active listening, not just on the project planning, on what people are saying and how they are communicating, and if they show their screen on Zoom, I can watch some of their body languages. And so, I watched somebody when we were changing the plan again. I saw somebody like visibly flinch, and so I called that person after the meeting and I said, "Hey, I know that was a change

of direction that none of us were expecting. Talk to me about how you're feeling about that.”

Organizations that offer employees' annual surveys are able to engage and measure the effectiveness of their policy and procedures through the lens of the worker (Stamolampros et al., 2019). Participants 2 and 3 discussed that requesting and receiving workers' feedback is a strategy to reduce voluntary turnover. Participants 2 and 3 concluded that employee feedback helps to develop employees' talents and available work opportunities. Participants 2 and 3 give employees surveys to gain insight about their attitude towards the job. Participant 2 of NGO-B provides bi-annual surveys to find skillsets that match available job opportunities. Participant 2 shared,

We conducted skills and talents survey to see what hidden skills people had that we would not know about. For example, if you are working as a driver, you have competencies in computers, or you work with refugees, but your real passion is development and fundraising. We have tried to identify the skills and then offer opportunities for people to either cross train in other areas or work on projects that come up in other areas.

Participant 3 of NGO-C explained that they allow the workers to assist with the development of their job description. Additionally, Participant 3 follows up with the employees by asking if they are comfortable with the job expectations after completing the revisions to the job description. Participant 3 shared, “We do an annual review of the job description. This is also like a person's skill set and their passion and the way the work needs to grow with them.”

Participants 2 and 3 complete an exit interview with the workers for feedback from the workers' lens. An exit interview is a conversation between a terminated employee and the employer where they discuss the reasons why the worker ended their employment with the organization (Mokibelo, 2020). Participant 2 shared how exit interviews help with improving the job,

I asked them if they have any suggestions for me and human resources to make the job different or better or the environment different or better for the next person who is coming in. And they give some really good feedback on how we need more automation or how we could do things a little differently or my job description says nothing about what I am doing so I get a lot of information there.

The worker's exit interview provides feedback about why the worker decided to leave the organization. The feedback received from each worker is evaluated and may be implemented to develop and improve the job position. The participants' responses to the interview questions indicates that open communication is an important strategy to reduce voluntary turnover in the nonprofit sector. Each business leader discussed how employee feedback is advantageous to improve the overall quality of the business and the workers' job. Gathering workers' feedback is critical to supportive decision making (Bull & Janda, 2017). The participants suggested that effective communication throughout worker's employment is imperative to solve and address problems, including the development of job positions.

There are several empirical studies that indicate the benefits of effective communication with workers and how their feedback can improve organizational

effectiveness (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). Employee feedback is a vital method to motivating workers to increase their efforts and satisfaction with the organization. When managers allow workers to communicate freely, they are more likely to exhibit job satisfaction (Wulandari & Burgess, 2011).

### **Theme 3: Growth Factors Motivate Employees**

Scholars of motivational theories suggested that leaders need to satisfy workers' desires to keep them motivated and energetic (Baqir et al., 2020). Each manager's strategy for reducing voluntary turnover includes employee engagement using growth factors to reward and recognize workers. Some employees, depending upon their performance, receive a donation, gift card, end-of-year bonus, phone stipend, or a stipend to supplement health-related fees as a reward. The two-factor theory categorizes rewarding and recognizing employees as a growth factor that motivates workers and can lead to job satisfaction (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). All of the managers give workers celebratory luncheons to show employee appreciation. Participant 2 mailed care packages. Participant 1 personalized holiday cards and calls the workers directly to thank them for their contribution. Business leaders who reward and recognize employees increase the workers' productivity, commitment, and job satisfaction (Baqir et al., 2020).

Participants 1, 2, and 3 use rewards and recognition as a strategy to retain workers. Participant 1 recognizes workers by making them a priority. Participant 1 indicated that NGO-A has a reputation where the workers want to work. NGO-A protects and supports their workers' needs. Participant 1 shared,

I have workers coming to me ask to teach because they know what our

organization stands for and how we work. Like the simple thing is protecting our teachers. We are as involved in protecting our teachers as we are protecting our patrons.

All the managers celebrated workers with luncheons, social gatherings, and team-building activities; however, that changed this year due to the pandemic, and business managers had to improvise. Participant 2 was excited about an upcoming food delivery to workers' homes to show workers appreciation for their contribution. Participant 2 shared,

We were trying to do something around Christmas time for the employees that is fun, but we just could not pull it off however XXX gave us a really good discount. And so, we are actually having XXX delivered to 170 workers tomorrow.

Participant 3 suggested that showing employees appreciation and letting them know that they are valuable is essential to retaining workers. Participant 3 sent workers care packages to recognize their contribution when NGO-C transition to work at home because of COVID-19. Participant 3 shared,

It is important that workers feel valued and happy. I made the staff care packages and work from home packages and things like that to let them know that I at least recognize[d] their effort. I may[be] cannot help how challenging this is in their life to have to do this, but at least I know they are doing it, and someone sees them.

Each business leader used rewards and recognition as part of their process to reduce voluntary turnover. All the participants found that recognizing employees helps to retain workers and shows that the organization appreciates and value employee's

contribution to the business. Each leader suggested that giving praise to workers is essential because of the lack of benefits that the organization is able to offer.

Additionally, providing a work environment that relates closely to the organization's mission and values is in the best interest of the business (Emanuele & Higgins, 2000).

### **Voluntary Turnover and Career Mobility**

Participants 1, 2, and 3 noted that much of the voluntary turnover that occurs in their organization is due to life changes or the completion of an academic degree.

Participant 1 suggested that much of their voluntary turnover happen because of advancements in the workers' skillset, including admission to internships with large organizations for career mobility. Participant 1 of NGO-A is supportive of their employees' decision to move forward with their career and informs workers at the hiring process that they do not expect them to remain with the organization long term.

Participant 1 shared,

“We really like workers to continue their education. So, I have had an employee who has worked with us for the last five years. They were accepted to a graduate choreography production project. And so, we have said, “Go for it!”

Participant 2 of NGO-B found that during COVID-19, many of the employees were working towards a graduate degree, and they took advantage of free time due to COVID-19 to complete the program. Participant 2 also noted that the organization was not aware of many of the workers' desire to achieve higher education. Before COVID-19, much of the volunteer turnover was due to money, upward mobility, and workers not being satisfied with the leadership. Participant 2 shared,

Workers say that I have finished my degree, and now I am going into that area, or I was getting my masters and because of COVID this extra time I was able to speed up my masters and now I am going to work for an engineering company. Or, the last one I did was quite recent that person had been working on his counseling certifications, and he was able to get a job in the counseling psychological counseling area.

Participant 3 followed the same sentiments as participants 1 and 2 and noted that many people leave the organization due to career mobility. Participant 3 of NGO-C found that securing a management title in the nonprofit sector is easy and workers use the titles to enhance their career in the for-profit sector. Participant 3 continued by sharing that workers can receive higher wages and fringe benefits at large organizations making small organizations appear less attractive for long term employment. Participant 3 shared,

Working in the nonprofit sector can be a training playground for people to move on to their next career because nonprofits more easily hand out titles. You can get a manager title with 3 years of experience and then once you have that title it is like you are that much more attractive to the private sector that pays so much more.

Each nonprofit business manager of this study shared a commitment to encourage their workers to continue career mobility. The leaders positive influence was counterproductive at times due to them losing talented workers. Most of the nonprofit leaders are familiar with workers leaving due to upward mobility but several indicated that voluntarily ending employment is at all times high due to the completion of academic

careers during COVID-19. The two-factor theory includes career growth and development as a growth factor that can lead to job satisfaction but does not reduce job dissatisfaction (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). Workers with intrinsic needs such as career growth and advancement in an organization may leave to work for organizations with more opportunities for career growth and development.

### **Herzberg Two-factor Theory**

The conceptual framework that I used to understand strategies that managers used to reduce voluntary turnover is Herzberg's two-factor theory. Herzberg et al. (1959) identified factors that impact workers' job satisfaction as hygiene and growth factors. Hygiene factors relate to employment, benefits, policies, compensation, leadership, interpersonal relationships, and job security. Growth factors are work achievement, praise, growth and development, and advancement. Growth factors impact job satisfaction while the absence of hygiene factors contributes to job dissatisfaction.

The two-factor theory can include a different set of hygiene and growth factors depending on the occupation (Alrawahi et al., 2020). My findings indicate that the hygiene factors are important to retain workers but not as impactful as the growth factors that managers use to reduce voluntary turnover to improve job satisfaction. This may be due to some workers in the nonprofit sector being driven by intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic rewards.

The participants' responses to the semistructured open ended interview questions support Herzberg's two-factor theory. Participant interviews, employee handbooks, and the benefit documents indicate that each organization used hygiene and growth factors to



reduce voluntary turnover and improve job satisfaction. Employees' job satisfaction and factors that leaders use to engage workers are critical to employee retention (Sharma & Tomar, 2020).

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The information in this study may benefit nonprofit business managers with applicable strategies to reduce voluntary turnover in their organization. Employee voluntary turnover is an ongoing problem (Wójcik, 2020) and can occur because of internal reasons (e.g., lack of organizational flexibility, poor leadership, the work itself, rigid policy, and procedures, limited interpersonal relationships, and low compensation) or external reasons (e.g., career mobility, career change, or a shift in the family circumstances); (Wójcik, 2020). Business leaders who implement strategies to lessen the risk of voluntary turnover can improve employee job satisfaction creating a positive work environment to increase employee retention.

The findings of this study indicate the strategies that nonprofit business managers use to reduce voluntary turnover. The nonprofit managers used the following strategies (a) organizational flexibility to increase job satisfaction; (b) employee engagement to increase employee retention; and (c) motivating employees with intrinsic rewards. The findings of this study indicate that for nonprofit leaders to reduce voluntary turnover managers can offer workers flexibility in the workplace, listen to and incorporate worker's feedback, and improve job satisfaction by recognizing and rewarding employees. Additionally, managers can use open communication to create a positive work culture to enhance interpersonal relationships. Lastly, nonprofit managers can

reduce voluntary turnover by establishing a work environment that is supportive of the workers' professional growth and development. The strategies that the nonprofit managers used is a method to improvise the lack of extrinsic rewards that the organization is unable to provide financially.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Business leaders who study voluntary turnover may improve society by improving workers employability including monetary compensation that can be used for meeting the daily demands of life. Nonprofit organizations account for a third of the United States (Camarena et al., 2021) workforce supplying many Americans with jobs in sectors that fill the gap in supporting societal issues that affect workers communities.

Social change contributes to transformational behaviors that influence individuals' perspectives, buildings, communities, and the daily lives of people (Stephan et al., 2016). Business managers may use the information from this study to encourage social change. Voluntary turnover is expensive, and businesses incur massive costs to recruit, select, hire, and train workers. Retaining employees is critical to the organization's ability to meet the supply and demand that nonprofit businesses provide to the community.

The findings in this study showed how nonprofit managers might use strategies to reduce voluntary turnover by having organizational flexibility, instilling effective open communication for dialog, and effective rewards and recognition. The strategies found in this study may assist workers with maintaining a healthy work-life balance, give workers confidence in their communication techniques, and boost workers sense of self-worth.

The three themes provide workers with a sense of comradery and that may help to build interpersonal relationships. Many people use work opportunities as a method to establish friendships and build to the community.

### **Recommendations for Action**

One recommendation for action is for nonprofit business managers to incorporate strategies that will allow the leaders to assess the effectiveness of their methods used to reduce voluntary turnover. The methods that are implemented should be consistent with their workers' daily needs and should complement their work-life balance. The strategies that I found useful to retain employees are organizational flexibility, effective communication for open dialog, and rewards and recognition. I recommend that organizations create paths to upward mobility within the organization to attract and retain workers. Many of the organizational leaders may benefit from learning about strategies to reduce voluntary turnover during COVID-19. Another recommendation for action is for business leaders is to learn how to engage and motivate remote effectively workers.

Nonprofit business leaders should invest in strategies to build engagement and interpersonal relationships with workers. Leaders need to provide additional support to workers who transition to work at home and those who encounter family hardships due to unexpected events. I recommend that business managers learn strategies to cope with organizational changes and workers' job burnout. It is also my recommendation that leaders find methods to support employees' work-life balance, mental wellness and show flexibility to workers' who are significantly affected by external circumstances.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Business leaders in the nonprofit sector continue to encounter hardships that affect the company's overall financial well-being, employee retention, and commitment (Slatten et al., 2020). Reducing voluntary turnover in the sector is critical to talent retention. Further research is needed to explore the phenomenon from the lens of nonmanagerial staff to determine if the used strategies make a significant difference to front-line workers. The targeted population was three nonprofit business managers working at three nonprofit organizations in metropolitan Texas, who have successfully reduced voluntary turnover. The business leaders share a different perspective about methods that may be used to reduce voluntary turnover. Expanding the study to focus on the front-line workers in nonmanagerial positions will offer positive feedback on the effectiveness of the strategies used and the information may assist with innovative strategies to reduce voluntary turnover in a pandemic.

Additionally, I recommend that researchers evaluate how nonprofit managers measure the effectiveness of the strategies used to retain workers when there are multiple historical crises. The pandemic in the United States exposed many weaknesses within the sector and created organizational financial hardships (Maher et al., 2020). Nonprofit organizations may be overwhelmed with community requests due to job closures and layoffs. An increase in workload impacts job dissatisfaction and job burnout, thus a proximal factor to voluntary turnover. Managers may have to implement new retention strategies to mediate job stress and absenteeism to avoid an increase in voluntary turnover (Akingbola et al., 2020).

Finally, future researchers may benefit from understanding how the pandemic affects different generations that work in the nonprofit sector. Future scholars may want to analyze how the pandemic impacts interpersonal relationships, employee engagement, and work motivation. Another aspect to consider is how transitioning workers from a work location to the work at home influence the organization's overall productivity.

### **Reflections**

The experience of being in the Walden DBA doctoral study has been an extensive journey that exceeded my expectations. When I first started the program, I assumed that reaching the finish line would be a simple process. However, throughout the years, I have learned that the process is not a sprint and is a humbling marathon. Completing this research has been a rewarding experience. My academic development from being in the program has helped me exponentially in my personal and professional life. What I have discovered the most from being in the program is nothing can stop persistence. I am thankful to the volunteers who participated in my study. The participants contribution assisted with a deeper understanding of the conceptual framework.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine strategies managers use in the nonprofit sector to reduce voluntary turnover. Successful leaders that reduce voluntary turnover have effective strategies to improve employee retention. I interviewed three nonprofit business managers from different organizations in metropolitan Texas using an open-ended, semistructured technique. Each manager was asked six succinct questions to explore the strategies used to reduce successfully

voluntary turnover. All participants submitted their organizations' employee handbook and fringe benefit document to support their response to the interview questions. The results of this study align with the conceptual framework, Herzberg's two-factor theory. The strategies used to retain workers consist of hygiene and growth factors. The three themes that emerged from the study are flexibility in the workplace to contribute to work-life balance, creating an environment for open communication, and motivation through rewards and recognition. I concluded that managers may benefit from strategies that create a flexible work environment to support a good work-life balance, promote positive communication, and the develop of upper mobility programs to retain talent.

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## Appendix: Interview Protocol

**Interview Topic:** What strategies do nonprofit managers use to reduce voluntary turnover?

1. Participants are greeted, given an introduction, and I will briefly describe the purpose of the study.
2. Participants will complete consent forms sent by email prior to participation of the study.
3. I will ask the participants to confirm that they understood the consent form, the purpose of the study, and asked if they have any questions before being the interview.
4. I will inform participants that the study is voluntary, and they can withdraw at any time without explanation or consequence.
5. I will remind participants that they will not receive compensation for the study.
6. I will inform the participants that the interview will be recorded and transcribed verbatim.
7. I will start video conference and handheld digital recorder.
8. I will state the location, time, date, and the interview number.
9. I will use the participant's coded name.
10. I will ask the 6 interview questions in the exact order that is listed on the informed consent. I will conclude with follow up questions if needed.

11. I will inform the participant about member checking and schedule a follow up meeting to ensure that I captured their perspective correctly on the transcript and interpretation.
12. The interview will not exceed 60 minutes.